

Geneva WATCH

An overview of the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral trade negotiations

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Azevêdo Picks a New U.S. Deputy Director General for his Second Term

For his second term as Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), starting this September, Roberto Azevêdo decided to retain all his Deputy Director-Generals (DDG) but one – David Shark from the United States. Azevêdo decided to replace Shark with another American: Alan Wolff who led the U.S. negotiating team during the Tokyo Round negotiations. The three other DDGs are China’s Yi Xiaozhun, Germany’s Karl Brauner and Nigeria’s Yonov Frederic Agha.

“Alan Wolff will be an excellent addition to the leadership team at the WTO. He is a very experienced, well-known and well-regarded trade lawyer, respected around the world and by the trade community in the U.S. He is a strong supporter of trade as a key driver of growth and development and a strong supporter of the multilateral trading system,” Azevêdo said about his pick, adding that he was looking forward to working with Alan Wolff “at this important moment for global trade.”

Trade observers believe the selection of Alan Wolff is purely strategic, as the latter enjoys close relationships with the new U.S. Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer. The two both worked for steel companies during the 1990’s.

The new USTR also released a statement congratulating Alan Wolff on his selection. “Alan is one of the leading experts on international trade, spending his distinguished career in and out of government shaping U.S. trade policy,” Lighthizer said.

“I’ve had the privilege of knowing and working with Alan for many years, and I have no doubt that he will ably serve the WTO. I look forward to working with him to improve the WTO and to promote truly free and fair trade around the globe,” the USTR added.

Azevêdo who has met with Lighthizer twice this year, is looking to get the U.S.’s support in making the upcoming WTO’s 11th Ministerial Conference (MC11) in Buenos Aires a success.

At a hearing held last week on the Trump administration’s trade policy priorities, Lighthizer said the U.S. will indeed pursue a successful Ministerial Conference this December, one that would help reinvigorate the WTO. However, the USTR added that he does not “advocate a meeting that seeks major deliverables or significant negotiated outcomes.”

WTO Members are looking to reach a deal on a certain number of issues including a cut in trade-distorting support as well public stockholding for food security purposes and the special safeguard mechanism for developing countries.

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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