

Minister Calls For Completion Of Doha Round

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Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator Maxine McClean making a point while WTO Director General, Roberto Azevedo looks on during Wednesday's joint press conference. (C.Pitt/BGIS)

Barbados' Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator Maxine McClean, has stressed the importance of completing the Doha Development Agenda despite the challenges it has faced over the years.

She made the comments recently during a joint press conference with World Trade Organization (WTO) Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo, at her Ministry's Culloden Road headquarters.

Senator McClean pointed out that small states such as Barbados continued to be faced with multiple challenges to integration into the multilateral trading system, as they sought to realise the full benefits of such integration. She noted that there needed to be focused developmental assistance to compensate for the structural difficulties of these small, vulnerable states.

“The Doha Development Agenda, which is the last round of negotiations launched at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in 2001, was crafted to give the desired and necessary attention to the expressed and experienced difficulties of all developing countries of the WTO. The Doha Development Round is notable in its ambition to level the playing field among trading partners by keeping development at the heart of negotiations of both rules and market access,” she stressed.

The Foreign Trade Minister also commented on the 10th Ministerial Conference of the WTO, which was held last December in Nairobi, Kenya. According to her, that meeting was “a significant landmark in the continuing multilateral negotiations”.

“The most outstanding agreement was in the area of agriculture. Provisions similar to those which have been applied to industrial products in the agreement on subsidies and countervailing measures have now been applied to agricultural goods,” she disclosed.

Senator McClean added that Ministers attending the conference also agreed to improve the

participation of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in global trade through the provision of enhanced preferential rules of origin; special treatment for LDC service providers; and the treatment of cotton.

Barbados has chaired the WTO Committee on Trade and Development and coordinated the group of Small Vulnerable Economies. At present, it coordinates the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of Countries, as well as the Group of 90 (G90).

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