Statement by India- Delivered by Ambassador & PR to the WTO

Agenda Item 7. Preparations for the twelfth session of the Ministerial Conference – Statement by the Chair

&

Agenda Item 7A – WTO's response to the Pandemic – Report by the Facilitator

Chair, we thank you for your report of the preparations for MC12 and also thank Ambassador David Walker for his report on WTO's response to the pandemic.

2.   Chair, first I would like to touch upon your report. We thank you for your consultations with Members on the issues of Appellate Body, WTO reforms and other issues listed in Para 3.17 of your report contained in document JOB/GC/259. On the issue of Appellate Body we believe that members should re-engage. We support the process for necessary reforms that would restore the two-tier DSB. On the issue of WTO reforms, we need to look at the proposals submitted by Members in that regard and agree on the common elements that could constitute reform package. Then only we can discuss the process for working on the reform proposal package. My delegation does not support setting up of a Working Group, as being suggested. On para 3.17 issues, our view is that, during a pandemic year when our attention should be fully devoted to delivering a robust response to the pandemic, taking up other issues will be a distraction and we should avoid doing that for MC12. As suggested earlier, we reiterate our request for including a section on the status of past MC deliverables in the MC12 document.

3.   Chair, we are running short of time and it is high time that we quickly identify the agenda items which we want to pursue for delivery at MC12, so that we can come back and focus on them immediately after the summer break. Also, having a clarity on the format of the meeting – virtual or in-person – will help delegations to effectively prepare for the Ministerial.

4.   Chair, I will now turn to WTO's response to the pandemic. We thank DG, Ambassador Walker, Ambassador Tan and Ambassador Spencer for the ongoing work under this item. We note that there are many proposed deliverables, but we should avoid those that are openly trying to push the market access agenda and aim to take away the policy space available for Members and also impose cumbersome obligations that serve to benefit a few in the name of pandemic. No doubt, we need to work on supply chain bottlenecks. However, doing away with the legitimate policy instrument of **export restrictions** or aiming for making temporary **elimination of tariffs**

a permanent measure or calling for **stringent transparency obligations** will not guarantee access to vaccines, therapeutics or diagnostics or access to food for the most vulnerable. In fact, such a step is likely to lead to, a flight of these critical final finished products to the highest bidder, making them inaccessible to the resource-poor further aggravating the current divide which we are seeing.

5.   On the Waiver proposal, as few Members were successful in delaying the landing zone beyond July, I wish to reiterate that there is an urgent need to engage in the text-based negotiations and finalise the Waiver request to be adopted by MC 12. WTO's response to pandemic will not be fulfilled without an agreement on the Waiver.

6.   Millions have regressed deeper into poverty during this pandemic and their food security is another critical issue for this organization. A simple, efficient, and permanent solution on extending **PSH for food security purposes** to new programs and new products is therefore a key deliverable. In this regard, we once again reiterate that the new submissions by the Africa Group and the proposal being worked upon by G33 are a good basis for CoASS to take the process forward.

7.   We also urge for a multilateral outcome on the Movement of healthcare professionals, particularly in view of the current pandemic. We need to be aware of new forms of Trade Barriers in the name of 'selective use of vaccine certificate' and find ways to resolve them.

***