Recent development on fisheries subsidies’ negotiations and prospects for WTO MC 12

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1. Why has an agreement in fisheries remained so elusive?

Negotiations were launched almost two decades ago, but inherent tensions in some elements

First: “triple win” potential (trade-development-environment)

Second: Sustainable development, not trade distortion, as a central purpose

Third: Disciplines subject to Dispute Settlement procedures.

Two recent mandates: SDG 14.6 (2015), and MC11 (2017)
2. What have been the recent developments in the WTO Fisheries’ subsidies negotiations?

- The Group has not slid back since MC11; progress, albeit constant, has proceeded at slow pace
- Confidence building:
  - Incubator Groups
  - Facilitator-led conversations
  - Texts/working documents
- January-July 2019: 14 new textual proposals, 3 concept/discussion papers
- HoDs meeting of 17th of July, endorsement to:
  - Start discussions in September, use working papers as a reference
  - Four one-week meetings for Sept-Dec
  - Intensify intersessional work

- Accelerating work will be a major challenge: Members must move out of their comfort zones, allow for testing new formulations/approaches.
3. Prospects for the negotiations.

✓ The Group is entering a new phase that will hopefully lead to the end game, pressure will only increase

✓ The group will have to make more use of the facilitators to help articulate their work.

✓ Stepping up pressure on the process is fundamental

✓ Any deal will not suffice.

✓ Three main components of an outcome:
  - Sustainability.
  - Flexibility
  - Transparency
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