

WTO TRIPS Council November 2021: UK statements

Thank you, Chair.

The decision to postpone MC12 is undoubtedly a disappointment, but it was the right call.

The health of MC12 participants is the key priority whilst there is uncertainty regarding the new variant.

We are grateful to the Director General for her inspiring leadership, as well as to the WTO Secretariat for their professional preparation of the Ministerial. Whilst we await confirmation of a new date, the UK will continue to engage actively in all key negotiations.

We are determined to see the WTO back in business and fit to meet the challenges of the 2020s

These uncertainties only underline the vital ongoing importance of innovation in the fight to contain, treat, and prevent COVID-19, given the existing international IP framework's demonstrated ability to enable such action.

Despite MC12's postponement, our commitment to reaching a pragmatic and tangible outcome remains. As we have stated in previous TRIPS Councils, the UK has made concerted efforts to engage bilaterally with members on this file. We are committed to continue engaging with members to find a solution acceptable to all.

Collaboration by all is the way forward. We are encouraged by the tone of the discussions we have had, and as we are still all agreed on the need for tangible outcomes, we remain hopeful this tone will continue in the discussions. It is clear that compromises will be needed from all to achieve an outcome acceptable to all.

Of course, efforts to increase global and diversified production and supply of vaccines will continue, so will further research and development, underpinned by the IP framework. That said, it is clear we must now particularly concentrate on equitable distribution and administration of available vaccines in order to contain, treat, and prevent COVID-19, in all its variants. Ensuring vaccines reach people's arms is fundamental. We look forward to further practical discussions focused on areas of convergence in formats that are most suitable to that. To that end, we agree with keeping this session open and propose to reconvene when there is a solution at hand, not to reiterate known positions.

Thank you, Chair.