Council for Trade in Services

REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 JUNE 2026*

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT[1]

The Council for Trade in Services held a meeting on 4 June 2026, opened by Ambassador Subedi of Nepal, and chaired by Ambassador Audrey GOOSEN of the Netherlands.

The agenda was contained in document WTO/AIR/CTS/47.

The agenda was adopted.

The Chairperson reminded delegations attending in virtual mode that they should allow a few seconds of streaming before starting their intervention, in order to ensure that their statement was heard in full. Additionally, for the benefit of the interpreters, he urged them to speak at a reasonable, moderate pace and, if possible, to provide to the interpreters, via the Secretariat, an advance copy of any written statements they intended to deliver. That would help to ensure that interventions were properly conveyed and understood when translated into the other two official languages.

He drew Members' attention to the fact that the use of e-Agenda had been formally approved. Consequently, it was essential that delegations kept their list of contacts updated. He explained that delegations could check who had access to the e-Agenda platform by looking under the "Account Settings" tab and then under "Delegation Settings". He noted that the platform did not allow delegations to make any changes themselves and stated that if any modifications needed to be introduced, Members should contact the Secretariat who would amend, add or delete the profile as per instructions.

1 ELECTION OF THE NEW CHAIRPERSON

1.1. The Chairperson, Ambassador Subedi of Nepal, said that, based on the consensus reached in the General Council, he was glad to pass on the Chairmanship of the Council for Trade in Services to Ambassador Audrey Goosen of the Netherlands. He was confident that, with her vast experience, energy and wisdom, Ambassador Goosen would guide the future work of the Council capably and efficiently.

1.2. As the outgoing Chairperson, he had really enjoyed working with Members during the previous year. He had tried his best to advance the Council's work, particularly on the MC13 mandates, and had truly appreciated Members' cooperative and constructive spirit. He was very grateful for delegations' readiness to engage with him and with each other, and he could only applaud them for their efforts. He also thanked the Secretariat for the steadfast support and tireless work.

1.3. He then proposed that the Council elect Ambassador Goosen of the Netherlands by acclamation as its new Chairperson.

1.4. It was so agreed.

* This document has been republished in English only to make typographical corrections in pages 4 and 5.

[1] This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

1.5. The new Chairperson, Ambassador Goosen, thanked Ambassador Subedi for his kind words and confidence. She commended him for his leadership, effort and guidance. She also thanked the Members for their trust and support.

1.6. Under this agenda item, or when intervening later during the meeting, delegations expressed their gratitude to Ambassador Subedi for his service in chairing the Council, and also welcomed Ambassador Goosen as the new Chairperson.

2 NOTIFICATIONS PURSUANT TO ARTICLES III:3 AND V:7 OF THE GATS

2.1. With regard to notifications pursuant to Article III:3 (Transparency), the Chairperson drew the Council's attention to the communications received from Ukraine (S/C/N/1203); the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu documents (S/C/N/1206 to S/C/N/1208); Mauritius (S/C/N/1210); and the European Union (S/C/N/1211).

2.2. The representative of Ukraine indicated that transparency remained one of the fundamental obligations of WTO Members under the GATS framework. In that regard, Ukraine was pleased to present notification S/C/N/1203 pursuant to Article III:3 of the GATS. That notification concerned the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1720 of 24 December 2025, which had introduced amendments to the licensing conditions for the conduct of economic activity related to the production of medicines, wholesale and retail trade of medicines, and import of medicines, except for active pharmaceutical ingredients.

2.3. That measure aimed to align Ukraine's licensing framework with its current legislation in the fields of education, professions, and professional qualifications, including updated educational standards, professional standards in pharmacy, and requirements for continuous professional development of healthcare personnel. Those amendments primarily concerned qualification and professional requirements for personnel engaged in pharmaceutical activities, operation of quality assurance systems, and dispensing conditions for medicines.

2.4. The changes that had been introduced were horizontal, non-discriminatory in nature and applied equally to all market participants regardless of ownership structure, organisational form, or origin of capital. The objective of the measure was not to create unnecessary barriers to trade in services or restrict market access. On the contrary, the resolution had been designed to ensure transparent, predictable, and uniform regulatory requirements while enhancing the quality and safety of pharmaceutical services and ensuring compliance with good pharmaceutical practices.

2.5. In the context of the ongoing full-scale armed aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, maintaining a stable and properly functioning pharmaceutical sector had become critically important for Ukraine. Ensuring adequate qualification of pharmaceutical personnel, functioning quality systems, and uninterrupted access to medicines was directly linked to public health resilience and national security. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Ukraine's healthcare and pharmaceutical infrastructure had been systematically targeted by Russia.

2.6. By the end of 2025, more than 2,700 attacks by Russia on Ukraine's healthcare system had been recorded; pharmaceutical infrastructure and supply chains had increasingly become direct targets of indiscriminate bombardments. According to the State Service of Ukraine on Medicines and Drugs Control, approximately 1,000 pharmacies and pharmaceutical facilities had been damaged or destroyed; major Ukrainian pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors had reported substantial damage to production facilities, warehouses, logistics infrastructure, and technological processes due to missiles and drone strikes.

2.7. In particular, severe damage had been inflicted on Ukraine's pharmaceutical distribution system; in October 2025, the central warehouse of the Optima-Pharm Company in Kyiv, which contained approximately 20% of Ukraine's monthly medical reserves, had been completely destroyed by a Russian missile attack. Additional strikes had later targeted the company's logistics hubs in Kyiv and Dnipro. Similar attacks had destroyed major logistical facilities of the BaDM company, another leading pharmaceutical distributor. Together, those companies supplied around 85% of pharmacies across Ukraine.

2.8. According to the latest World Bank rapid damage and needs assessment, total damage to Ukraine's health sector had been estimated at US$ 1.8 billion, while total recovery and reconstruction needs for 2026-2035 amounted to approximately US$ 23.6 billion. The war had severely disrupted healthcare delivery, pharmaceutical supply chains, and access to medicines, particularly in frontline regions.

2.9. Despite those unprecedented challenges, Ukraine had continued to fulfil its WTO transparency obligations and remained committed to a predictable, rules-based and non-discriminatory trading system. The submission of that notification reflected Ukraine's continued dedication to multilateral disciplines and responsible regulatory governance, even under severe conditions of war.

2.10. Ukraine highly valued the support of its partners in countering Russia's aggression and remained committed to further strengthening cooperation to ensure resilience, transparency, and continuity in service trade, including in the pharmaceutical sector.

2.11. The Chairperson suggested that the Council take note of the notifications and the statement made.

2.12. It was so agreed.

2.13. With regard to notifications pursuant to Article V:7 (Economic Integration), the Chairperson drew the Council's attention to the communications received from India, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (S/C/N/1209); and Canada and the European Union (S/C/N/896/Add.1).

2.14. She suggested that the Council take note of the notifications made and that the agreements notified be referred to the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements for consideration.

2.15. It was so agreed.

2.16. The Chairperson drew Members' attention to the fact that the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements, at its meeting scheduled for 25 June, would be considering three agreements covering services trade, namely the accession of the United Kingdom to the CPTPP; the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Ukraine; and the Türkiye-United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

2.17. Finally, turning to the notification made pursuant to Article VII:4 (Recognition), the Chairperson drew Members' attention to the communication received from Switzerland and the United Kingdom (S/C/N/1205). She suggested that the Council take note of the notification.

2.18. It was so agreed.

3 FOLLOW-UP TO OUTCOMES OF MINISTERIAL CONFERENCES

3.1. The Chairperson recalled that, at the February meeting, Members had continued to express their appreciation for the thematic session on the green services economy and sustainable development held in December 2025 and had shared further views on what had been discussed and what possible follow-up work might be undertaken. Various delegations had also noted the usefulness of the two other thematic sessions the Council had held the previous year, on good regulatory practices and on the recognition of professional qualifications. They had underscored the importance of continuing to reinvigorate the Council's work on Trade in Services.

3.2. The representative of Pakistan recalled the thematic session held on the recognition of professional qualifications, which had been useful and timely. In his delegation's view, that was an important area for the Council to continue engaging in, particularly in the context of reinvigorating the work on trade in services as guided by Ministers.

3.3. For many developing countries, including Pakistan, professional services represented an important area of export interest. However, lack of recognition of qualifications and licensing requirements often remained a practical barrier for professionals seeking to provide services across borders.

3.4. Further discussion in the Council could help Members better understand existing approaches, challenges, and possible ways to improve transparency and cooperation with regard to recognition. Pakistan, as one of the co-sponsors of JOB/SERV/CTS/46 and RD/SERV/CTS/8, had requested that that issue be taken up separately, underlining that the recognition of professional qualification should remain part of the Council's follow-up work. His delegation looked forward to working with interested Members on that theme in a constructive and practical manner.

3.5. The representative of the Philippines supported continuing the Council's follow-up work, particularly after MC14, in a practical and structured manner, recognising the Yaoundé impasse on the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce and on the multilateral moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions.

3.6. He indicated that, at the same time, Members should also recognise positive developments around MC14, including the interim arrangements relating to the WTO Agreement on Electronic Commerce, as well as the Trade in Services for Development Ministerial side event, which had underlined the importance of services trade in development, diversification, digital transformation, and inclusive growth.

3.7. For the Philippines, the lapse of the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce should not mean that Members stopped engaging on the services dimensions of digital trade. With regard to the moratorium, he observed that Members continued to maintain the practice of not-imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions. In that context, the Council had an important role to play in filling part of the institutional space left by the impasse.

3.8. He underscored that services were increasingly the engine room of digital trade. They powered the platforms, networks, payments, logistics, professional inputs, creative content, and business processes through which digital trade took place. For the Philippines, that meant that digital trade issues were, at their core, services trade issues. They concerned the ability to supply services across borders, use digital networks and payment systems, deliver professional and business services remotely, and ensure that MSMEs and developing country suppliers could participate meaningfully in digital markets. His delegation therefore saw merit in focused thematic discussions on the services sectors that enabled digital trade, digital trade across different modes of supply and key enabling sectors. He suggested that the topic of Artificial Intelligence and services trade be given priority as a possible thematic session.

3.9. The Philippines was also cognisant that this year's Public Forum was focused on services, and hoped that the Council would meet after the Forum. He suggested that, similarly to what previous Chairs had done, the Chairperson conduct consultations with Members, which could be anchored on initial written inputs by Members. His delegation had found that process to be helpful, and it had assisted to identify areas of shared interest among the Membership.

3.10. With regard to the Council's recent thematic sessions, he wished to offer some concrete ideas for follow-up.

3.11. On green services, the Philippines saw value in organising deliberations around practical enabling conditions, noting, for example, the ongoing classification and scheduling work under the CSC, but also saw benefits in further exchanges on transparency of existing commitments and regulatory requirements, licensing and permitting processes, technical standards and the mobility and recognition of specialised professionals in green sectors.

3.12. On good regulatory practices, as previously indicated, his delegation saw value in bringing that strand of work more deliberately under the Working Party on Domestic Regulation, including by having the WPDR engage on a known product, the Handbook on Good Regulatory Practices and the self-assessment questionnaire that had been produced.

3.13. The Philippines saw those as practical tools to support Members' peer learning. It also hoped to further engage on regular updates and briefings on the trade in services for development initiative within the Council.

3.14. The representative of Barbados, speaking on behalf of the ACP Group, wished to take up some of the elements that Philippines had outlined in its proposal as it related to how Members could possibly move forward some of the elements under the Work Programme on e-Commerce, given that it had lapsed. The Group agreed that the CTS was the appropriate forum in which Members could have a targeted discussion on some of the elements related to services trade and digitally traded services. She indicated that the Group would welcome such a conversation going forward.

3.15. Speaking in her national capacity, she wished to associate herself with the intervention of Pakistan, and agreed that the issue of recognition of qualifications and qualified persons could be subject to further discussion going forward. She noted that this issue was of interest to Barbados, and that her delegation would welcome such a conversation.

3.16. As it related to the proposal of the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Barbados on green services and the contribution to sustainable development, Barbados had been pleased to participate in the session held on 2 June in the Committee on Trade and Environment. The session had considered pathways to promoting and facilitating trade in environmental goods and services, and had allowed delegations to have a conversation on environmental services and trade facilitation, bringing together Members as well as academia and business representatives.

3.17. The representative of India recalled that this item had been included on the CTS agenda with a view to implementing the mandate delegates had received from the Ministers to reinvigorate work on trade in services. In an effort in that direction, a CTS thematic session had been held on the recognition of professional qualifications in October 2025, where experts on that subject had been heard.

3.18. Following useful ideas that had emerged from that session, some Members had circulated document JOB/SERV/CTS/46, putting down on paper proposals for facilitating recognition through the effective operationalization of GATS Article VII. India had been engaging on this agenda item and looked forward to constructive engagement with a view to achieving meaningful outcomes as a follow-up to the Ministerial mandate.

3.19. The representative of Malawi, speaking on behalf of the LDC Group, indicated that the LDC Group considered it vital to continue invigorating the Council's work on trade in services, mostly by advancing mandates and initiatives stemming from previous Ministerial Conferences. As the Group had indicated in previous CTS meetings, that work should include LDC-specific outcomes. She added that services provided a significant opportunity for LDCs to integrate into global markets, support inclusive growth, and address emerging challenges and opportunities in international trade.

3.20. The representative of Nepal echoed the intervention made by Malawi on behalf of the LDC Group.

3.21. The representative of Cambodia echoed with the statement delivered by the LDC Group. He underscored the importance of continuing the reinvigoration of the work of the Council by advancing mandates and outcomes from previous Ministerial Conferences, including those relevant to the LDCs.

3.22. Cambodia firmly believed that sustained engagement on LDC-specific outcomes, including the operationalization of the LDC services Waiver, an initiative aimed at enhancing the participation of LDCs in services trade, remained essential. Continued work in that area could help to ensure that Ministerial Decisions delivered meaningful and tangible benefits for LDC Members.

3.23. Cambodia supported maintaining those issues on the Council Agenda and encouraged Members to continue engaging constructively in advancing the outstanding mandate and commitments agreed at the previous Ministerial Conference.

3.24. The representative of the United Kingdom agreed on the need to reinvigorate work at the CTS and to build on the mandate from MC13. He had taken note of the interest in the environmental services thematic seminar expressed by Members and possible areas for further consideration. He echoed Barbados' intervention, as his delegation had also been pleased to have engaged in a productive discussion on trade in environmental services at the Committee on Trade and Environment on 2 June. He also echoed the interest in the trade in services for development initiative that other delegations had expressed.

3.25. The representative of China shared other Members' observation that even though MC14 had experienced an impasse, it had produced some pragmatic outcomes, particularly regarding the package and the document, on which there had been near consensus, including on the issue of WTO reform. More importantly, the overwhelming majority of Members had engaged in communication and consultations to build consensus in the spirit of multilateral cooperation, and had shown the value and resilience of the multilateral trading system. At the same time, MC14 had also shown that, amid the profound adjustment of the current global economic and trade landscape, it was necessary to update and improve the operating mechanisms and rules of the WTO through reform.

3.26. China believed that MC14 might become an important milestone for the multilateral trading system, prompting Members to recognise the need to advance the WTO work in a flexible and innovative manner.

3.27. Specifically, China supported reinvigorating the work of the CTS and encouraged Members to conduct in-depth discussions on trade in services and on digital trade. On the services aspects, the representative echoed previous delegations that had mentioned specific items such as recognition of qualifications and green services, among others. China also believed that previous MC mandates could still provide guidance for the Council's work going forward. China suggested taking stock of the previous MC mandate to examine what was still relevant and what was unfinished so Members could have the necessary working basis to decide on next steps.

3.28. On digital trade, China echoed the ACP Group's statement, noting that the CTS could take the responsibility from the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce, if, under that work did not continue under the General Council framework.

3.29. China supported engaging in further work in a flexible and innovative manner.

3.30. The representative of New Zealand indicated that her delegation had found the thematic sessions to be of immense value, both for the rich technical discussion and the wide range of views and experiences that they had brought, as well as for their role in continuing to reinvigorate the Council's work.

3.31. New Zealand was especially pleased of having participated in the thematic session from December led by Barbados, South Africa, and the United Kingdom on the green services economy and sustainable development. Her delegation looked forward to continuing those discussions through further evidence-based thematic sessions in 2026 and stood ready to contribute.

3.32. The representative of Switzerland appreciated the work done in the Council to date. Particularly, it noted the considerable interest that the thematic session on the green services economy had generated, with the participation of numerous Members at all levels of development. That had shown the importance that several Members attached to trade in environmental services, but also the potential that resided in those services to promote sustainable development.

3.33. Switzerland reiterated its commitment to the green economy and the continuation of work and discussions on that topic. Finally, Switzerland took note of the different interventions regarding e-commerce, and it would take them into consideration in its internal reflections on how best to continue work in that area at the WTO.

3.34. The representative of Canada thanked all participants in the thematic sessions, which in Canada's view had consistently provided useful insights to the Council. Canada had a particular interest in the green services economy, considered further developments and work in that area worthwhile, and looked forward to engaging in possible future work on that topic, specifically on how to make services greener.

3.35. Canada agreed with other delegations that it remained critical to maintain momentum in the Council by building on insights from the thematic sessions and to ensure continuity in that work. It supported further discussions that would deepen engagement on emerging issues relevant to the Council. In that context, it echoed the comments by the Philippines and others in underscoring that services related to e-commerce remained relevant to the Council, despite the lapse of the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce, given their growing importance for trade innovation and participation in the digital economy.

3.36. Canada was also reflecting on how to bring issues of particular relevance to the Council, notably on services export competitiveness, to help ensure that discussions remained forward-looking and responsive to evolving trade dynamics.

3.37. The Chairperson thanked all delegations for their ideas and interest. She looked forward to working with Members and encouraged them to engage with each other and to see how the CTS work could be taken further. She indicated her willingness to hold informal consultations in that regard.

3.38. She suggested that the Council take note of the statements made and revert to this item at its next meeting.

3.39. It was so agreed.

4 OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE LDC SERVICES WAIVER

4.1. The Chairperson recalled that, at the previous meeting, a number of delegations had reported on their efforts to gather information on LDC services exports and how LDC services suppliers had been interacting with consumers in Members who had notified preferences under the Waiver. Based on the respective surveys carried out domestically, one delegation had shared detailed findings on the implementation of the Waiver, while a couple of others had summarised key elements that had been identified by respondents, while also noting that they had received limited replies.

4.2. The representative of Malawi, speaking on behalf of the LDC Group, appreciated and welcomed Members' efforts in deploying the questionnaire and other tools to help gather more evidence, which helped to review and promote the operationalization of the Waiver by reviewing information on LDC service suppliers and consumers of LDC services in preference-providing Members' markets.

4.3. The results from the survey so far were highly useful to the LDC Group. The reports that had been provided in the last two meetings of the CTS had demonstrated that LDC service suppliers were actively doing business with consumers in Members providing preferences under the Waiver, as well as in other configurations. She recalled that, at the meeting in December 2025, the United Kingdom had kicked off with important news that out of 251 UK-based businesses, 26 had been found to be importing services from LDCs. The Group looked forward to more details from the United Kingdom on services sectors and countries, specifically the LDC countries which were supplying those services.

4.4. She also recalled that, from Japan, Members had heard that 15 companies out of 100 had responded to the questionnaire, having provided useful information about the logistics, manufacturing, and consulting services sectors that had been covered. Those results had indicated that LDC companies had been active in the logistics, finance, tourism, and travel-related services sectors.

4.5. Reports from Members up to that point had also included what the Group wanted to know about the need for more awareness building about the Waiver. It was comforting to know that some respondents had been aware of the Waiver and that those consumers who had been doing business with LDC suppliers had done so regardless of the Waiver, based instead on services quality and cost optimisation, as it had been reported by Japan. The information on other tools, services, data, and assistance initiatives developed, as well as the suggestions on elements that could improve upon the Waiver itself, had also been very useful.

4.6. The representative also referred to and recognised the consultations the Group recently had had with some Members. She then delivered a short presentation on the findings that had emerged up to that point from the responses to the survey from LDC suppliers, highlighting that it was an ongoing process that was still being undertaken within the Group.

4.7. Twelve responses had been gathered from LDC Members, specifically Bangladesh, Cambodia, Guinea and The Gambia, where suppliers had completed the questionnaire on the supply side. All respondents were selling services to consumers abroad, mostly falling under due diligence, business intelligence and consultancy services, and all were supplied remotely across borders through mode 1.

4.8. In terms of which economies LDCs had been exporting services to, it had been noted that the top three destinations were Singapore, followed by Japan and the United States. On how the customers had been found, the service suppliers had indicated that most customers had been found from business contacts and diaspora contacts.

4.9. Regarding whether suppliers wanted to increase or diversify the services they were supplying, all responses obtained were in the affirmative. Concerning the challenges faced by service suppliers in export markets, respondents had indicated that, regulatory and compliance burdens, market access or protectionist measures, visa or work permit barriers, were the top three difficulties they encountered.

4.10. On the question about success factors, IT software had been a huge contributor since it underpinned mode 1 trade. In addition, cost advantages, export strategies and knowledge of those export strategies had also been identified as some of the key factors which had led to the success of LDC service suppliers.

4.11. Concerning the awareness of the Waiver, responses had shown that there was no awareness by LDC service suppliers. On the question of whether the Waiver notifications had influenced LDC suppliers' export strategies, the answer had been negative.

4.12. With regard to other domestic improvements that would help facilitate LDC service exports, no further answers had been provided. As for the export sectors that were of interest to most LDC service suppliers, accounting, auditing and bookkeeping, travel and agency or tourist operator services, data processing, and tabulation services had been the sectors most frequently mentioned. In terms of suggestions about how Members could improve LDC service suppliers' access to export markets of interest, respondents had mentioned increased awareness of the Waiver, simplified or reduced compliance costs, information on market opportunities, and promotion of LDC services, among others.

4.13. Relating to the sort of information that would have been helpful to identify service export opportunities, the majority of respondents mentioned information from preference providers on opportunities in the markets that could benefit LDC service suppliers, followed by information on market demand, on potential market openness and business networks.

4.14. In conclusion, the key challenges identified by LDC respondents had been regulatory compliance burdens, market access restrictions, visa barriers, and lack of awareness of the Waiver. Their most relevant recommendations had been increasing Waiver awareness, capacity building, simplified compliance, and improved market access.

4.15. As a way forward, the LDC Group would present its assessment in a written communication for circulation before the next CTS meeting in October. It also indicated that it intended for that October meeting to be the deadline for receiving presentations from Members, since the exercise had been launched in 2025. She encouraged Members to continue bringing their reports and sharing information in the Council, indicating that it would be useful if delegations would circulate their reports with the information they had gathered so far, including on the services supplied, so as to help the Group in the preparation of its assessment.

4.16. The representative of Bangladesh aligned with the LDC Group statement delivered by Malawi. He thanked the reporting Members for their information and presentations on the issue, which had demonstrated that LDC services suppliers were actively doing business with consumers in the Members who had provided preferences under the Waiver.

4.17. In addition to the LDC Group presentation, Bangladesh delivered additional information, gathered from the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Bangladesh, which was one of the apex business bodies in the Dhaka metropolitan area. In response to the question on how services were delivered, the respondents had answered that services were delivered remotely across borders, which meant mode 1 supply.

4.18. In terms of destination markets, services exports were destined for Hong Kong, China; Singapore and the United Kingdom, whereas the preferred sectors of export interest corresponded to travelling agencies and tour operators' services, consultancy, survey services, translation and interpretation services, consulting services on agriculture and management consulting services, among others. The challenges found consisted of export markets of interest being too competitive and price sensitive.

4.19. He noted that, from the suppliers' perspective, useful support would include information from preference providers on market access opportunities that could benefit the LDC service suppliers, as well as information on market demand, preferential market openness, and business networks.

4.20. As mentioned by the LDC Group, the main challenges Bangladesh had also identified from its suppliers' responses consisted of regulatory and compliance burdens, market access restrictions, visa and work permit barriers, and a persistent lack of information and awareness of the LDC services Waiver.

4.21. He concluded that a lot of issues needed to unfold and resolve on the operationalization of the LDC service Waiver which had been granted since 2011. Bangladesh was ready to engage further with Members to fully operationalize the Waiver.

4.22. The representative of Australia indicated that his delegation had had finished circulating questionnaires and wished to present the findings that had emerged in the spirit of progressing with the review overall and advancing the discussion on what could facilitate services trade and development.

4.23. Australia had circulated the surveys to its peak industry bodies, but it had been aware of the likelihood that survey responses could be sparse. So, in addition to the surveys, Australia had also reached out to its relevant Embassies operating in LDC partner countries and markets to investigate if services trade had been taking place between Australia and their respective partner economies.

4.24. While the number of survey responders had been limited, survey responses and inputs from Australia's embassy network combined had provided a useful qualitative insight into barriers and enablers of services trade. He wished to share Australia's analysis and conclusions from those efforts.

4.25. In terms of methodology, Australia had used tools developed by LDCs to design industry-specific surveys across the key services sector where Australia provided preferential treatment under the Waiver, including in tourism and travel services, maritime, air transport, ICT, architecture, transport, technical testing and analysis, and manufacturing services. To encourage participation and to support the understanding of the respondents, each survey had also included the context of the survey, as well as examples of four modes of supply specific to each industry. For example, on a survey for architectural services providers, Australia had explained that architectural services covered urban planning, including designing and organising land use in cities and towns, zoning and transporting.

4.26. The survey had been circulated to peak bodies and government agencies to share with their members and stakeholders so as to cover as many industry representatives as possible. However, Australia had received a limited number of responses, consistent with the experience of other Members who had been presented with the known challenges of collecting services trade data through surveys, compounded by the challenges of engaging on LDC services trade.

4.27. Given the low response rates, Australia had supplemented survey data with targeted input from its Embassies to identify real-world examples and case studies of services trade with those markets, particularly in the Pacific, Southeast Asia and Africa.

4.28. The first finding to emerge was that services trade was driven by commercial demand rather than preferential treatment. Survey respondents had been generally unaware of the LDC services Waiver and had indicated that awareness would not materially influence sourcing decisions. Instead, those firms had said that they had prioritised availability of specialist skills, cost efficiency and service quality. Evidence from Australia's Embassies and trade commission networks supported that finding, including outsourcing arrangements based on talent availability and business viability rather than preferential policy settings.

4.29. The second finding consisted of limited evidence that preferences alone increased services trade with LDCs operating in the Australian market. While Australia's services regime was already highly open, little evidence had been found of significant LDC commercial presence in Australia, which had suggested that access alone was not sufficient, that firms needed to have the capability and incentives to enter the market, and that Australian businesses needed to be aware of or have confidence in the LDC suppliers offering their services.

4.30. The third finding was that Australian firms tended to engage LDC services providers most often when they operated directly in LDC markets and engaged local providers. Evidence from its Embassy network showed that Australian businesses in LDC economies routinely engaged local services on logistics, legal services and ICT, supporting day-to-day operations. That suggested that services trade was more closely linked to investment, presence, and local market development than to preferential access alone, and highlighted the role of mode 3 in building services capacity in developing markets.

4.31. The obstacles and key barriers Australia had identified included capability gaps related to skills, quality, standards, interoperability. They also included regulatory barriers, such as transparency issues or navigating complex requirements; market visibility constraints, usually related to limited awareness of the suppliers available in LDC economies; and structural challenges relating to primarily digital access, financing, scale, and, sometimes, sovereign risk.

4.32. To address the obstacles that had been cited by consumers, Australia's view the following elements were worthy of discussion to help with strengthening LDC services trade as a part of the review. First, a focus on strengthening transparency and predictability in domestic regulation, including through initiatives such as the WTO Disciplines on Services Domestic Regulation. The representative concurred with the presentation of Japan that those disciplines aimed to enhance transparency and predictability in domestic regulation and provided stability and predictability for professionals, service suppliers and business investors.

4.33. The second conclusion was to focus on capacity building, including through joint operations between developing and developed economies to support joint long-term structural developments. As an example, Australia, through the Australia Pacific Partnerships for Aviation Program, looking at aviation as a case study, had been working with the Solomon Islands, an LDC with whom it had been working closely, to build a safe, resilient and sustainable aviation sector and to support the Solomon Islands' connectivity across the Pacific.

4.34. Australia had also provided a range of support, including an assessment of the Solomon Airlines Engineering Department, Board of Governance training for staff in the Solomon Islands Airports Corporation and Solomon Airlines, a staff exchange for aviation firefighters, upgrades to automated weather observation systems, and the delivery of technical expertise to the Civil Aviation Authority of the Solomon Islands. Australia had also co-funded regional airport runway upgrades, alongside New Zealand, utilising Solomon Islands firms and Solomon Islands workers to enhance national and regional connectivity. It had also offered a range of scholarships in-country to Solomon Island students to attain qualifications in relevant services sectors, to provide for a more sustainable footing in aviation services and related services development.

4.35. As an observation, using LDCs was standard practice across Australia's development programs, including the one he had just outlined, where they met that Member's quality and governance standards. In that context, Australia's approach to advancing the objectives of GATS Article IV and the review of the LDC services Waiver operationalisation would focus on addressing underlying constraints that shape firms' commercial decisions.

4.36. In summing up, Australia reiterated its call for Members to consider moving past the questionnaire stage of the review and to advance a holistic review that considered multiple inputs so that Members could take an evidence-based approach to next steps in developing LDC services trade under the remit of the CTS.

4.37. The representative of Barbados, speaking on behalf of the ACP Group welcomed the updates presented by the coordinator of the LDC Group, as well as by Bangladesh. She also thanked Australia for its detailed report and for the outlined recommendations. She took the opportunity to call on the other Members who had not completed their process to do so, so that Members could close the issue and the relevant assessments could be undertaken by the LDC Group, and welcomed next steps in completing that process.

4.38. The representative of Japan thanked Malawi, Bangladesh, and the LDC Group, as well as Australia for their presentations and the information shared, which he was found informative and beneficial for the Council to deepen the discussion on the matter. He recalled that Japan had delivered a presentation on the implementation of the services Waiver at the previous Council meeting, which had been based on the engagement with about 100 Japanese companies.

4.39. Japan hoped that its findings could serve as a reference and help other Members, including LDCs, to operationalize or make full use of the Waiver. He concluded that Japan would be appreciative if other Members could also share their experiences and views so that the Council could deepen the discussion on the LDC services Waiver.

4.40. The representative of India appreciated the efforts made to collect evidence on the operationalization of the LDC services Waiver. From Malawi's presentation, India had received an idea of the challenges LDC suppliers faced. She recalled that India's notification under the LDC services Waiver, while covering preferential market access, had gone beyond that aspect to include other elements, namely technical assistance and capacity building through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, and a visa fee waiver, whereby business and employment visas to applicants from LDCs were issued on a free basis.

4.41. She remarked that visa-related barriers had been outlined as one of the main challenges identified in Malawi's presentation. India indicated that its visa fee waiver had been a distinct element of the preferences her delegation had notified, noting that India had been the only Member to do so. She added that LDC suppliers and professionals were making active use of those elements.

4.42. She recalled that in an earlier assessment of the LDC services Waiver utilisation that the Council had undertaken a few years earlier, one of the difficulties that LDC suppliers had faced consisted on the lack of awareness of the Waiver. She noticed that that had also been identified as one of the main critical challenges in the presentation delivered by Malawi, and that more needed to be done for better dissemination and outreach.

4.43. She additionally drew attention to her delegation's ITEC programmes for 2026-27, which were due to be held and consisted in two-week courses on various WTO-related issues, whose details would be shared with the LDC coordinator separately. She encouraged LDC Members to submit their interested candidates' applications.

4.44. She concluded that, on the questionnaire, India hoped to share its results in the following CTS meeting.

4.45. The representative of the European Union thanked the LDCs, Malawi and Bangladesh and others for their presentations and the work they had undertaken, and for summarizing the feedback that had been received regarding the LDC services Waiver questionnaire. He also noted that those delegations had faced the same problem that his delegation had identified, of a relatively limited response rate or a lack of awareness about the Waiver itself. He added that that underlined the point that the Waiver was not the be-all and end-all.

4.46. There was a broader discussion to be had around alternatives to support a greater LDC participation in global services trade, an objective that was strongly backed by the European Union, which considered it also an essential element of its work.

4.47. He recalled that, during the previous meeting, the EU had shared its experience circulating the questionnaire among its stakeholders and provided feedback on the survey results. He also acknowledged the feedback provided by Australia, adding that it had been useful in providing a concrete sense of the factors that influenced commercial behaviour and the success rate of LDC's participation in trade. It has illustrated that there was more to be done, not just to improve the Waiver's awareness, accessibility and effectiveness, but also to move forward with other avenues to encourage a greater participation of the LDCs in international trade in services. His delegation looked forward to continuing that work over the coming months.

4.48. The representative of Nepal aligned his delegation with the statement and presentation that had been delivered by Malawi on behalf of the LDC Group and the statement made by Bangladesh, and thanked those delegations for their contributions.

4.49. The operationalization of LDC services Waiver remained one of the most important issues for LDC Members, as services increasingly drove economic growth, employment generation, digital transformation, and participation in global value chains. He added that the effective operationalization of the Waiver was essential to enable LDCs to secure meaningful market access and strengthen their integration into global services trade.

4.50. In that regard, Nepal appreciated the efforts of the Members that had extended preferences and supported discussion aimed at enhancing the utilisation and effectiveness of the Waiver. He encouraged all Members to continue working constructively to translate existing preferences into tangible commercial opportunities for LDC service suppliers. He hoped that under the new Chairperson's leadership, renewed momentum would be generated on that important development issue and that the Council would continue to give a due attention to the concerns and priorities of LDCs. His delegation looked forward to working closely with the new Chairperson and all Members in advancing a development-oriented outcome in services.

4.51. The representative of Cambodia supported and aligned itself with the statements delivered by Malawi, on behalf of the LDC Group, and by Bangladesh and thanked them for the presentation on the implementation of the LDC services Waiver. He also welcomed the useful information that had been shared by other Members and appreciated the efforts undertaken through the questionnaire and related initiatives in gathering evidence on the utilisation and impact of the Waiver.

4.52. Cambodia believed that the findings that had been presented provided valuable insights into the participation of LDC service suppliers in international markets and the challenges they continue to face. Cambodia was particularly encouraged by the report from the preference-granting Member and the information that had shown that LDC service suppliers were actively exporting services across a range of sectors and markets. At the same time, the survey results had highlighted the continued need for greater awareness of the Waiver, improved transparency, and enhanced support to help LDC suppliers make full use of available preferences.

4.53. Cambodia encouraged all Members, especially preference-granting Members, to continue reporting on their experience and findings, including by providing information on sectors where the preferences were being utilised, the participation of LDC suppliers, and any relevant assistance initiatives. The representative also encouraged Members to circulate their reports to facilitate the LDC Group's assessment and to continue contributing to a more evidence-based discussion on the operationalization of the Waiver.

4.54. He looked forward to the LDC Group's assessment and remained committed to working with all Members to enhance the effectiveness and utilisation of the Waiver.

4.55. The representative of Pakistan acknowledged the LDC Group and other Members for the updates provided. He appreciated the efforts that had been made to gather evidence from LDC service suppliers. He added that the responses that had been shared up to that point were useful, even if limited in number, as they showed that LDC suppliers were actively exporting services and engaging in some foreign markets.

4.56. Pakistan noted the challenges that had been identified by LDC suppliers in their presentation, which included regulatory and compliance burdens, visa and work permit barriers, market access restrictions, and lack of awareness of the Waiver. Those were practical issues which needed continued attention if the Waiver was to deliver meaningful benefits. Pakistan remained supportive of constructive efforts to make the LDC services Waiver responsive to the LDC Group's needs.

4.57. The representative of the United Kingdom welcomed the updates provided by Members. Her delegation would analyse the information provided soon, but it had been particularly helpful to hear from both the LDC Group and Members about both the degree of awareness and utilisation of the Waiver among businesses, and the factors which had been considered by services suppliers to be particularly useful and relevant to increasing trade.

4.58. She recalled that her delegation had previously shared its experience of taking forward a survey process on the questionnaire. She looked forward, as the LDC Group had mentioned, to providing further information about the sectors in which the United Kingdom and LDCs were trading with one another at the following CTS meeting. Her delegation's experience until then, which did not differ significantly from some of the findings that had been presented, had exposed well-known gaps in services trade data, and shown that there was more to be done to understand the accessibility and utility of the services Waiver for UK firms and for LDCs.

4.59. The challenges that had been cited by businesses in response to the UK survey had suggested that levers beyond the Waiver itself would need to be deployed to allow the Waiver to be most effectively operationalized, and ultimately to allow LDCs to participate more fully in global services trade. The United Kingdom believed that the range of initiatives, including the questionnaire and survey, but also examples like the useful tools developed through the Trade in Services for Development Initiative, were going to be part of enabling trade in the future. Her delegation stood ready to support the LDC Group as Members progressed that work further, and she thanked the LDC Group and Members for the updates and suggestions that had been made at that meeting on next steps.

4.60. The representative of Ghana, speaking on behalf of the African Group, welcomed the continued engagement of Members on the operationalization of the LDC services Waiver. He commended Malawi, on behalf of the LDC Group, and Bangladesh for their insightful updates on the subject.

4.61. The African Group reiterated that the Waiver remained a crucial development tool to support the meaningful participation of LDCs in global services trade by facilitating their structural transformation, economic diversification, and integration into regional and global value chains.

4.62. The African Group noted that, while some progress had been made, the utilisation of the Waiver remained below its potential. Many LDC service suppliers continued to face significant challenges in assessing and benefiting from notified preferences, some of which had been shared in the presentation by the LDC Group.

4.63. The African Group also commended Australia's efforts to address those constraints, and looked forward to the meaningful efforts of other Members. The African Group supported continued monitoring, experience sharing, and evidence-based regular discussions within the Council to identify challenges, assess outcomes, and promote best practices that could enhance the effectiveness of the Waiver.

4.64. The representative of Switzerland thanked the LDC Group for the information they had presented, including on the results of the questionnaire that had been circulated among LDCs. Switzerland valued the fact that Members had gained a services-offer side perspective, which included export markets and the level of demand. It had also taken note of the presentation of Australia and the comment that the use of LDC service providers was driven by demand for the services offered rather than the knowledge of the existence of the Waiver.

4.65. With regard to the work going forward, Switzerland recalled the importance of backing any additional recommendations with additional sources and questionnaires. That would allow to better identify how to improve the participation of LDC suppliers in services trade.

4.66. The Chairperson thanked Malawi and the LDC Group as well as other Members for the presentations, which had been very insightful, as well as all delegations which intervened for the statements made.

4.67. She proposed that the Council take note of the statements made and said that the Council would revert to this item at its next meeting.

4.68. It was so agreed.

5 FOLLOW-UP ON THE COMMUNICATION "FACILITATING RECOGNITION THROUGH THE EFFECTIVE OPERATIONALISATION OF GATS ARTICLE VII" - REQUESTED BY BANGLADESH, INDIA, THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC, NEPAL AND PAKISTAN

5.1. The Chairperson recalled that this item had been placed on the agenda at the request of Bangladesh, India, the Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, and Pakistan, adding that in February, the Council had continued discussing how recognition could be facilitated through the effective operationalisation of GATS Article VII. The discussion had taken place on the basis of a communication the five co-sponsoring delegations had submitted on the issue, which is contained in JOB/SERV/CTS/46.

5.2. She added that, on 21 May, following the issuance of the Convening Notice for the meeting, the co-sponsors had also circulated a room document, RD/SERV/CTS/8, that focused on two of the elements contained in their earlier JOB communication, namely notifications and data tools.

5.3. The representative of Bangladesh, speaking on behalf of the five co-sponsors, noted that, in respect of agenda item 3, the CTS thematic session held on the Recognition of Professional Qualification in October 2025 had been extremely insightful and had delivered some useful ideas for the Council's work. That had been followed up by exchange on the proponents' communication contained in JOB/SERV/CTS/46, where a range of ideas for possible work in that area had been presented. He recalled that that discussion at the previous CTS meeting had shown significant interest. The co-sponsors hoped that Members could achieve some practical outcome in that area as a follow-up to the mandate from Ministers to reinvigorate work on trade in services.

5.4. The representative then recalled that, in the previous CTS meeting, the questions and concerns raised by Members had been addressed, and it had been suggested that a pragmatic way forward was to follow up on the issue in writing, to allow Members to properly consider the issue.

5.5. As had also been mentioned by the Chairperson, the proponents had circulated document RD/SERV/CTS/8, which focused exclusively on two elements of their previous communication in JOB/SERV/CTS/46 on facilitating recognition through the effective operationalisation of GATS Article VII, namely notifications and the use of databases as analytical and capacity-building tools. Those were two areas where the proponents had heard interest and practical potential from Members.

5.6. The room document proposed that the Membership agree to hold a dedicated workshop in the CTS focused on notifications and databases in respect of Article VII. The workshop could include a presentation by the Secretariat, alongside Members' exchanges. A factual overview by the Secretariat of the current stock of notifications that had been made under Article VII:4 might assist Members in understanding the nature of the information currently available and that the transparency value of notification depended partially on how information was structured and assessed.

5.7. Members could benefit from a factual presentation by the Secretariat on how that information was sorted, which database tools currently existed within the WTO, and what ideas could be drawn from illustrative examples such as the WTO RTA database and the APEC inventory. The presentation by the Secretariat could be followed by exchanges between Members on experiences and observations related to notifications and database tools. The proposed workshop could be designed to deepen the understanding of the WTO elements while identifying areas where Members could benefit from incremental improvements.

5.8. He concluded by noting that proponents looked forward to Members' constructive engagement.

5.9. The representative of Belize appreciated the communication from Bangladesh, India, the Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, and Pakistan on transparency concerning GATS Article VII.

5.10. His delegation recognised that Article VII required Members to notify any new recognition agreements, which were important instruments for facilitating professional mobility and building confidence in services trade. He added that, being only 14 years-old in 1995, Belize had maintained a reserved posture in its initial services offer. Its services sectors remained underdeveloped in several respects, both from a regulatory and human capacity standpoint.

5.11. That explained the cautious approach that his delegation had taken in scheduling services commitments, particularly with respect to the temporary movement of natural persons. Currently, Belize had no MRAs to notify. However, it fully recognised the value of services liberalisation as a driver of economic development. Its recent trade policy review had highlighted the need for a gradual, sustainable opening of service markets supported by capacity building and regulatory strengthening.

5.12. Belize saw the transparency initiative under Article VII as complementary to that trajectory, helping small economies like Belize learn from Members' approaches that balanced openness with the protection of livelihoods and economic outcomes for their people.

5.13. Belize, therefore, supported further work on notification practices and database tools, and recognised that capacity-building initiatives would allow developing Members to operationalize recognition measures in ways that promoted inclusive and sustainable liberalisation.

5.14. The representative of Malawi, speaking on behalf of the LDC Group, reiterated the Group's support for the submission from Bangladesh, India, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, and Pakistan. She added that LDC service suppliers were concerned about issues of recognition, that that subject was of interest to LDC service exporters and a component of the Group's collective request. She concluded that that element had received little attention in the preferences notified under the Waiver, and called on the CTS to respond favourably to the communication from the co-sponsors.

5.15. The representative of Barbados, speaking on behalf of the ACP Group, welcomed the proposal in terms of how to follow up on that issue and added that the broad issue of the recognition of qualifications was a very important matter as it related to the movement of services professionals. The ACP Group would also welcome the proposed workshop and looked forward to getting more information.

5.16. The representative of Egypt extended this delegation's appreciation to the co-sponsors for the communication regarding transparency under GATS Article VII, particularly concerning notifications and data tools. She added that the challenges initially highlighted in JOB/SERV/CTS/46 had underscored the significant obstacles faced by professionals from developing and Least Developed Countries due to the non-recognition of their qualifications, which severely impeded their access to international markets.

5.17. Egypt believed that the proposal possessed substantial potential for enhancing trade in services. The recognition of professional qualifications, as had been emphasised in the proponents' communication, was vital for reducing barriers and facilitating market access, particularly for developing countries and LDCs. Her delegation supported the proposal for a dedicated workshop within the Council, to foster the exchange of experiences among Members. The initiative was essential for making notifications under Article VII of the GATS more accessible for all Members.

5.18. Furthermore, Egypt saw that there was an urgent need to improve notification mechanisms, establish a comprehensive database for monitoring recognition procedures, and enhance international standards for the recognition of qualifications. Targeted development assistance programmes were also crucial for empowering developing and least developed countries. Egypt called upon the Secretariat to review those notifications to assist Members in better understanding the current data landscape, and to facilitate informed discussions in the context of the proposed workshops and presentations. Her delegation looked forward to the outcomes of those suggestions.

5.19. The representative of Guyana appreciated the proponents for their efforts in raising the issue on how recognition could be facilitated through the effective operationalization of GATS Article VII. His delegation had also taken note of the proponents' recent communication regarding a proposed dedicated workshop and noted that it would expand the appreciation of Article VII and its provisions, indicating that Guyana supported the proposal.

5.20. The representative of Cambodia thanked Bangladesh, India, the Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, and Pakistan for submitting their communication on transparency under GATS Article VII. His delegation appreciated the proponents' efforts to enhance understanding of notifications and data tools relating to recognition measures. Cambodia considered that the proposal was well aligned with the mandate of the Council and supportive of the WTO transparency objectives.

5.21. He added that improved access to information, greater clarity regarding notifications, and the sharing of Members' experiences could contribute to a better understanding and implementation of Article VII. In that regard, his delegation saw value in a Secretariat factual presentation and in an exchange of views amongst Members. Cambodia supported the holding of a dedicated workshop on notifications and database under Article VII and looked forward to engaging constructively in the discussions. He concluded by aligning his delegation with the LDC Group's statement.

5.22. The representative of the Philippines thanked Bangladesh for introducing the room document of the proponents and for their continued work on facilitating recognition through the effective operationalization of GATS Article VII. He supported the practical and focused approach taken by the co-sponsors.

5.23. Recognition of qualifications and professional experience remained an important services trade issue, particularly for professionals and service suppliers from developing and LDC Members. It was also directly relevant to professional mobility and to regulated sectors such as health, engineering, architecture, accounting, and other professional services.

5.24. The Philippines also supported the proposal to convene a dedicated CTS workshop on Article VII notifications and databases. Such a workshop could provide a useful opportunity for the Secretariat to present a factual overview of existing notifications and database tools, and for Members to exchange experiences on how recognition-related information could be made more accessible and useful in practice. He looked forward to the convening of the workshop.

5.25. The representative of the United States recalled that in earlier meetings her delegation had expressed concerns with elements of previous proposals. She reiterated that the United States supported the theme of transparency; however, it had questioned what purpose and value some of the proposed actions in previous communications would have served. Her delegation appreciated the efforts of the proponents to further streamline their proposal and for taking into account Members' views.

5.26. The United States did not oppose further discussions on issues of interest to Members, including in a workshop, as had been proposed. However, the proponents should demonstrate that the proposed workshop would provide value-added to the CTS's work and not reiterate the content of previous discussions. The United States would closely evaluate any proposed outcome under the premise that it did not share the view that Article VII needed to be further operationalized.

5.27. The representative of Hong Kong, China indicated that her delegation attached great importance to the notification requirement under GATS Article VII. Hong Kong, China had diligently observed the obligations thereunder by promptly notifying the WTO of the adoption of any new recognition measures or significant changes to existing ones.

5.28. Hong Kong, China recognised that enhanced transparency strengthened the implementation of GATS Article VII and promoted recognition. It welcomed the joint communication submitted by the proponents, which had put forward some suggestions on actions that the Council might work on to improve the implementation of GATS Article VII.

5.29. Hong Kong, China also appreciated that, in response to the concerns expressed by Members at the previous meeting, the proponents had submitted a written proposal for a dedicated workshop focusing on a factual overview of notifications and the state of data relating to recognition measures, to be followed by an exchange of experiences and observations among Members.

5.30. The representative believed that the proposed workshop, in which the Secretariat would be giving a factual presentation, could help fill Members' knowledge gaps regarding the requirements under GATS Article VII:4 and provide Members a better grasp of the current notification landscape under that provision. That would be conducive to Members' further deliberations on how to enhance the implementation of the notification requirement. She concluded that Hong Kong China would support the organisation of the proposed seminar without prejudice to its position on the four suggestions that proponents had raised in their earlier communication.

5.31. The representative of China thanked the proponents' efforts on issues related to the recognition of qualifications. China recognised the importance of GATS Article VII in promoting trade in services and enhancing the participation of developing Members. It agreed to strengthen experience sharing and the exchange of best practices, and to compile and analyse Article VII notifications with the support of the Secretariat.

5.32. The representative of Australia thanked the proponents for their statements, their communication and their responses to Australia's questions, which had been provided at the previous meeting. Australia appreciated the continued engagement on the issue, and recognised that the recognition of professional qualifications could play an important role in facilitating trade and effective market access through regulatory cooperation. His delegation also supported efforts to enhance transparency and information sharing at the WTO on recognition measures.

5.33. At the same time, Australia recalled that efforts to enhance transparency should remain practical and not create expectations, including regarding recognition outcomes or processes. It noted that proponents at the last meeting had gone to great efforts to provide some assurance in that regard. It also recalled the clarification from the proponents that the proposed work on affording adequate opportunity under Article VII was not intended to raise thresholds or establish prescriptive procedures.

5.34. Australia considered it important that further discussions remained flexible, non-prescriptive and consistent with the voluntary nature of mutual recognition arrangements. Australia noted that Article VII provided a flexible framework that accommodates the diversity of Members' recognition systems and regulatory approaches. The representative also appreciated Pakistan's comment that the proposal took into account the different ways countries regulated professions and conducted recognition assessments.

5.35. In Australia, recognition decisions were often undertaken by independent regulators and non-government professional bodies, rather than by the government. All of Australia's independent regulators and professional associations were publicly accessible and easy to find. At Members' request, his delegation would be happy to assist in providing information and connections on its independent regulators and professional bodies where that related to a matter of access.

5.36. On the question of non-discrimination and avoiding hidden barriers, Australia noted that recognition processes were typically based on assessments of equivalence, qualifications and standards, including considerations of public protection and social licence. In Australia's view, maintaining that focus was important to ensure that recognition frameworks remained consistent with GATS commitments and were not used as, nor did become, disguised restrictions on trade in services.

5.37. With respect to notifications, the representative thanked the proponents for having suggested elements in the notification template. Australia supported efforts to improve usability and clarity of the information shared under Article VII, but reiterated that any changes to notification processes or templates should remain simple, practical and avoid creating additional mandatory administrative burdens for Members and their stakeholders, including non-government regulators.

5.38. Australia stood ready to engage constructively on that issue, including through the sharing of high-level experiences where appropriate, to support a better collective understanding of recognition frameworks. While his delegation was not yet ready to support the full proposal as had been tabled in 2025, Australia would be pleased for a presentation to proceed, as outlined in the proposal provided, on the overview of the current stock of notifications and the comparison of WTO and other institutions' databases.

5.39. Such a presentation could provide an opportunity for proponents to provide further advocacy on the broader proposal. His delegation would attend the event with an open mind and proactive spirit. Australia could accept that the workshop took place under the remit of the CTS, but it would also encourage the proponents to advance it in other fora or informally on their own if that was not possible, in order to maintain momentum on the issue, which was clearly of interest. His delegation would also be open to engaging in that process, however it proceeded, by sharing its experience, if that assisted Members' understanding, while also noting the importance of maintaining a practical and non-burdensome approach.

5.40. The representative of the United Kingdom recognised the benefits of better transparency for all Members, as various delegations had outlined. The UK position on that proposal remained the same as it had been outlined in the previous Council meeting. The United Kingdom supported the factual exchange of information on notifications made under GATS Article VII and welcomed the efforts to further focus the proposal as per the new document circulated by the proponents.

5.41. The United Kingdom was open to exploring what data tools and databases existed already within the WTO to store information collected during notification processes. However, as expressed in previous meetings, his delegation would be cautious of the parts of the proposal that set out prescriptive processes for notifications, for similar reasons to those that had been outlined by other Members, such as Australia. To that end, it provided its support for a presentation to proceed, though its position on the previous proposal remained.

5.42. The representative of Pakistan thanked the broad support the proposal had received and the comments made on, including those delivered under agenda item number two that related to the recognition of professional qualifications. He also underlined that the latest proposal by the co-sponsors was modest and practical, as had also been noted by many Members. He reiterated that it did not create any new obligation, nor did it affect Members' regulatory autonomy. It also did not require Members to enter into recognition arrangements.

5.43. The proposal was simply to hold a focused workshop on Article VII notifications and data tools, which would help Members understand what had been notified until then, how the information was accessed, and whether incremental improvements could make the existing system more useful. He reiterated that, as had been said in the previous meeting, the proposal was instead limited to improving understanding of Article VII and focused on transparency and practical information sharing. He added that the proposal fully respected domestic regulatory structures, including independent regulators and professional bodies.

5.44. In reply to the United States' comment about the value added, he indicated that the workshop was a practical first step which would allow Members to hear a factual presentation from the Secretariat on existing Article VII notifications and available database tools, followed by an exchange of Members' experiences.

5.45. Improved access to information on recognition measures could help developing countries and LDCs to identify possible opportunities, understand requirements, and engage more effectively in recognition-related discussions. The expected outcome and added value would be a better understanding, together with Members having a clearer picture of existing information gaps in notifications and possible ways to improve usability of the information in a gradual and non-binding manner.

5.46. Pakistan was encouraged to take that work forward and was ready to engage with delegations who might still have concerns, considering the significant interest that Members had shown on the issue.

5.47. The Chairperson noted that she had heard broad support for the suggestions made. There had been also references to previous concerns and some delegations had indicated that caution should be exercised. She asked if delegations could agree to the Council going ahead with organizing the workshop, without prejudice of any other next steps.

5.48. As there was no opposition from the floor, it was so agreed.

5.49. The Chairperson then suggested that the Council take note of the statements made and said that the Council would revert to this item at its next meeting.

5.50. It was so agreed.

6 CYBERSECURITY MEASURES OF CHINA AND VIET NAM – REQUESTED BY JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES

6.1. The representative of Japan reiterated her delegation's concerns about China's cybersecurity measures, including the Cybersecurity Law, Data Security Law, Personal Information Protection Law, and their implementing regulations. Japan had previously expressed its views and concerns on those measures at past CTS meetings and through China's public comment processes.

6.2. Japan requested that her delegation's views be fully considered, in that provisions restricting data flows be applied in a manner that was not unduly trade-restrictive beyond what was necessary to achieve legitimate objectives and that care be taken to avoid imposing excessive burdens on companies operating in China.

6.3. Regarding Viet Nam's measures, Japan reiterated its concern regarding Viet Nam's Cybersecurity Law that had been enacted on 10 December 2025. The representative recalled that her delegation had expressed its views on that law at past CTS meetings. and had noted particular concerns about the obligations for foreign companies to store data and to establish branches or representative offices in Viet Nam, which had been mandated by the 2018 Cybersecurity Law. As Japan had expressed at past CTS meetings and through other channels during the enactment of the 2018 Cybersecurity Law, those obligations could potentially hinder the free flow of information and the entry of foreign companies into the Vietnamese market.

6.4. Japan understood that those obligations were also stipulated in the decree of the implementation of the Cybersecurity Law, which had entered into effect in October 2022. Japan requested clarification on the relationship between that law enacted in 2025 and the decree of 2022.

6.5. The representative requested an update on how Viet Nam was addressing the concerns raised by Members, including those raised by Japan, and continued to request that Viet Nam ensure that the relevant laws and regulations were consistent with the GATS.

6.6. The representative of the United States stated that her delegation and several other Members had continued to raise concerns in the Council regarding various Chinese measures, including the Cybersecurity Law, the Data Security Law, the Law on Protection of Personal Information, and implementing regulations for those laws, particularly with regard to their impact on cross-border data flows.

6.7. As had been mentioned at previous meetings, it was disappointing that China had gone forward with finalising amendments to the Cybersecurity Law without acknowledging or taking into account the numerous concerns raised. As a result, the issues raised by the United States and others persisted in China's data management regime and continued to create unnecessary uncertainty about fair treatment and predictability in the regulation of cross-border data flows.

6.8. The United States acknowledged that China had suggested that some aspects of their negative list currently being piloted in various Free Trade Zones created more clear and predictable guidance for enterprises and may be eventually implemented across China. However, the United States urged China instead to focus on addressing WTO Members' concerns regarding cross-border data flows on a countrywide basis rather than through a patchwork system. The representative stated that those and other issues continued to raise great concerns for stakeholders, and urged China to continue to revise its data regime to take account of those concerns.

6.9. Moving to cybersecurity measures of Viet Nam, the United States was disappointed to hear of Viet Nam's approval of the amended Cybersecurity Law, which did not appear to address the United States' longstanding concerns. The United States understood that the amended law still required foreign companies providing telecommunications, internet, or other online services to store certain data in Viet Nam. Such requirements might restrict US companies from providing services cross-border, in Viet Nam or to Vietnamese companies. The United States urged Viet Nam to address those concerns in the implementation of the Cybersecurity Law. In addition, the United States urged Viet Nam to address those concerns in the implementation of the Cybersecurity Law, Data Law, and Personal Data Protection Law.

6.10. The United States was also disappointed that Vietnam had conducted a limited public comment period for the draft decree to implement the Cybersecurity Law that had not provided WTO Members and other stakeholders sufficient time to provide inputs. It urged Vietnam to ensure against imposing duplicative or unnecessary requirements in the implementation of the Cybersecurity Law, Data Law, and Personal Data Protection Law.

6.11. The representative of Canada shared and echoed the concerns of other Members on China's and Viet Nam's cybersecurity-related measures. Those measures could be financially prohibitive, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, and act as a barrier to trade. Canada continued to urge China and Viet Nam to implement their respective laws and regulations applicable to the transfer, storage and processing of data in a manner consistent with their respective trade commitments.

6.12. The representative of Australia said that his delegation continued to have concerns regarding the cybersecurity measures of China and Viet Nam and their implementation. Australia thanked Japan and the United States for bringing those issues to the Council's attention.

6.13. Australia encouraged both China and Viet Nam to ensure that any measure that affected trade in services be applied only when necessary, minimise costs on businesses, and be consistent with the GATS. While Australia acknowledged the continued engagement of China and Viet Nam on the issues raised to date, the representative noted that there continued to be concerns raised by Members on those issues that had not been resolved, and would welcome further updates from both Members.

6.14. The representative of the European Union thanked the United States and Japan for raising those matters and noted that there had not been any developments since the previous meeting which would have changed his delegation's assessment of the situation in either China or Viet Nam. The European Union reiterated its concerns about the notion of "important data" in China, which was not clearly defined, and the state of play regarding Viet Nam's cybersecurity and privacy regulations. The situation in both Members continued to be a matter of concern for the European Union. As concerned the Chinese measures, the European Union was concerned that China relied on a broad interpretation of "security concerns", in particular those impacting the conditions under which companies were able to transfer data outside of the country. His delegation also remained concerned that the burden to identify the data subject to security assessment essentially still fell on the companies. That situation created legal uncertainty, a legal jeopardy, and raised concerns about the possibility of discretionary enforcement.

6.15. The European Union encouraged China to interpret cybersecurity requirements in a narrow way, based on a clear and transparent regulatory framework and implement them in an objective and non-discriminatory manner. The data which was considered sufficiently important to be covered by those restrictions was not yet clearly defined, leading to some severe legal uncertainty and contributing to data localisation in China in order to avoid problems on the part of the companies. The European Union continued to urge China to narrow down the scope of those requirements, to define cybersecurity measures in a narrow way based on a risk-based approach, and to avoid creating unnecessary and unjustified market barriers.

6.16. As regarded the measures of Viet Nam, the European Union recognised the importance of cybersecurity and underlined the need for a balanced approach that supported business activity and maintained predictability and certainty in the legal environment. His delegation was concerned that mandatory data localisation under the new Cybersecurity Law risked raising costs and hindering the process of digital transformation, leaving global service providers without clear security gains and potentially increasing risks of information leakage due to double storage requirements.

6.17. The European Union continued to be concerned that those requirements were essentially duplicative with the forthcoming with the Personal Data Protection Law and that additional storage obligations were therefore unnecessary.

6.18. The representative called on both China and Viet Nam to effectively take Members' concerns into account in that area.

6.19. The representative of New Zealand stated that her delegation continued to have an interest in the implementation of China's cybersecurity measures. The representative urged all Members to ensure alignment between domestic law and international trade commitments and to implement regulations in a manner consistent with the obligations contained in the GATS.

6.20. The representative of Viet Nam thanked Japan, the United States, and other Members for their continued interest regarding Viet Nam's cybersecurity legal framework. He indicated that Viet Nam's new Cybersecurity Law of 2025 was designed to foster a stable, secure, and transparent business environment while remaining fully compliant with Viet Nam's WTO commitments.

6.21. Viet Nam had conveyed the concerns that had been raised by Members, especially on the relationship between the new law and existing implementing degrees, to its Capital, for their careful review. As the process was ongoing, his delegation would provide a response in due course. Viet Nam remained open to continued constructive technical engagement with interested Members.

6.22. The representative of China indicated that China's policies on cybersecurity and cross-border data transfers were consistent with WTO rules and China's commitments. Cross-border data transfers had not only accelerated the digital transformation of industries, but also had posed challenges related to national security, public interest, and personal information protection. Finding a balance between promoting the free flow of data and achieving legitimate public policy objectives was a common challenge faced by all countries. China had always adhered to the concept of placing equal emphasis on development and security and had continuously improved its governance framework for cross-border data flows.

6.23. China's data regulation followed the principle of classified and tiered management with targeted measures. Only necessary regulation was applied to important data and a certain amount of personal information, while ordinary data that did not contain such information could flow freely across borders. That embodied the principle of proportionality, which reflected the balance between promoting data flows and legitimate regulation, minimising the impact of regulation on the normal flow of data to the extent possible.

6.24. China had continuously deepened reforms to facilitate cross-border data flows and had improved the system that placed equal emphasis on security and facilitation. At the national level, China had continued to provide clearer compliance guidance for enterprises, including the Cybersecurity Law, Data Security Law, and Personal Information Protection Law, and had further refined procedures through supporting rules, such as the measures for the security assessment of cross-border data transfers and the measures for standard contracts for the cross-border transfer of personal information.

6.25. China had also issued operational guidelines, clarifying the required application materials and procedures. In 2024, China had published the provisions on promoting and regulating cross-border data flows, which had further streamlined data transfer procedures, had expanded the scope of facilitation and had detailed six categories of exemption scenarios for data transfers, including international trade, cross-border transportation, contract performance, and human resources management.

6.26. Enterprises transferring non-important data and less than 100,000 pieces of personal information were not required to go through security assessment, standard contracts, or certification procedures, which significantly reduced the compliance costs for businesses.

6.27. At the pilot Free Trade Zone level, eight Free Trade Zones, as well as the Hainan Free Trade Port, had respectively formulated and implemented negative lists for cross-border data flows, having effectively promoted the efficient, convenient, and secure cross-border flow of data in 22 sectors, such as automotive, pharmaceutical, and retail.

6.28. At the sectoral level, the standards and regulations for data classification and grading in certain sectors, as well as the rules for the identification of important data, had already been published, such as the guidelines for identifying important data in the industrial sector, and the guidelines for identifying important data in the telecom sector, which had greatly improved the efficiency of cross-border data flows.

6.29. In addition, China was actively participating in global data governance and promoted rule coordination, including with the E-Commerce Agreement, and was also advancing the process of acceding to the CPTPP and DEPA agreements to align itself with high-standard international digital rules. In summary, China believed that building an open, inclusive, and non-discriminatory digital trade environment would benefit all Members.

6.30. China called on all parties to strengthen dialogue and cooperation on cross-border data flows under the WTO and other frameworks to enhance mutual trust in rules to improve the transparency and predictability of regulation and foster a stable and sustainable environment for global businesses.

6.31. The Chairperson suggested that the Council take note of the statements made.

6.32. It was so agreed.

7 MEASURES OF THE UNITED STATES RESTRICTING TRADE IN SERVICES – REQUESTED BY CHINA

7.1. The representative of China said that this delegation continued to have two concerns regarding United States measures restricting trade in services. First, the "America First" Investment Policy Memorandum, which restricted Chinese enterprises from investing in critical sectors such as semiconductors, Artificial Intelligence, and quantum technologies, while creating a fast-track mechanism for investments from selected Members.

7.2. In China's view, those measures discriminated among WTO Members and were inconsistent with the Most-Favoured Nation principle of the GATS. The Unites States had also failed to comply with the requirements of GATS Article VI:1 that domestic regulations be implemented in a reasonable, objective, and impartial manner. The US measures had broadly misinterpreted the concept of national security and were obviously discriminatory. They could not be justified under the GATS national security exceptions and constituted another example of politicising and weaponizing economic and trade issues.

7.3. The US measures severely disrupted normal economic and trade cooperation between both sides, violated the principles of market economy and fair competition and threatened the security of global industrial and supply chains. China urged the Unites States to withdraw its measures that violated WTO rules, respect market economy principles, clarify the boundaries of national security in economic and trade issues, and work jointly to maintain a free, open, and rule-based trade order.

7.4. Second, the Unites States' final rule on preventing access to Americans' bulk sensitive personal data and the United States government-related data by countries of concern had systematically restricted cross-border data flows to China and other so-called countries of concern, while imposing no equivalent restrictions on other Members. Such discriminatory measures targeting specific Members had violated the WTO Most Favoured Nation principle.

7.5. While defining "countries of concern" as posing a long-term threat to US national security, the Unites States had failed to provide objective evidence of substantive actions that had harmed its national security. Instead, it had relied solely on political assumptions lacking direct relevance to national security.

7.6. China urged the Unites States to properly correct its mistakes and comply with WTO rules to foster an open, fair, and non-discriminatory business environment for global enterprises and promote the orderly and free flow of global data.

7.7. The representative of the United States said that, as stated in previous meetings, the United States had adopted those measures to address national security concerns.

7.8. The Chairperson suggested that the Council take note of the statements made.

7.9. It was so agreed.

8 MEASURES OF INDIA RESTRICTING TRADE IN SERVICES – REQUESTED BY CHINA

8.1. The representative of China indicated that India had excluded Chinese digital service suppliers through discriminatory measures and had violated India's market access commitments. India's banning measures had only targeted Chinese applications, which had also violated the MFN principle under GATS. Although India had invoked national security exceptions, India had failed to prove that Chinese applications posed substantive security threats.

8.2. China urged India to cease discriminatory measures against China, refrain from abusing national security exceptions, and comply with WTO rules.

8.3. The representative of India reiterated the statement her delegation had made at the previous meetings under that agenda item, which is reproduced below.

8.4. As underlined at previous Council meetings, India was committed to upholding its obligations at the WTO. India was committed to protecting the democratic rights of its citizens, including access to goods and services, while reserving its right to take measures to ensure the protection of privacy, data security and national security. India firmly believed that the measures raised under this agenda item were fully consistent with its GATS commitments.

8.5. The Chairperson suggested that the Council take note of the statements made.

8.6. It was so agreed.

9 MEASURES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION RESTRICTING TRADE IN SERVICES - REQUESTED BY CHINA

9.1. The representative of China raised two concerns regarding European Union's measures restricting trade in services and investment.

9.2. The first related to the European Union's proposal for a revised Cybersecurity Act. Under the pretext of safeguarding cybersecurity, in which an objective assessment based on established technical standards and factual evidence was absent, the proposal mandated the designation of countries posing cybersecurity concerns based on a highly unreasonable and arbitrary factor of non-technical risks. The proposal targeted 18 specific sectors with respect to key ICT assets, and thereby deemed all relevant businesses as high-risk suppliers, arbitrarily and systematically excluding enterprises from certain countries from the EU market. Characterised by their wide reach, highly discriminatory nature, and significant negative impacts on trade, the measures laid out in the proposal were industrial protectionist measures in disguise.

9.3. China believed that the proposal violated multiple WTO rules and the European Union's WTO commitments and could not be defended by invoking relevant exceptions. The proposal violated the principles and rules of market access, national treatment, and most-favoured nation. Based on GATS and the EU's services schedule of specific commitments, apart from reservations by a few EU Member States, such as Malta, the Slovak Republic, Cyprus, and Poland, the EU had made commitments for market access and national treatment in many service sectors, such as consultancy services related to the installation of computer hardware, software implementation services, database services, data processing services, and computer maintenance and repair services.

9.4. According to the proposal, the EU would prevent high-risk suppliers from providing maintenance and repair services in supply chains for identified ICT-related sectors in the EU and would prohibit or restrict EU entities with high-risk suppliers in their supply chains from transferring key data to, or engaging in remote data processing from, countries posing cybersecurity concerns. In addition, personnel involved in that process would need to be vetted by the relevant national competent authorities of EU Member States.

9.5. China believed that such measures to prohibit the provision of services constituted a set of completely restrictive measures targeting services by some countries. Such restrictive measures on services were in clear violation of the market access and national treatment commitments the EU had undertaken for many sectors and were also in clear violation of the MFN principle.

9.6. The proposal also violated GATS obligations on domestic regulation. According to Article VI of GATS, Members had to ensure that all measures of general application affecting trade in services were administered in a reasonable, objective, and impartial manner. The EU proposal required personnel involved in maintenance and repair services in relevant sectors to be vetted by the relevant national competent authorities of EU Member States. That measure would also uniformly forbid high-risk suppliers from providing maintenance and repair services without objective evaluation and factual evidence, in violation of domestic regulation requirements.

9.7. China urged the EU to comply with WTO rules and delete or substantively revise the identification of countries posing cybersecurity concerns, non-technical risks, and high-risk suppliers, as well as the subsequent trade prohibitions and restrictive measures. Cybersecurity risk assessments had to be based on uniform, objective, and verifiable technical standards and facts. Judgements should be made about capability and the products of specific businesses with their individual practices, technical safeguards, and commitments in areas such as cybersecurity management, and operation compliance taken into consideration.

9.8. The designation of high-risk suppliers had to be made on the basis of verifiable technical faults, security incidents, or management flaws. There should also be an evaluation process with transparency and predictability, as well as complaint channels established for affected companies. Trade restrictive measures should not be taken regardless of technical assessments and objective facts and prohibiting all products and services provided by listed suppliers without discretion should be opposed.

9.9. The EU should determine risk levels on the basis of an objective assessment and apply a scientific management system accommodating different products and service categories and risk levels.

9.10. China's second concern related to the EU's Industrial Accelerator Act, which imposed unreasonably restrictive requirements on foreign investment in four emerging strategic sectors, affecting services related to manufacturing. Such discriminatory restrictions violated the basic market economy principles, including fair competition, and violated the national treatment and most favoured nation principles.

9.11. According to Article 18 of the Act, the relevant restrictions did not universally apply to all foreign investors but specifically targeted investments originating from countries whose global production capacity exceeded 40% in four major emerging strategic industries, namely batteries, electric vehicles, and the extraction, processing, and recycling of critical raw materials. Those were explicitly discriminatory clauses.

9.12. The Act imposed numerous restrictions on specific foreign investments, such as technology transfer, ownership and shareholding ratio limits, union content requirements, and minimum union employee ratios, which restricted foreign enterprises' provision of operation, maintenance, and distribution services related to the four sectors in the EU, in violation of the GATS principles of national treatment and most favoured nation treatment.

9.13. China urged the European Union to eliminate or revise discriminatory measures against specific countries and to comply with WTO principles and rules.

9.14. The representative of the European Union said that his delegation took note of the China's intervention and the concerns that China had raised on those two pieces of legislation. He added that, as the Chinese representative had recognised, currently both the Cybersecurity Act and the Industrial Accelerator Act were only proposals.

9.15. Those proposed regulations had been adopted by the European Commission in January and March of 2026, respectively, and they would now both be considered by the two co-legislators of the European Union, the Council and the European Parliament, in the normal way under its ordinary legislative procedure. Neither regulation had been adopted to date.

9.16. It was perfectly possible, even probable, that the co-legislators would decide to amend provisions of one or both proposed regulations before final adoption took place. For that reason, a detailed substantive review of the proposed legislation would be premature.

9.17. He provided, nevertheless, some remarks, with the intention of placing the two proposals in context for Members.

9.18. First, as regarded to the Cybersecurity Act, it consisted in a proposal that would update the current regulatory framework that relied on the original Cybersecurity Act of 2019. The European Union recognised that the cybersecurity threat landscape had evolved and worsened significantly since then. That proposal, therefore, aimed to update the EU Cybersecurity Act to take those developments into account. It would establish an updated framework to further strengthen the EU cybersecurity resilience and capabilities.

9.19. Once adopted, that new updated framework would be implemented through the adoption of subsidiary regulations that would lay down the objective, proportionate, and risk-based measures that would be taken.

9.20. Second, as concerned the Industrial Accelerator Act, it envisaged a number of actions to support EU competitiveness in a number of key strategic manufacturing sectors and to ensure the resilience of the relevant supply chains. While certain elements of the proposal concerned the framework for investments in those strategic sectors, investments targeted at providing services were explicitly excluded from the scope of application of the Act, according to Article 17(3)(b) of the proposal.

9.21. Both proposed regulations had been designed to be in line with the European Union's international obligations. In both cases, a prior public consultation and impact assessment had been carried out. Going forward, the European Union remained open to dialogue with all Members about those proposals.

9.22. The representative of China said that he took note of the EU indication that it was open to dialogue, highlighting that the same applied for his delegation. China was also open to further constructive dialogue with the EU, would follow closely the progress of the two legislations on which it had concerns, and hoped that through constructive engagement, they could find a way to resolve those concerns.

9.23. The Chairperson suggested that the Council take note of the statements made.

9.24. It was so agreed.

10 OTHER BUSINESS

10.1. No intervention was made under the item.

10.2. The meeting was adjourned.