WTO PUBLIC FORUM 2012

Plurilateralism

THE CONTEXT

Plurilateralism is not new or completely strange countries always come together in small groups to formulate, influence or negotiate in or outside multilateral frameworks.

An approach for countries willing to move forward with the liberalisation process.

Conversely, plurilateralism represents a reaction to the failure of multilateralism some countries not willing to move forward with the liberalisation process.

The Context ...

- Different approaches to plurilaterals:
- Outside the WTO RTAs or FTAs
- o Inside the WTO
- o Benefits extended to all Members (MFN),
 - while obligations bind only the initial members and others as they join.
- Benefits accrue only to participants who also undertake binding commitments.

THE PARADOX

Plurilateralism supports the international free trade regime

AND

Plurilateralism not only hurts traditional multilateral principles but also the international free trade system (Oyane, 2001)

On the basis of this paradox, my intervention will focus on only two of the perspectives framed by the organisers implications of plurilaterals for the MTS, and strategies and tactics for developing countries and LDCs, due to their systemic nature.

The Paradox ...

The other questions on how to multilaterlise plurilateralism negotiate plurilateral agreements; and areas to be negotiated through plurilateral approaches are issues of consensus by WTO Members, and I do not wish to speculate on them.

IMPLICATIONS OF PLURILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Plurilateralism fragments and disrupts the larger multilateral process, including multilateral cooperation on different issues.

Plurilaterals can violate the multilateral principles of universality, inclusiveness and transparency.

Consolidation of RTA commitments and policy harmonisation beyond the needs of some members

THANKYOU FORYOUR ATTENTION