



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

"ENHANCING BETTER UNDERSTANDING ON FISHERIES SUBSIDIES AGREEMENT THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING - WTO ORGANISED REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON FISHERIES SUBSIDIES FOR ASIA REGION, 23 - 25 MAY 2023 IN KUALA LUMPUR"

1. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) Regional Workshop on Fisheries Subsidies for Asia Region was held in Kuala Lumpur from 23rd to 25th May 2023, organised by the WTO Secretariat, in cooperation with the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI). The Workshop was jointly officiated by Deputy Director-General of WTO, Ms. Angela Paolini Ellard, and Secretary-General of MITI, Datuk Seri Isham Ishak.
2. The key objective of the Workshop is to provide deeper comprehension of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies adopted during the Twelfth Ministerial Conference (MC12) held from 12th to 17th June 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Workshop also provided a platform for exchange of views and thoughts among participants on the two work streams under the WTO Negotiating Group on Rules on Fisheries Subsidies, notably the entry into force and implementation of the Agreement; and the second wave of negotiations on outstanding fisheries subsidies issues currently being negotiated in Geneva.

3. The Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies marks a historic achievement for the WTO as the first multilateral agreement that focus on environmental sustainability at its core, in curbing harmful subsidies and protecting global fish stocks. The Agreement sets out disciplines to prohibit harmful fisheries subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and in respect of overfished stocks. To safeguard the livelihood of small-scale and artisanal fishers, the Agreement also provides certain exemptions to fishers in developing and least-developed WTO member countries. Recognising the need to have a comprehensive agreement to protect and sustain global fish stocks, WTO member countries are currently negotiating additional provisions to be included in the Agreement, to outline disciplines to curb fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing.
4. The Deputy Director-General of WTO also took the opportunity to meet with the Secretary-General of MITI and the Secretary-General of Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (KPKM) respectively, to exchange views on matters related to the implementation of the Agreement. Both MITI and KPKM expressed Malaysia's aspiration to expeditiously ratify the Agreement and carry on intensive engagement with stakeholders to ensure responsible and sustainable fishing.
5. Participants of the Workshop comprising officials and experts from national fisheries authority responsible for fisheries management and policies from 15 WTO member countries had benefitted from the Workshop through extensive exchange of experiences and best practices, as well as enhanced knowledge and understanding of the Agreement. Ultimately, the knowledge gained from the Workshop will facilitate the expeditious ratification of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies by the WTO member countries in the

Asia Region, eventually reaping its full benefits to secure enough fish stocks for generations to come.

MINISTRY OF INVESTMENT, TRADE AND INDUSTRY (MITI)

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY (KPKM)

28 MAY 2023