

### **Agriculture actual situation of the negotiations**

- The Chair of the negotiating committee on AG, Ambassador Walker held detailed consultations with members to determine where useful progress could be made, particularly in light of the subsequent renewed political mandates.
  
- The consultations included Room E and open-ended informal meetings of the negotiating group, resulting in a steady program of technical work and further discussions on outstanding issues in the texts before the negotiators. Thus, now it has become clear that work in agriculture is proceeding with the support of members on a two-track approach.
  
- One track, template work, is advancing well, with substantive contributions from members. Step 1 of this template work concerns the identification of base date and appropriate tables; it is expected to conclude this month, with Step 2 then to start, namely the preparation of templates to be used for scheduling. This technical work will continue with every prospect that it can conclude early in the new year.
  
- The other track of work in agriculture is the Chair's informal consultations on the bracketed and otherwise annotated issues in the draft modalities and associated documentation. There have been discussions on domestic support — where again it is clear that a solution on cotton is fundamental — and on market access issues, including work on sensitive products, tariff cap, TRQ expansion and tariff simplification as well as Special products and SSM.
  
- On SSM, members requested to have deep technical discussions focusing on some of the elements of the mechanism such as the seasonality, spillover, prorating ...etc . the aim of such discussion is to practically test how the mechanism will be operating and whether it will achieve its objectives in terms of safeguarding markets against import surges while not disrupting normal trade.
  
- In general terms, no real progress achieved so far on the level of Agriculture negotiations, it seems that the technical discussions will continue to the next year. The chair of the NG highlighted that he will communicate his program for the next year to members during the Agriculture week on the 7th of December.