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Plenary Session

“The Vicissitudes of the Doha Round Negotiations and the Future of the WTO”
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Abstract

Since its creation in 1995, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has successfully attracted new members, most notably China and Russia, and become a truly global trade body. While the Doha Round commenced in November 2001 has brought negotiations on Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and Agricultural Export Competition and Cotton to successful conclusions as part of the multilateral trade deal, the prospects for concluding the remaining Doha issues are not yet in sight even after fifteen years of negotiations. Meanwhile, the mantra of “trade for development” in the Doha Development Agenda has found suitable places in the broader UN-sponsored international agenda on sustainable development goals (SDGs). However, the centrality of the WTO in the rules-based world trading system would be lost unless it could fulfil its intrinsic role of “pedaling trade negotiations among member countries” since the times of the GATT. Re-building confidence as the forum of trade negotiations is the utmost importance for the future of the WTO. For that sake, G20 member countries would have to demonstrate their collective initiatives so as to (1) ratify and implement TFA as early as possible, (2) implement ITA-2 as agreed, (3) bring negotiations on EGA to fruition by the end of this year and (4) accelerate and conclude TiSA negotiations. Furthermore, the WTO should engage itself in negotiations on global issues, such as international investment facilitation and protection and e-commerce, through plurilateral trade negotiations based on MFN clubs, in response to the expansion of supply chains across national borders and the rapid development of the digital economy.

Key Words:

WTO, WTO Reform, Doha Round Negotiations, Plurilateral Trade Negotiations, MFN Club

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