

# Geneva WATCH

Charles Akande, Editor

An overview of the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral trade negotiations

## Resuming Agriculture Talks in Geneva

**Agriculture negotiations chair, New Zealand's ambassador to the WTO, Vangelis Vitalis, has quietly started consulting Members on how to resume the agriculture talks and which topics to prioritize in the coming months. Delegates said the chair has been testing ideas on how to tackle the remainder of the Doha Agenda.**

“Ambassador Vitalis has already met with 50 or so Members since the beginning of the year,” one delegate claimed, adding that the chair plans to continue meeting various coalitions and key Member-states ahead of the March 8<sup>th</sup> informal open-ended meeting of the full Membership. At that time, he plans to report on his consultations and discuss the way forward from here.

Members have been given a mandate to take on the issues of cotton, special safeguard mechanism (SSM), and negotiate toward establishing a permanent solution for public stockholding for food security this year.

But in parallel to these matters, the agriculture negotiation chairman has also been mandated to

pursue talks on the remainder of the agriculture negotiation topics, including domestic support and market access.

In order to satisfy all Members, informed sources say Vitalis is planning to pair the SSM discussion with the broader negotiation on market access and will tackle the food security issue in parallel with domestic support.

The March 8<sup>th</sup> agriculture meeting is expected to test delegates on what their expectations are for this year. If Members continue to behave like they did during the February 10<sup>th</sup> heads of delegation meeting – where none of them opposed the Nairobi outcome and most expressed pragmatic views on the way forward – the meeting could help advance the WTO agenda this year, one source said.

But before then, the full Membership will gather again this week for the first General Council meeting of 2016 where observers expect more reactions from delegations than during the previous heads of delegation meeting.

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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