



MEDIA RELEASE

WTO MC13: MALAYSIA REMAINS COMMITTED TO A MORE EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL TRADE NETWORK

Malaysia remains committed to a more equitable and sustainable global trade network, despite the missed opportunity for all members to achieve consensus on few major issues during the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Thirteenth Ministerial Conference (MC13) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Trade ministers, policymakers and trade experts from around the world gathered at the MC13 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) with the overarching objective of restoring confidence in the multilateral trading system and upholding WTO's credibility in addressing economic uncertainties, as well as to chart the path towards a more equitable and sustainable global economy.

The Malaysian delegation was led by the Minister of Investment, Trade, and Industry, YB Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, who submitted **Malaysia's Instrument of Acceptance (IoA) for the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (FSA)**, underscoring the country's **commitment to sustainable fishing practices on a global scale**. To date, 71 WTO Members have already accepted the FSA which emphasises on the

preservation of marine biodiversity and was adopted in June 2022 during the Twelfth Ministerial Conference (MC12) in Geneva, Switzerland.

In the realm of **Dispute Settlement Reform**, a priority issue for Malaysia and most of the members, the Ministers unanimously agreed to continue working together to address the critical issue of the appeal review mechanism by 2024. Another noteworthy milestone was when 124 WTO Members, including Malaysia, came together to unanimously adopt the **Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement**.

YB Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Minister of Investment, Trade, and Industry said, “These decisions demonstrate the unwavering commitment of Malaysia and fellow WTO Members to finding a resolution that is workable and acceptable to ensure a fair and effective, rules-based multilateral trading system that promotes transparency, fairness, and stability globally. The dispute settlement process, for example, is key to such aspirations within the WTO framework, and we see it as highly important in facilitating Malaysian exporters’ trade transactions globally.

“We also recognise the immense value of the IFD Agreement, which has the potential to create a stable and favourable investment environment by enhancing transparency in investment policies and streamlining administrative procedures. Coupled with Malaysia’s unique value proposition to investors and focused efforts on investment implementation, these will be crucial in not only attracting new investments, but also expanding existing ones in Malaysia,” continued Tengku Zafrul.

At MC13, the Ministers also agreed to uphold the existing practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions, and renewed the current moratorium on the application of Non-Violation and Situation Complaints (NVSC) to Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) until the Fourteenth Ministerial Conference (MC14) which is scheduled for 2026. Through its involvement in these meetings, MITI has ensured that these agreements will help foster a conducive environment for the growth of digital trade in Malaysia, as well as provide a degree of stability and predictability in the international trade system.

In summary, the MC13 has yielded significant outcomes that resonate with Malaysia's key priorities, including advancements in promoting inclusive and fair-trade practices, nurturing the growth of MSMEs, and addressing challenges associated with sustainable and responsible business practices. These outcomes will reinforce Malaysia's unwavering commitment to an open, fair and rules-based trading system, contributing to a more resilient, equitable, and environmentally conscious global trade framework.

MINISTRY OF INVESTMENT, TRADE AND INDUSTRY (MITI)

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About MITI

MITI is the key driver in making Malaysia the preferred destination for quality investments and enhancing the nation's rising status as a globally competitive trading nation. Its objectives and roles are oriented towards ensuring Malaysia's rapid economic development and help achieve the country's stated goal of becoming a developed nation.

About the World Trade Organization (WTO)

The WTO is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. Established in 1995, the WTO serves as a forum for negotiations, settle disputes, and establish a system of trade rules to ensure smooth and predictable trade flows. With 164 Members (excluding Comoros and Timor Leste who will be undertaking ratification procedures) representing over 98% of global trade and GDP, the WTO aims to promote open and predictable trade by reducing barriers such as tariffs and quotas through negotiated agreements. The WTO also provides mechanisms to resolve disputes, and prohibits discrimination between trading partners, with exceptions for important objectives like environmental protection and national security.

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