



WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE 13 – 1st March 2024 – ROUND UP

All-night talks failed to reach a breakthrough¹

Here's a short overview of the status of negotiations on important issues² -

- **Agriculture:** India is leading reform efforts in seeking a 'permanent solution in the form of binding rules' for public stockholding (PSH). Two draft solutions were pitched, but **no agreement could be reached**.³
- **E-Commerce:** Despite facing opposition from several developing countries, **the moratorium on e-commerce tariffs has been successfully extended** for a period of two years.⁴
- **Fisheries:** The negotiations are focused on curbing government subsidies for industrial fishing. The US Trade Representative noted that fisheries could be the only area where there is potential for agreement, but **no consensus could be reached by the end of Friday**.⁵
- **Dispute Settlement:** **Countries have committed to continue negotiations in 2024** to resolve the crisis in the dispute settlement system.⁶

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<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/wto-mc13-talks-may-get-delayed-one-more-day-amid-logjam-on-key-issues/articleshow/108135757.cms?from=mdr>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/whats-state-play-wto-negotiations-abu-dhabi-2024-03-01/>

³ <https://insidetrade.com/daily-news/no-deals-fish-agriculture-mc13-e-commerce-moratorium-extended>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶

https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?file_name=q:/WT/MIN24/W22.pdf&Open=True

The US Trade Representative attributes the failure of talks to fragmentation among the BRICS countries

- US Trade Representative Katherine Tai reportedly said to Reuters – “If some or all of the talks aimed at fixing global commerce rules do collapse, fragmentation among the BRICS bloc of emerging economies will have contributed.”⁷
- She further cited division amongst developing countries and complex intra-BRICS dynamics for breakdowns of talks. On the possibility of the E-commerce moratorium being extended, Tai noted, “only if agriculture is unlocked.”⁸

China-led Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement might not make it to the Final Outcome Document⁹

- India blocked the inclusion of the IFD Agreement as Annex 4 to the Marrakesh Agreement, citing a lack of general consensus, a preliminary requirement under Article X.9.¹⁰
- In view of this, 117 IFD signatories have released a Draft Ministerial Decision seeking addition of the Agreement to Annex 4 of the WTO Agreement.¹¹

⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-trade-chief-complex-trade-offs-needed-wto-talks-2024-02-29/>

⁸ Ibid

⁹ https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/india-blocks-china-s-ifd-in-wto-unlikely-to-feature-in-final-outcome-124022801267_1.html

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https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?file_name=q:/WT/MIN24/24.pdf&Open=True

¹¹

https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?file_name=q:/WT/MIN24/W25.pdf&Open=True

Reports suggest that Draft Fisheries Agreement Text contains forced labour provisions

- The text includes the U.S. proposal that would require members to report annually “any vessels and operators for which the Member has information that reasonably indicates the use of forced labour.”¹²
- The inclusion of this provision was initially opposed by both China and India.¹³

Thailand replaces WTO Ambassador amidst India’s diplomatic protest

- This move comes amidst India expressing disappointment and registering a formal complaint against Pitfield's comments on New Delhi’s rice procurement program.¹⁴

We hope you have found this information useful. For any queries/clarifications please write to us at insights@elp-in.com or write to our authors:

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¹² <https://insidetrade.com/daily-news/new-mc13-fisheries-text-narrows-gaps-includes-forced-labor>

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/thailand-replaces-its-ambassador-to-wto-following-strong-protest-by-india-on-her-remarks/article67903193.ece>