



# Geneva WATCH

An overview of the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral trade negotiations

Charles Akande, Editor

## Potential Ministerial Meeting in Atlanta

**The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) chief negotiators will meet in Atlanta, U.S. from September 25–30 to narrow their differences on the remaining issues before potentially calling trade ministers to wrap up the talks on October 1-2. Prior to the Atlanta gathering, Japan, Canada, Mexico and the U.S. will resume their discussions on autos on September 21–22.**

It is believed that the outcome of the automotive negotiations will play a substantial role in the decision to call back trade ministers in early October. This is the reason why TPP negotiators have refrained from making an official announcement concerning the Ministerial meeting so they can call it off if need be. In other words, this could be a “Guam-type” of meeting where chief negotiators and lead experts gather in Atlanta, but won’t call ministers to join until they are sure about the outcome.

The next ministerial gathering has been described as “do or die” for the TPP, as failing to agree on the package for the second time in a span of two months could send negative signals, which may put the negotiations on ice for some time.

Various observers said chief negotiators have thus far only focussed on autos, leaving the remaining outstanding issues, including dairy, rice, and biologics, to be dealt with at the upcoming meeting in Atlanta. They said dairy, in particular, doesn’t seem to have been tackled since the last ministerial meeting in Maui, where New Zealand voiced great concerns with respect to the access it was granted.

Observers thought a small group meeting involving Japan, the U.S., New Zealand and Canada – similar to the NAFTA + Japan small group gathering on autos – could have taken place on dairy to narrow existing differences, but it has not been the case. Key players in the dairy talks may already have an idea on how to resolve the issue, which they may present as a “take it or leave it” to New Zealand and be betting on their

chances that the kiwis will, in the end, elect to sign the agreement, choosing to be part of the TPP rather than staying out of it – even if the volume they are offered on dairy falls far below what they anticipated.

### Azevêdo Outlines Potential Deliverables for Nairobi

World Trade Organization Director General, Roberto Azevêdo, convened a meeting of all WTO Members in Geneva on September 17 to report on the current state of play in the remaining issues of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). He said the significant difficulties he detected while consulting with Members during the first semester are still evident.

“Returning to Geneva after consulting with capitals over the summer, it seems to me that we have not yet found solutions which can bridge the gaps in the most problematic areas. For many months, we have been focusing on the most challenging areas of the negotiations in an effort to find possible solutions, even though the chance of finding such solutions appears to be diminishing,” Azevêdo said.

“While continuing those efforts, I think it is time for us to start working more intensely on the more promising issues which may be potential deliverables for the Nairobi Ministerial Conference (MC10),” he added.

However, Azevêdo also claimed that he sensed that Members are getting closer to “a set of deliverables” that could potentially be agreed upon in Nairobi making the upcoming Ministerial Conference a success and help move the DDA forward.

The common view is to place development and least-developed countries (LDCs) issues at the centre of the MC10 deliverables. In addition, outcomes on export competition in the agriculture negotiations as well as various provisions to improve transparency in several issues currently under negotiation, could round up the Nairobi package, according to officials.

“We all want to make it [Nairobi] a meaningful Ministerial Conference which delivers substantive support for growth and development,” Azevêdo told the full Membership

urging them to decide now on the shape and scope of the outcome they want to achieve at MC10.

“Time is short. It is essential that we have an answer to this question within the next month. Once we have a clear picture of what the Nairobi outcomes might look like, then we can work hard to deliver them.”

The DDA negotiating groups will intensify their meetings in the coming weeks which will be run in parallel with the

Director General’s own consultations. Azevêdo will look for support for the Nairobi agenda when he visits Washington D.C. this week to hold bilateral meetings at the U.S. Congress and with senior government representatives. He will also be interacting with ministers at forthcoming meetings of the G-20, the African Union, the African, Caribbean, Pacific Group of States, and of the Arab Trade Ministers.

**Geneva Watch is published by Dairy Farmers of Canada, Chicken Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Canada, Turkey Farmers of Canada and Canadian Hatching Egg Producers to report on the various events occurring in Geneva, particularly on the WTO negotiations on agriculture.**

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Legal Deposit: National Library of Canada, ISSN 1496-9254

