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Statement by Kumar Iyer, UK Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the WTO. Delivered at the General Council of 5-6 October 2026, Geneva, under Agenda Item 4.

Thank you Chair.

The United Kingdom has listened carefully to Members today and over the past few weeks. We recognise many concerns have been raised. These include capacity constraints and also the need to ensure that all Members can see something of interest and value to them in this reform process.

By return, the United Kingdom continues to want an inclusive process and is happy to look at ideas that support that. We will also engage constructively on issues beyond our immediate priorities, just as we hope others will do so.

There is however an urgency to this work, which we cannot avoid. The world around us continues to evolve and sadly doesn't seem to be paying much attention to the WTO's timelines. MC15, in that regard, is an important milestone. Whether we like it or not, it will be a point at which Ministers will judge whether we have made material progress on addressing the problems set out in the document that came out of Yaoundé, a document which all of us agreed in this room to work on, on a best-efforts basis, even though it wasn't formally adopted.

We should also not forget the excellent work of our colleague from Norway, which whilst it was not adopted at Yaoundé, was helpful in bringing together the vast majority of this room.

We should also be clear that inaction has a cost, and the World Trade Report has shown that that cost could be considerable. As of today, I'm told by my team that 26.6% of the time available before MC15 has passed.

The good news is that we have seen some welcome progress in some of the plenary sessions so far. We thank the facilitators very much for the hard work they're putting in, the Members that have submitted reports and all those that have started the progress of engaging with them.

So there do indeed remain reasons to be hopeful and the UK remains ready to engage at pace with all Members to secure meaningful progress.

Thank you Chair.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/wto-reform-statement-by-the-chairperson>