

Services actual situation of the negotiations

- There is no progress in the services negotiation since the Signaling conference that was held in July 2008. Meetings of the Council for Trade in Services were normally held after that date, yet these meetings didn't tackle any ways for pushing forward negotiations. Countries still relate their submission of new offers to the outcome achieved in the Agriculture and NAMA negotiations and to the extent these outcome meet their level of ambition.
- In general, the outcome of the conference was to some extent positive; as most of the developed countries have indicated their willingness to undertake commitments responding to developing countries' requests with respect to the temporary movement of natural persons, especially for the categories of independent professionals and contractual service suppliers (the US didn't signal more commitments with regard to the contractual service suppliers). However, the failure of the Ministerial Conference on agricultural and non-agricultural resulted in suspending the outcomes of the signaling conference, which aimed primarily at identifying the status of the service negotiations until reaching an agreement on the agricultural and non-agricultural modalities.
- Only 71 countries have submitted their initial offer and only 31 countries have submitted their revised offer. Furthermore, the level of liberalization offered by developed and developing countries was less than expected, both in terms of the extent of liberalization and the sectoral coverage. In the context of the Plurilateral negotiations, countries submitted to each others 21 Plurilateral requests for undertaking commitments in almost all service sectors and modes of supply.

Results of the meetings of senior officials

- During the last Senior officials meeting, the Chair presented the actual situation of the negotiations and mentioned that there was a good engagement, the discussions focused on the rule-making negotiations in services and the implementation of LDC modalities. On rule-making, namely, Domestic Regulation, Emergency Safeguard Measures, Subsidies and Government Procurement, there was a sense of good engagement among Senior Officials and Heads of Delegations. There was recognition that, as expected, Domestic Regulation is at a much more advanced stage than the other three subjects. In the Working Party, negotiations have been taking place on the basis of a revised draft text presented by the Chairperson. Of course, the text will be subject to subsequent revisions in the light of future progress. There are still, however, divergences that need to be resolved. On the other three areas, more intensive work is needed to clarify the way forward.
- On the implementation of LDC modalities, the discussions focused on a proposed text for a waiver allowing members, notwithstanding the MFN obligation, to extend preferential treatment to services and service suppliers of LDCs.