

The road to 11th WTO Ministerial Conference, 10-13 December, Buenos Aires

A Look at the negotiations through the SUNS lens*

This collection puts together the SUNS articles that track the WTO negotiations as it moves towards the 11th Ministerial to be held at Buenos Aires, Argentina between 10-13th of December, 2017. On the one hand, negotiations have covered the mandated issues of agriculture (spanning a permanent solution on food security proposal, domestic subsidies, Special Safeguard Mechanism, discipline on export measures etc.), fisheries, special and differential treatment, LDC issues. On the other hand, more and more topics under the umbrella of so-called “new issues” are being pushed with remarkable frequency, mainly by the developed countries along with a few developing countries. These include investment facilitation, mandate on e-commerce, Global Value Chains, SMEs, and so on. Alongside, the US has provided its own twists by creating roadblocks on several process issues and refusing to allow an outcome declaration from MC11.

The SUNS articles, which have monitored the negotiations on a daily basis, provide an in-depth look into each track, and maps the volatile dynamics as the 11 WTO Ministerial draws closer. This collection is intended as a useful tool for negotiators, academics, trade policy analysts, and civil society at large, to catch up quickly on the negotiations.

**SUNS refers to the South North Development Monitor, published by Third World Network (TWN). SUNS is a unique source of information and analyses on international development issues with particular focus on North-South and South-South negotiations. Over the years SUNS has provided unique in-depth coverage of the activities of the Non-Aligned countries, of the Group of 77 and other regional and inter-regional groups of the South and the non-governmental organizations.*

[G90 setback as North nations refuse any outcome on S&DT](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 28 November 2017)

The large majority of developing and poorest countries - the Group of 90 - suffered a setback on Thursday (23 November) at the World Trade Organization after the United States, the European Union, and other major industrialized countries refused to agree to any outcome on their core issues for improving special and differential flexibilities at the Buenos Aires ministerial conference next month, trade envoys told SUNS.

[US rejects proposal by 52 WTO members on AB selection](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 30 November 2017)

The United States has again blocked efforts to launch the process for filling three vacancies at the Appellate Body of the World Trade Organization.

[Isolated US tries to block MC11 Ministerial Declaration](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 28 November 2017)

The United States stood isolated and exposed on Wednesday (22 November) for its unilateral decision to block the finalization of the ministerial declaration for the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial conference (MC11) in Buenos Aires next month, trade envoys told SUNS.

[South nations throw down gauntlet on e-com at MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 24 November 2017)

A large majority of developing and poorest countries, including India and South Africa, on Tuesday (21 November) threw down the gauntlet on electronic commerce at the World Trade Organization, challenging the European Union, Japan, and other countries that want to change the existing mandate on e-commerce at the eleventh ministerial conference in Buenos Aires (MC11) next month, trade envoys told SUNS.

[Streamlined texts emerge on IUU fishing, overfished stocks](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 24 November 2017)

The WTO Negotiating Group on Rules, meeting over five days last week (13-17 November), saw the completion of efforts by a group of members to streamline texts on prohibited subsidies relating to IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing and on overfished stocks.

[E-Com at MC11 is effort to hijack basic internet governance issues](#)

(Chakravarthi Raghavan, Geneva, 22 November 2017)

As issues relating to the monopolistic/oligopolistic control over information and data by the Silicon Valley technology giants and their platforms are beginning to attract adverse public and political attention around the world, these technology platforms (Google, Facebook, Twitter) are attempting to hijack the issue of internet governance and democracy by writing trade rules at the WTO under the rubric of "e-commerce".

[US cherry-picking MC11 outcomes, holds Members hostage](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 20 November 2017)

The United States continues to cherry-pick outcomes for the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires next month.

[US doubts WTO's pre-eminence for multilateral trade liberalization](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 16 November 2017)

The United States has cast doubts on the pre-eminence of the World Trade Organization for accelerating multilateral trade liberalization. The US did so on Tuesday (14 November) during a discussion at a small group meeting on the outcome document for the ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires, trade envoys familiar with the development told SUNS.

[US transparency proposal criticised at WTO Goods Council](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 15 November 2017)

The United States proposal, setting out stringent procedures on transparency and notification requirements under the WTO Agreements including penalties, was criticised at a meeting of the WTO Goods Council on 10 November by over a dozen WTO Members, both developed and developing.

[South countries insist MC11 outcome must be finalised in Geneva](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 14 November 2017)

Uganda along with many countries said on Friday (10 November) that the outcome document for the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial conference in Buenos Aires must be finalized in Geneva so as to avert the opaque process that was adopted in the run-up to the last ministerial meeting in Nairobi, in 2015, trade envoys told SUNS.

[US addressing outcome on PSH at MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 10 November 2017)

The United States has begun to address an outcome for the permanent solution for public stockholding programs for food security at the upcoming World Trade Organization ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires (MC11).

[No outcome likely at MC11 on domestic regulation in services](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 9 November 2017)

A large majority of developing and least developed countries rejected on Tuesday (7 November) the revised draft negotiating proposal for an outcome on disciplines on domestic regulation of trade in services at the upcoming World Trade Organization ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires.

[Argentina's desperate effort to avert failure of MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 7 November 2017)

In a desperate attempt to save its "South American" face, and despite a categorical NO from the United States to any outcome on domestic support at the upcoming World Trade Organization ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires (MC11), Argentina on Thursday (2 November) issued a draft ministerial decision for further consideration, trade envoys told SUNS.

[Stiff opposition to proposed MC11 decision on regulatory transparency](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 6 November 2017)

A proposed ministerial decision on transparency of regulatory measures for trade in goods in relation to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) tabled by the European Union and several other countries has been strongly opposed by many developing and least-developed countries.

[US attempts to use wrecking ball against WTO](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 2 November 2017)

The United States on Tuesday (31 October) indicated as to how it is going to put the Doha Round of trade negotiations to bed, after circulating a proposal on mandatory transparency provisions and notification requirements in all the World Trade Organization agreements that would amount to altering the rights and obligations of members, trade envoys told SUNS.

[A new vice-chair, consultations to intensify on organisation of MC11](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 30 October 2017)

With less than seven weeks to go for the eleventh Ministerial Conference of the WTO, the Chair of the General Council, Ambassador Xavier Carim of South Africa, is holding intensified consultations and meetings on the organization of MC11 and the kind of outcome document members would like to see coming out of MC11.

[Impasse over AB selection process lingers on, US again criticised](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 27 October 2017)

The impasse over the launch of the process for the selection of new Appellate Body (AB) members to fill current and upcoming vacancies on the Appellate Body continues with the United States again saying that it is not in a position to agree to the launch of this process until its concerns over the continued service of former AB members are addressed.

[MC11 becoming a North-South battle](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 26 October 2017)

The eleventh ministerial conference (MC11) of the World Trade Organization in Buenos Aires in December is increasingly transforming itself into a North-South battle on unresolved trade issues of the Doha Work Program (DWP).

[Outcome unlikely on domestic regulation in services at MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 25 October 2017)

The proposed multilateral outcome on enhanced disciplines for domestic regulation in trade in services by major developed and some developing countries at the upcoming World Trade Organization ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires almost evaporated on Monday (23 October) following unbridgeable divisions on the need to finalize any decision at this juncture, trade negotiators told SUNS.

[Moves for permanent solution for PSH for MC11 ministers](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 24 October 2017)

With about seven weeks to go for the eleventh Ministerial conference (MC11) in Buenos Aires, attempts appear to be currently under way at the WTO to push the major unresolved issues of the mandated permanent solution for public stockholding (PSH) programs for developing countries to the wire and for trade ministers of major nations to finalise an outcome at MC11.

[The African Group position on e-commerce talks at WTO](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 24 October 2017)

The African Group has formally circulated on 20 October, as a restricted official document, the full statement that it had delivered at an informal meeting on the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce on 16 October.

[South countries shoot down proposals for e-commerce negotiations](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 18 October 2017)

A large majority of developing and least developed countries shot down on Monday (16 October) proposals from major industrialized and some developing countries for establishing a "Working Party" or "Working Group" on Electronic Commerce at the World Trade Organization's upcoming ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires, several trade envoys told SUNS.

[US NO to Cotton-four, but China-India welcome proposal](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 17 October 2017)

The United States on Friday struck a body blow to the four poorest countries (C-4) - Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Chad - in West Africa, rejecting their demand for a decision on substantial cuts in cotton subsidies by 70 per cent, at the upcoming World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting (MC11) in Buenos Aires, trade envoys told SUNS.

[Consensus eludes trade ministers at Marrakesh](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 16 October 2017)

The just-concluded informal trade ministerial summit in Marrakesh on 10 October brought into sharp focus the linkages between fisheries subsidies and improvements in the Doha trade remedy rules, and between the permanent solution for public stockholding programs and domestic support.

[No outcomes possible at MC11, unilateralist USA insists](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 16 October 2017)

The United States, which sent a low-level delegation to the Marrakesh meeting, continued to maintain its unilateral position that no outcomes are possible at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires beginning on 10 December, participants told SUNS.

[New "vertical" text on fisheries, assessment by Rules Chair](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 16 October 2017)

The proponents of the seven textual proposals, put forward in the ongoing negotiations on fisheries subsidies, have submitted a new "non-paper" compiling these proposals.

[MC11 will be scene for fierce US vs South battle](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 10 October 2017)

The World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial conference (MC11) in Buenos Aires beginning on 10 December is going to be a fierce battle between the developing and poorest countries on the one side, and the United States on the other, trade envoys told SUNS.

[CSOs urge WTO Members to abandon expansionist agenda](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 10 October 2017)

Some 300 civil society organisations (CSOs) from more than 150 countries have raised the alarm that some members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are "pushing a dangerous and inappropriate new agenda" in the run-up to the WTO's eleventh ministerial conference (MC11) in Buenos Aires beginning on 10 December.

[African Group will not negotiate e-commerce rules at WTO](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 9 October 2017)

The African Group on Thursday fiercely rejected proposals by major industrialized countries and their allies in the developing world for changing the structure of the current electronic commerce work program so as to establish a separate Working Group at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial conference in Buenos Aires beginning on 10 December, trade envoys told SUNS.

[India, Africa resist IC moves to finalize outcomes in GATS DR at MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 6 October 2017)

India and the African Group have expressed sharp concern over attempts to finalize outcomes in the domestic regulation for trade in services by major industrialized countries and their allies in the developing world without adhering to the work done in the 2009 and 2011 texts, services negotiators told SUNS.

[US again blocks AB selection process from going forward](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 4 October 2017)

The United States has once again said it is not in a position to agree to launch the process for the selection of new Appellate Body (AB) members to replace those members whose terms have either expired or will expire soon until its concerns over the continued service of former AB members are addressed.

[US assault on DSU and DG's "deafening silence"](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva , 3 October 2017)

The United States appears to be mounting a sustained assault on the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU) of the World Trade Organization, with the objective of eliminating the negative consensus rule, something that the US had principally pushed for in 1993 as a condition for its acceptance of the DSU.

[ICs and allies in South push for new mandate on e-commerce](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 27 September 2017)

Major developed countries and their allies in the developing world have upped the ante for launching negotiations on electronic commerce at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires beginning on 10 December. They have issued a fresh call for pursuing negotiations under a new mandate as opposed to the 1998 e-commerce work program, trade envoys told SUNS.

[US told to de-link its AB concerns from selection process](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 21 September 2017)

A large number of WTO Members have made clear to the United States that no linkage should be made between its concerns regarding the WTO Appellate Body (AB) and the launching of the selection process for new AB members.

["Will not pay for mandated permanent solution for PSH", insist G33](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva , 20 September 2017)

Indonesia, India, China, and other members of the G33 group made clear categorically on Friday (15 September) that they will not pay for the mandated permanent solution for public stockholding programs for food security in the developing countries at the upcoming World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires, several trade envoys told SUNS.

[North declares war on S&DT and improvements at WTO](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 19 September 2017)

The United States and other major developed countries seem to have declared a war against proposals for specific improvements in special and differential flexibilities as demanded by a large majority of developing and poorest countries at the upcoming World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial conference in Buenos Aires from 10 December, several trade negotiators told SUNS.

[Argentina's "authoritarian" MC11 agenda views rile South nations](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 18 September 2017)

Argentina, which is hosting the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires from 10 December, has warned members to drop proposals for MC11, such as the elimination of most trade-distorting domestic subsidies - the Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS) - proposed by China and India, on grounds that it will lead to the breakdown of the conference, sources told SUNS.

[South nations insist on reference to DWP in fisheries accord at MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 14 September 2017)

A large majority of developing and poorest countries have insisted that any outcome/agreement for prohibiting certain categories of fisheries subsidies must refer explicitly in the preamble to the mandate provided in the Doha Work Program (DWP) of 2001, trade negotiators told SUNS.

[PSH with several caveats a priority for MC11, says agri-chair](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 11 September 2017)

The chair for Doha agriculture negotiations, Ambassador Stephen Karau of Kenya, has said that the permanent solution for public stockholding programs for food security purposes (PSH) in developing countries remains "a priority issue" for the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires beginning on 10 December.

[India re-calibrates its TFS proposal](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 3 August 2017)

India has re-calibrated its proposal on trade facilitation for services (TFS) at the World Trade Organization by suggesting that the proposed TFS agreement will only cover commitments scheduled under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), trade envoys told the SUNS.

[WTO Rules Chair issues "matrix" paper on fisheries subsidies](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 2 August 2017)

The Chair of the WTO Negotiating Group on Rules has issued a compilation matrix of all the textual proposals put forward so far in the ongoing negotiations on fisheries subsidies.

[Developing nations and LDCs reject new E-com work programme](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 28 July 2017)

The developing and least-developed countries on Wednesday (26 July) rejected proposals from major developed countries and their allies in the developing world for a new work program for electronic commerce for addressing cross-cutting issues, trade envoys told SUNS.

[DG pulled up for flouting mandates, WTO and Rules](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 27 July 2017)

The World Trade Organization Director-General, Roberto Azevedo, was taken to task on Tuesday (25 July) by developing countries for flouting the mandates of the Doha Work Program and for adopting questionable procedures and practices, such as Heads of Delegations (HoD) meetings, in his efforts to advance new issues by the backdoor, several trade envoys told SUNS.

[South call for credible results, including on PSH & SSM at MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 27 July 2017)

The developing countries, individually and along with their coalitions on Tuesday called for credible results based on the Doha work program, including the permanent solution for public stockholding programs for food security, at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires in December, trade envoys told SUNS.

[Chairs of WTO Doha bodies report on key issues at TNC](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 27 July 2017)

After an hiatus of almost two years, an informal meeting of the WTO Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) was finally held on Tuesday, at which the chairs of the various negotiating bodies under the Doha Work Programme reported on their recent consultations on the key issues in the run-up to the eleventh ministerial conference in Buenos Aires this December.

[Doha Round "legacy issues" can't be ignored in favour of new issues](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 21 July 2017)

The legacy issues of the Doha Round cannot be ignored in the push for starting negotiations on the new issues (such as investment facilitation and binding rules on e-commerce), and the WTO members must decide "by consensus" that the Round has been concluded, Ms Nirmala Sitharaman, India's Minister for Commerce and Industry, said on 18 July.

[India optimistic over course-correction for Buenos Aires MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 21 July 2017)

The Indian commerce minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday (19 July) expressed "optimism" about finalizing two-thirds of the work on the proposed deliverables for the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting by the time when an informal trade ministerial summit takes place in Marrakech by mid-October.

[Brazil joins hands with EU, strikes death blow to G20](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 19 July 2017)

Brazil has finally struck a death blow to the G20 coalition of developing countries that it had created in 2003 for reforming the global agriculture, after joining hands with its erstwhile foe - the European Union - for tabling a proposal on domestic support. The proposal leaves the two big subsidizers - the United States and the EU - in the industrialized world almost untouched, several trade envoys told SUNS.

[South nations for ending AMS, cuts in "green box" in agriculture](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 17 July 2017)

Major developing countries on Wednesday (12 July) called for the elimination of Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS) as well as significant reduction commitments of minimally trade-distorting green box programs in the developed countries in the ongoing Doha agriculture negotiations at the World Trade Organization, trade envoys told SUNS.

[EU, Indonesia table revised proposals on fisheries subsidies](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 17 July 2017)

Both the European Union and Indonesia have introduced their revised proposals on fisheries subsidies at an informal meeting of the WTO Negotiating Group on Rules on Thursday.

[Developing and LDCs to pay heavy price for Hamburg declaration](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Hamburg, 11 July 2017)

The leaders of the Group of 20 developed and developing countries along with invited nations on Saturday unveiled a controversial declaration of compromises for "shaping the interconnected world" for which the developing and poorest countries will continue to pay a heavy price.

[G90 demand fruitful outcome on S&DT at MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 7 July 2017)

A large majority of developing and least-developed countries have demanded a "fruitful outcome" at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial conference in Buenos Aires in December on 25 revised agreement-specific proposals for strengthening special and differential flexibilities for promoting "inclusive and sustainable industrialization."

[EU and Brazil oppose end to "green box" cotton payments](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 6 July 2017)

The European Union and Brazil opposed the elimination of a range of green box direct payments for cotton as demanded by the Cotton-4 countries - Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Chad - in the unresolved Doha agriculture negotiations at the WTO.

[Goods Council debates national security exceptions to WTO rules](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 6 July 2017)

A meeting of the WTO Goods Council on 30 June debated the issue of national security exceptions to the WTO rules, with a number of members voicing concerns over the "systemic risks" posed by the investigations initiated by the United States earlier this year into steel and aluminium imports under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962.

[China lowers MC11 ambition on AD-CVD, US still opposed](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 30 June 2017)

China faces an acid test for bringing about a modest outcome of improvements in trade remedies at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires in December as the United States remains dead opposed to any changes in the anti-dumping provisions as well as negotiated deliverables in the Argentinean capital.

[Prospects for any Doha agri accords at MC11 bleak](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 29 June 2017)

The African Group of countries, particularly the Cotton-four - Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad - are going to be left high and dry at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting (MC11) at Buenos Aires in December without any outcomes on their main demands for reducing the domestic support in agriculture by the developed countries, sources told SUNS.

[DG Azevedo needs to come clean on his meeting with USTR](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 27 June 2017)

The World Trade Organization's Director-General Roberto Azevedo needs to come clean about his meeting with the United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer early this month during which the USTR served notice about the changes the Trump administration wants to see in the Dispute Settlement Body, according to people familiar with the development.

[Formulaic approach to MC11 outcomes to ensure comfort for US?](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 22 June 2017)

Attempts to finalize a formulaic approach of outcomes for the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires this December are being intensified with the sole aim of ensuring that the United States remains comfortable without having to undertake any fresh commitments, according to people familiar with the development.

[North to try to bury DDA, push e-commerce & MSME talks at MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 14 June 2017)

Major developed countries and their "allies" in the developing world have intensified efforts to quietly bury the Doha Development Agenda negotiations while launching negotiations on electronic-commerce and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial conference in Buenos Aires in December, several ministers and trade envoys told SUNS.

[South nations demand credible, concrete outcomes on Doha at MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Paris, 12 June 2017)

Trade ministers from India, South Africa, Indonesia, and the ACP countries on Thursday called for credible and concrete outcomes based on the outstanding Doha issues at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires in December, according to people familiar with the development.

[South stress food security and SSM outcomes at MC11](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 7 June 2017)

A number of developing countries, at dedicated sessions of the WTO agriculture negotiations last week, stressed on the importance of a permanent solution for public stockholding programmes for food security as well as an effective Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM), and for meaningful outcomes on these issues at the eleventh WTO ministerial conference in Buenos Aires this December.

[Permanent solution for PSH seems unlikely at MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 1 June 2017)

Major developed nations, and some of their allies in the South are refusing to engage in substantive discussions on the mandated permanent solution for public stockholding programmes for food security, and a successful outcome is unlikely at the WTO's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires in December.

[Investment Facilitation and links to China's OBOR](#)

(Chakravarthi Raghavan, Geneva, 22 May 2017)

The stalemate over the agenda at the General Council last week, resolved on 18 May with a compromise of sorts by the statement from the GC Chair, Amb. Xavier Carim of South Africa, has nevertheless brought to the fore many questionable practices of the secretariat and major systemic issues that, if left unresolved, may soon result in causing irreparable damage to the WTO multilateral trading system.

[Investment facilitation cannot now be discussed formally at WTO](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 22 May 2017)

Following strong opposition from India along with several other developing countries to the inclusion of an agenda item on trade and investment facilitation (IF), a resumed General Council meeting on Thursday decided that this issue cannot now be formally discussed at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

[Investment Facilitation proposals and India's objections](#)

(Chakravarthi Raghavan, Geneva, 19 May 2017)

The several proposals put forward (in Job documents) for inclusion in the General Council Agenda for 10 May, with a view to secure some "deliverables" on Investment Facilitation at the eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires this December, have been modified now (in the GC Chair's compromise statement) to be merely "Communications" without calling for any GC decisions.

[India and others ensure IF can't be discussed formally at WTO](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 19 May 2017)

India along with several developing countries on Thursday (18 May) ensured that investment facilitation cannot be discussed formally at the World Trade Organization, causing a huge setback to China, Russia, Brazil, Argentina, and others who sought to sneak in the failed (OECD mediated) Multilateral Agreement on Investment in a new avatar into the global trade body, trade envoys told SUNS.

[India blocks GC over agenda item on Investment Facilitation](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 11 May 2017)

India on Wednesday blocked the proceedings of the World Trade Organization General Council on grounds that the agenda includes proposals to discuss the controversial issue of investment facilitation that is not part of the WTO's mandate, trade envoys told SUNS.

[Efforts to import parts of failed TiSA into services DR thwarted](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 11 May 2017)

Many developing and least-developed countries on Tuesday (9 May) thwarted attempts by the Chair of the World Trade Organization Working Party on Domestic Regulation to steam-roll discussions on proposals, apparently incorporated from the failed Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) negotiations, services negotiators told SUNS.

[Positions unchanged on public stockholding, SSM, HOD told](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 10 May 2017)

An informal Heads of Delegation meeting at the World Trade Organization on Monday showed that members remain sharply divided on the key issues and possible deliverables at MC11 in Buenos Aires, with a large majority of developing countries insisting that the focus should be based on the Doha Work Programme and Nairobi Ministerial decisions, and not on any new issues like E-commerce or investment facilitation.

[US, India-South Africa nix move for Investment Facilitation accord](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 9 May 2017)

A sustained push by Germany to revive the failed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) under the banner of an Investment Facilitation agreement foundered on Friday (5 May) at the G20 technical experts' meeting in Berlin.

[India's TFS proposal gets little support](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 5 May 2017)

Members of the African Group and least-developed countries on Wednesday (3 May) raised several systemic concerns over India's draft negotiating proposal for facilitating trade in services at the World Trade Organization.

[New proposal on fisheries to undermine S&DT flexibilities](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 4 May 2017)

Attempts to undermine special and differential flexibilities for developing countries are being considered as part of the disciplines for prohibiting fisheries subsidies that are being promoted as a major deliverable for the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires later this year, rules negotiators told SUNS.

[US hurls "unparliamentary" language against India at WTO committee](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 4 May 2017)

The United States - which has failed to comply with several World Trade Organization rulings and has blocked several procedural proposals on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement and the accession of Iran - created an ugly scene at a meeting of the WTO Committee on Safeguards on 24 April, several participants told SUNS.

[New efforts to bring long-buried MAI into WTO](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 2 May 2017)

A group of countries - Argentina, Brazil, China, Russia, Hong Kong (China), Mexico, Nigeria, Colombia, Korea, and Australia among others - has stepped up its efforts to bring back the long-buried Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) to the World Trade Organization in the form of an Investment Facilitation Agreement for Development, several trade envoys told SUNS.

[G33 insist on unambiguous outcomes at MC11 on food security](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 28 April 2017)

Developing countries with hundreds of millions of resource poor and livelihood farmers face a do-or-die battle, ahead of the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires later this year, to secure a permanent solution for public stockholding programs for food security and a simple and effective special safeguard mechanism, trade envoys told SUNS.

[Friends of E-Commerce lay out roadmap for MC11 and beyond](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 27 April 2017)

The Group of Friends of E-Commerce for Development (FED) at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has put forward a roadmap of seven key issues relating to e-commerce aimed at paving the way for conversations to be held on this issue in Geneva as well as at the WTO's upcoming eleventh ministerial conference to be held in Buenos Aires this December.

[Large majority of South nations opposed to "investment facilitation"](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 12 April 2017)

A large majority of developing and least-developed countries, including India and South Africa, remain firmly opposed to attempts by Russia, China, Brazil, and five members of the MIKTA - Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia - group for starting discussions on investment facilitation at the World Trade Organization, trade envoys told SUNS.

[Kenya's Karau to chair agriculture negotiations](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 7 April 2017)

An informal meeting of the General Council on Friday (7 April) is expected to formally adopt the appointment of Ambassador Stephen Ndung'u Karau of Kenya as the new chair of the Doha agriculture negotiating body.

[Prospects for credible outcomes at Buenos Aires bleak](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 31 March 2017)

Efforts are currently underway to nominate Kenya's trade envoy Ambassador Stephen Ndung'u Karau as the chair of the Doha agriculture negotiating body, with the African Group, at the behest of some powerful developed and South American countries, apparently asking Ambassador Karau to chair the Special Session on agriculture to break the current impasse.

[PSH must cover all DCs, not country-specific](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 21 March 2017)

The G33 farm coalition led by Indonesia has called for a permanent solution for public stockholding programs to address the concerns of all developing countries, instead of any one country-specific solution, at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting (MC11) in Buenos Aires later this year, trade envoys told SUNS.

[Indian TFS draft faces sharp questions, intense scrutiny](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 20 March 2017)

Many developing and least-developed countries, including members of the African Group, sharply questioned India at the World Trade Organization (WTO) on Thursday (16 March) over its proposal to negotiate a standalone agreement on Trade Facilitation for Services (TFS) without any prior mandate, services negotiators told SUNS.

[ICs intensify efforts on e-commerce negotiations at MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 13 March 2017)

Major developed countries have decided to intensify their efforts for launching negotiations on several controversial issues in electronic commerce at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires later this year, trade envoys told SUNS.

[Rules Chair to hold focused sessions on fisheries subsidies](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 6 March 2017)

The Chair of the WTO Negotiating Group on Rules has informed members that he plans to hold focused sessions on specific substantive issues in relation to disciplines on fisheries subsidies.

[Azevedo gets second term, South Africa to chair General Council](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 2 March 2017)

The General Council of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on Tuesday formally re-appointed Roberto Azevedo to a second four-year term as Director-General of the organisation.

[India's draft legal proposal for TFS](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 28 February 2017)

India has called for substantial improvements in several articles of the World Trade Organization's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) to "facilitate the movement of information, data, technology and natural and juridical persons in an increasingly globalized and digitized world," according to the draft legal text reviewed by SUNS.

[WTO Members voice their views on key issues for MC11](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 28 February 2017)

An informal Heads of Delegation (HOD) meeting at the WTO on 23 February heard a range of members voicing their views on what they see as their priority issues for possible deliverables at the eleventh ministerial conference (MC11) in Buenos Aires later this year.

[WTO secretariat & DG reproached for vitiating negotiating climate](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 27 February 2017)

India and several developing countries on Thursday (23 February) reproached the World Trade Organization Secretariat led by Director-General Roberto Azevedo for "vitiating" the negotiating climate by pushing controversial new issues such as e-commerce and investment facilitation, despite opposition from a large majority of members, trade envoys told SUNS.

[South stress on public stockholding, SSM, S&D, development](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 27 February 2017)

Many developing countries stressed the importance of outcomes, amongst others, on the issues of public stockholding for food security purposes and on the Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) at MC11 in Buenos Aires later this year.

[14 developing countries meet DG, push e-commerce](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 16 February 2017)

In a coordinated effort with the World Trade Organization director-general Roberto Azevedo, 14 developing countries on Tuesday (14 February) called for urgent discussions on four issues concerning "electronic commerce and development", despite opposition from a majority of developing and least-developed countries, trade envoys told SUNS.

[CSOs urge WTO DG to advance development mandate, not 'new issues'](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 13 February 2017)

Over 80 Indian civil society organisations (CSOs) called on WTO Director-General Roberto Azevedo to advance the development mandate of the WTO negotiations especially on key issues in agriculture, instead of his current push for agreements on e-commerce and investment.

[Azevedo pushing differentiation, negotiating North's agenda for MC11](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 9 February 2017)

The World Trade Organization director-general Roberto Azevedo has told several trade envoys that differentiation among developing countries would happen in the development dossier of the unfinished Doha negotiations, trade envoys told SUNS.

[DG Azevedo rebuked by India over "value-loaded" statements](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 8 February 2017)

India sharply rebuked on Monday (6 February) the World Trade Organization director-general Roberto Azevedo over his assessment that there were "wide divergences" on special safeguard mechanism (SSM) in the run-up to the Nairobi ministerial meeting in December 2015, trade envoys told SUNS.

[Green room process on services domestic regulation](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 6 February 2017)

The WTO Director-General, Roberto Azevedo, held a green room meeting Thursday (2 February) on domestic regulation in services to prepare the ground for a possible outcome in this area at the forthcoming Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires end of 2017.

[LDCs table proposal on fisheries subsidies disciplines](#)

(Kanaga Raja, Geneva, 26 January 2017)

An informal open-ended meeting of the WTO Negotiating Group on Rules on Tuesday (24 January) held an initial discussion on a new submission by the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), proposing some elements for discussion on new disciplines on fisheries subsidies.

[ICs want "payment" anew for unresolved Doha agri issues](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 24 January 2017)

Major developed and some developing countries appear to be pushing for "payment" for addressing the unresolved Doha issues in agriculture in the run-up to the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires later this year, sources told SUNS on Saturday.

[LDCs push for concrete outcomes at MC11 on agri domestic support](#)

(D. Ravi Kanth, Geneva, 23 January 2017)

Despite the uncertainty and unpredictability induced by the new Trump administration's unilateral demands in global trade, the least-developed countries have raised the antennae for concrete outcomes for reducing trade-distorting domestic support at the World Trade Organization's eleventh ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires later this year.