

GENERAL COUNCIL

Informal Meeting held on 2 December 1998

Statement by Pakistan

Mr Chairman, I would like to express my delegation's high appreciation to the two wise men, Ambassadors Lafer and Rossier, for the painstaking task which they have undertaken in consulting such a large body of the membership of the WTO. I trust that by the end of the process such consultations will have incorporated the entire membership of the WTO. I understand from what has been stated that some elements are still missing and perhaps these elements are considered to be important pieces of the puzzle.

Mr Chairman, I have taken the floor following the statement of my colleague from Egypt to put down some markers as far as my delegations is concerned with regard to the substance and the process in which we are engaged. As regards the process, it is clear that the preference of all delegations, perhaps not only the majority but all delegations, is that we achieve a genuine consensus. But equally, the need for a consensus should not be a device to forestall the priorities and positions of the vast majority of the membership of the organization. The consensus should be dictated by the desires of the majority and not by the preoccupations of a minority.

Secondly, the process in which we are involved, the consultations being held by two distinguished Ambassadors, are designed as we see it to provide an indication of what the trends are within the membership of the organization in terms of the level of support and the possible level of opposition. In other words the consultations, or the results of the consultations being held by the two Ambassadors, amount to a refined straw poll. A straw poll is perhaps uni-dimensional, and their results will be multi-dimensional, but it is in our view an indication of where the trends are and what the levels and dimensions of support are for various candidates. It is on that basis that the General Council would be able to evolve further its final decision with regard to the selection of one of the four candidates. Now having said that about the process, I think it goes without saying and it is too evident to even make the point that we cannot change the rules, and if at the end of the day our process does not lead to the evolution of a consensus, that we will perforce be obliged to go back to the rules of procedure, however much we may regret doing so.

Mr Chairman this brings me to the substance of the selection. I would like to state here what we have stated to each one of the candidates. We believe that the new Director-General should be a Director-General who would reflect the interests of the entire Membership of the WTO. And if one analyses history, it is clear that what is required in this organization is a fuller reflection of the interests and priorities of the developing countries.

We have therefore been following with great interest the policy statements which the candidates have made and the positions which they have expressed, both here in the informal consultations as well as to the press. And I would like to underline that our concerns are that we should have a fair multilateral trading system which will reflect the interests of the developing countries both on the agenda and in the negotiations of the agenda, as well as on the substance. We

have therefore been concerned with certain statements on issues which fall completely outside the agenda of this organization, such as references to labour standards and environmental standards, which we believe will cause this organization to rupture from within, and therefore we want to underline this point at this stage in the presence of the two distinguished Ambassadors and the entire membership of the General Council.
