

APPOINTMENT OF THE NEXT WTO DIRECTOR-GENERAL
PRESENTATION TO THE WTO GENERAL COUNCIL BY
H.E. YOO MYUNG-HEE,
CANDIDATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

I. Introduction

Thank you Mr Chairman, and all distinguished delegates for the invitation. It is an honour to participate as a candidate in this selection process, and to share with you my vision for the WTO.

Call it a coincidence, but I was born in 1967, the year Korea acceded to the GATT, and I started my career in trade when the WTO was born in 1995. Over my lifetime, I personally witness the path of the WTO that

Korea as a country, and I as an individual owe a debt to the tools and economic environment necessary for growth. Members should have such opportunities regarding

My 25 year career in international trade has provided me with expertise will enable me to offer insights and creative solutions to restore and revitalize

When I came to Geneva in the early days of the WTO, there was optimism and confidence in building. Despite many challenges, the WTO has become a central pillar of the global trading system.

In voicing my confidence and optimism, I do not mean to downplay the challenges the WTO is at a crossroads, with the world economy facing

trade and environmental sustainability. I will do everything I can to support these negotiations and bring them swiftly to a successful conclusion, for endorsement by Ministers at MC12.

Electronic commerce is also an area in which we should work towards tangible outcomes. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of this issue. A comprehensive agreement by next summer may be ambitious, but I think we can take some concrete steps and lay out the path forward for post-MC12 work.

We also need to see real progress on development issues. This should always be an important part of every Ministerial Conference, but I think it is even more important in MC12 due to the impact of the pandemic on world trade, growth, and global value chains. The Organization should seek to take real steps that can help Members, especially the most vulnerable, deal with this on-going health and economic emergency.

I am well aware of the proposals that Members have put forward on WTO reform. I also know how sensitive these issues can be to individual Members. A high degree of trust among Members must be the starting point in exploring cooperative solutions.

All three pillars of the WTO need to work hand in hand to maintain a healthy and well-functioning multilateral trading system.

First, we need to update the rule-books and deliver agreements with real economic impact. Progress at MC12 will show that the WTO can address the real world problems societies and businesses face. LDC/CPJ-3P/01/0010

initiatives encompassing overall development issues, as well as specific, cross-cutting issues such as MSMEs, women's economic empowerment, and environment.