

BULLETIN N° 4 | SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2013

After many ups and downs, the Ninth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization has concluded successfully today in Bali, Indonesia. WTO Members have adopted a number of Ministerial Decisions on several important issues of the Doha Round, including in Agriculture, Development/LDC issues and Trade Facilitation and deliver the Doha Lite Bali Package. CUTS International actively participated in the Conference and has updated you every day on the highlights of the Conference. This is our Final Update from Bali.

Hot News!

The morning of Saturday, the 7th of December 2013 witnessed the adoption of the Bali Ministerial Declaration along with Ministerial Decisions on the Bali Package.

This is the first major agreement that has been reached by the WTO Members ever since the World Trade Organisation was established in 1995. It comes on the back of the Doha Development Agenda, which has been undergoing endless discussions ever since it was launched in 2001. The Bali package is a small but significant component of the DDA setting out a path for a successful wrap up of the DDA, if and when it happens.

Negotiations Insights

Since yesterday, things have moved fast, going back and forth after India, on 5th December, publicly re-emphasised at a press conference that 'no agreement is better than a bad agreement'.

From the afternoon of 5th December, intense consultations in closed rooms between the WTO Director General and all major coalitions were held, culminating to a 'night of long knives' as a late night meeting between India and the US collapsed with India reportedly leaving the room, stating that its food security concerns were not addressed satisfactorily.

On 6th morning, the talks resumed constructively and by afternoon the news of an imminent deal emerged propelling positivity in the ambience.

The revised draft of the Bali Package on 'public stockholding for food security purposes' said that an interim mechanism was agreed to be set in until a permanent solution is reached and recognised current and future food security programmes of the developing countries with some riders. And, it was reported that an agreement on trade

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About CUTS

Since its humble beginnings in 1983 as a local Indian consumer-advocacy group of 75 activists, CUTS has grown into an international NGO champion of stakeholder empowerment in economic and development policy.

CUTS organizations in India, Kenya, Zambia, Vietnam, Ghana and Geneva have made their footprints in the realm of economic governance across the developing world. Our activities stretch from Asia to Africa, and from South America to beyond.

CUTS is also a trusted technical cooperation and knowledge partner of international organizations such as the WTO and UNCTAD, where it has consultative status.

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facilitation was also reached by cutting out several contentious provisions on which 'consensus' was not reached.

After four days of intense negotiations leaving the outcome of this last opportunity unclear, many had lost hope that Bali could achieve an acceptable deal.

A late night meeting of the Heads of Delegations on 6th December could not conclude the deal as reportedly some South American countries raised their concerns over the application of non-discrimination principles to trade facilitation measures. Heads for Delegations left the room.

On 7th morning, the Heads of Delegations meeting resumed with the hope of concluding the Bali Package deal by arriving at a consensus on concerns raised by those South American countries. Based on a consensus and as reported due to some reservations by Cuba and other some other South American countries, a sentence was added to the Bali Ministerial Declaration reaffirming the application of principles of non-discrimination to trade facilitation measures.

From the first day of the Bali Ministerial Conference, India had made it clear that its food security programmes for millions of its people is non-negotiable and that it would not agree to a text where these programmes could be challenged in the WTO by other members. Calls were made to the Indian Prime Minister and reportedly the Indian trade minister made his final move after getting a clearance from a cabinet meeting held on 6th afternoon in New Delhi.

Through intense and constructive negotiations in Bali, India reaffirmed its position on food security and helped the WTO Members to not only conclude a 'balanced' deal on food security but also in arriving at a consensus on the Bali Package as a whole. The process which started in Geneva in December 2011 came to a largely satisfactory end.

The brokering role played by the new DG, Roberto Azevedo and Indonesian Trade Minister, Gita Wirjawan in getting the deal done is worthy of praise.

Over to 'delivery on development' and 'implementation issues'!

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