



MEDIA RELEASE

DR CRAIG EMERSON

Minister for Trade

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Trade Minister attends WTO Ministerial Conference

Trade Minister Craig Emerson arrives in Geneva today to take part in the 8th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Ministerial Conference is the highest decision-making body of the WTO, and Ministers from the 153 WTO Member States are invited.

This year's meeting comes at a time of global economic volatility, making it imperative that WTO Members unlock stalled negotiations in the Doha Round on trade liberalisation.

Dr Emerson said the Conference was the last opportunity of the year for Members to reaffirm the vital role of the WTO in governing global trade, and to take steps to strengthen the institution.

Reaching agreement on ways to keep Doha Round talks alive would go a long way towards these goals, Dr Emerson said.

"I will continue to push for agreement on Australia's new pathway plan, which won broad support at regional and global forums in recent months," Dr Emerson said.

Dr Emerson will continue to advocate breaking the Round into more manageable parts, and look to take the negotiations forward in a way that helps the world's least developed countries.

"I will reiterate Australia's commitment to resisting protectionism, pending completion of the Doha Round," he said.

"This is consistent with the pledge Prime Minister Gillard made at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Perth in October, and the recent commitments made by G20, APEC and East Asia Summit Leaders."

"I will be urging all WTO Members to follow Australia's example and will seek the support of Members for the Conference to deliver a strong public anti-protectionism message," Dr Emerson said.

The Ministerial Conference will also formally approve the accession of four new WTO Members: Russia, Vanuatu, Samoa and Montenegro.

"Australia warmly welcomes these new Members to the WTO," Dr Emerson said, "and looks forward to working closely with them."

On the sidelines of the Conference, Dr Emerson will hold talks with the United States Trade Representative, European Union Trade Commissioner, and WTO Director General, as well as with Ministers from Canada, China, Costa Rica, Colombia, Korea, Nigeria, Norway and the United Arab Emirates.

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