

Beat: Local

Trade can deliver more for Benin and all LDCs according to WTO

Visit of Director-General Roberto Azevedo

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USPA NEWS - Director-General Roberto Azevedo visited Cotonou, Benin, today (28 October) for meetings with senior government representatives to discuss how they can work together to ensure that the interests of least-developed countries (LDCs) remain central at the WTO.

During the visit, DG Azevedo met with Mr Abdoulaye Bio Tchane, Minister of State for Planning and Development, Mr Romuald Wadagni, Minister of Economy and Finance, Mr Hervé Hehomey, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Mr Lazare Séhouéto, Minister of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts, and Mr Delphin Oloronto Kouzandé, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. Director-General Roberto Azevedo visited Cotonou, Benin, today (28 October) for meetings with senior government representatives to discuss how they can work together to ensure that the interests of least-developed countries (LDCs) remain central at the WTO. The Director-General congratulated the government on its leadership as the coordinator of the LDC Group at the WTO this year.

-----THE DIRECTOR GENERAL SAID : "In recent decades trade has helped to lift one billion people out of poverty in developing countries. I want to ensure that trade delivers even more for Benin and all LDCs as WTO members seek to define the future direction of global trade negotiations. "Over the last few years the WTO has delivered important reforms to the global trading system. Now we must keep this momentum to deliver more outcomes that can help spread the benefits of trade for all players "" big and small. WTO members are currently discussing how to advance future negotiating work. This includes dealing with longstanding issues on our agenda, such as agriculture, services, market access for industrial goods, and further work dedicated to cotton and LDCs.

"In addition, some WTO members are discussing how to make trade more inclusive. For example, members seek understandings that help more SMEs to trade. SMEs account for the majority of firms in LDCs, yet their direct participation in trade is quite low. WTO members have also raised the question of how electronic commerce can reduce trade costs associated with physical distance. At present, only one in four people in Africa uses the internet "" and only one in seven people in LDCs. We must address this connectivity issue with funding, investment, and capacity-building support.

"We are still at the early stages of these discussions, but engagement and interest are high. We need to build on the progress made so far to deliver further reforms to the global trading system. Benin's voice will be as important as ever to set the path forward and ensure that the trading system continues to deliver for growth and development "" here and in all LDCs." [?]

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Source apo and World Trade Organization (WTO).

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