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## INFORMAL WORKING GROUP ON MSMEs

### DRAFT DECLARATION ON MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (MSMEs)

#### *Revision*

The following communication, dated 13 July 2021, is being circulated at the request of the Coordinator of the Informal Working Group on MSMEs.

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We, the Heads of Delegations representing the following Members of the WTO: [...],

*Acknowledging* that the integration of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in international trade enhances their contribution to the economic development of WTO Members, as sources of job creation, innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth;

*Stressing* that promotion of the participation of MSMEs in international trade is therefore an important issue in the WTO agenda;

*Recalling* the centrality of the multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core, to foster a transparent inclusive, [non-discriminatory], and predictable global trade environment [where MSMEs can compete on a level-playing field] [that supports MSMEs involvement in international trade];

*Recognizing* that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact on MSMEs and that a coordinated global response remains necessary to help MSMEs bounce back;

*Reaffirming* our pledge, as contained in our Joint Ministerial Statement at Buenos Aires<sup>1</sup>, to address obstacles related to foreign trade operations that represent a significant burden for MSMEs interested in participating in international trade;

*Reiterating* our resolve to favour horizontal and non-discriminatory solutions which are likely to yield benefits for the participation of MSMEs in international trade, taking into account the specific needs of developing Members and least developed countries;

*Desiring* to support the consideration of MSME-related issues in the regular work of WTO bodies and any other relevant work in the WTO;

1. *Welcome* the work of the WTO Informal Working Group on MSMEs since the 11<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference that took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in December 2017 and the adoption on 11 December 2020 of a package (INF/MSME/4 and Rev.1) including the following six recommendations and declarations:

- a) Recommendation on the collection and maintenance of MSME-related information (Annex 1);
- b) Declaration on access to information (Annex 2);

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<sup>1</sup> WT/MIN(17)/58/Rev.1.

- c) Recommendation on trade facilitation and MSMEs (Annex 3);
- d) Recommendation on promoting MSMEs' inclusion in regulatory development in the area of trade (Annex 4);
- e) Recommendation on MSMEs and the WTO Integrated Database (Annex 5);
- f) Declaration on addressing the trade-related aspects of MSMEs' access to finance and cross-border payments (Annex 6).

2. *Welcome* the launch of the Trade4MSMEs Platform and of the Trade4MSMEs Hub, a partnership with key international organizations working on MSME and trade issues (INF/MSME/W/34).

3. *Welcome* the MSME RTA and TPR databases available on the WTO webpage.

4. *Declare* that:

4.1. The work of the Informal Working Group on MSMEs (the IWG) shall focus on issues of core significance to MSMEs and shall identify actions that could be taken to promote MSMEs' participation in international trade, including fostering exchanges of good practices on how to best take into account MSMEs needs in domestic rulemaking.

4.2. The IWG will continue monitoring the recommendations and declarations set out in paragraph 1.

4.3. The IWG will pursue its work on the basis of the Buenos Aires Joint Ministerial Statement (WT/MIN(17)/58/Rev.1), recommendations and declarations set out in paragraph 1.1 and will consider proposals submitted by members as well as any other inputs the IWG deems relevant in consistence with paragraph 3.1. We take note of the presentations made to the IWG, without prejudice to the position of IWG members.

4.4. We invite IWG members, with the support of the WTO Secretariat and relevant multilateral institutions as needed, to exchange good practices in areas of interest to the Group and to organize workshops and information sessions as appropriate.

4.5. The IWG shall meet at least twice a year and may hold additional meetings as appropriate.

4.6. The IWG shall promote an effective coordination and information exchange with the other WTO regular working bodies on MSME-related issues. In particular, IWG members shall do their best to promote MSME-related discussions within regular WTO bodies.

4.7. The IWG will continue to periodically share with the membership information on its work and discussions at the HoDs, General Council and the Ministerial Conference as well as to reach out to other Members in order to invite them to join the Group in light of the value of our initiative.

4.8. The IWG and its members should continue the dialogue with the private sector to ensure its work remains relevant for MSMEs.

5. *Express* support for MSMEs in Covid times and beyond.

5.1. As a first response to the Covid-19 crisis, several IWG members circulated a "Statement on highlighting the importance of MSMEs in the time of Covid-19" on 14 May 2020 (WT/GC/215).<sup>2</sup> Looking ahead, the IWG is determined to foster international trade as a path to recovery considering not only the benefits MSMEs may derive from increased access to third markets but also because many MSMEs rely on imports in their activities.

5.2. The IWG will continue to support the WTO playing an active role in promoting open trade as well as resilient and sustainable value chains, which are essential to the economic recovery after the pandemic for MSMEs.

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<sup>2</sup> The following Members circulated the Statement: [list].

5.3. As a predictable and more certain global environment is crucial for MSMEs to make the most of trade opportunities, especially in these Covid-19 trying times, the IWG will encourage raising awareness and promoting the use of platforms facilitating MSMEs' access to information. The IWG members will support the WTO Secretariat in its monitoring and information collection efforts, including on Covid-19 trade related measures. [At the same time, the IWG will continue working towards improving overall transparency for MSMEs to promote a more predictable regulatory environment and facilitate MSMEs' effective participation in global trade.] [At the same time, the IWG will continue promoting improvement to overall transparency for MSMEs which would help develop a more predictable regulatory environment and facilitate MSMEs' effective participation in global trade.] [At the same time, the IWG will continue inviting members to fulfil their commitments regarding transparency to promote a more predictable regulatory environment and facilitate MSMEs' effective participation in global trade.]

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