

## NINTH MEETING OF THE INB (18 – 28 MARCH 2024)

### WTO SECRETARIAT STATEMENT

1. The WTO Secretariat appreciates the opportunity to provide this statement and does so under its own responsibility and without prejudice to the positions of WTO Members.
  2. We are closely following the process, particularly regarding trade-related elements that also feature on the WTO's agenda.
  3. In our written statement following the joint INB-WGIHR plenary session held on 23 February, we provided an update on work at the WTO pursuant to the 2022 Ministerial Pandemic Declaration ([WT/L/1142](#)) [, as detailed in document ([WT/MIN\(24\)/8](#))]. We also noted the report by the TRIPS Council ([IP/C/100](#)) explaining that despite considerable efforts, consensus could not be reached on whether to extend the 2022 Ministerial TRIPS Decision ([WT/L/1141](#)) to COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics.
  4. In the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the 13<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference held in Abu Dhabi from 26 February to 2 March, Ministers welcomed efforts to bolster **global supply chain resilience**, and work being done in this regard at the WTO, especially on transparency ([WT/MIN\(24\)/DEC, para. 6](#)). Ministers also called for the continuation of discussions within the **WTO Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology**, including in collaboration with relevant international organizations ([WT/MIN\(24\)/DEC, para. 9](#)). The Ministerial Declaration encourages relevant WTO bodies to continue their work to **build effective solutions for future pandemics**. Ministers called upon the WTO Secretariat to continue its work on supporting an international pandemic response with data, analysis and technical cooperation, including through trilateral cooperation with the WHO and WIPO, and other relevant international organizations ([WT/MIN\(24\)/DEC, para. 22](#)). Additionally, Ministers endorsed a declaration on 'Strengthening **Regulatory Cooperation** to Reduce Technical Barriers to Trade', recognizing, among other things, the fundamental role of close regulatory cooperation in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and promoting the continuation of the work on transparency, regulatory cooperation and collaboration ([WT/MIN\(24\)/35](#)).
  5. As regards the revised draft negotiating text, recognizing the role of intellectual property rights for developing and distributing new medical technologies is important, as is the call for the implementation and use of TRIPS flexibilities to ensure a balanced system that contributes to the promotion of technological innovation and its transfer and dissemination in line with the objectives of the TRIPS Agreement. We also appreciate continued efforts to articulate the relationship between the Pandemic Agreement and other international instruments which will help foster coherence.
  6. The WTO Secretariat remains committed to supporting the INB's work on these and other trade-related matters reflected in the revised draft of the WHO Pandemic Agreement. Thank you.
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