

No breakthrough in trade talks: Lamy

Ministers from the member states of the World Trade Organization (WTO), meeting here over the issue of farm subsidy and non-agriculture market access, failed to achieve a breakthrough, WTO chief Pascal Lamy said Thursday.

'There is still no convergence yet,' WTO spokesman Keith Rockwell quoted Lamy as saying in a briefing to delegations.

Lamy urged the key members to continue their negotiations, which focused on agricultural trade and industrial tariffs, in the next 24 hours to ensure 'every chance' for success.

Trade and agricultural ministers from the United States, the European Union, Japan, Australia, Brazil, India and China worked overnight Wednesday for a compromise on the major issues that have blocked the Doha Round of trade talks since its launch in 2001, Xinhua news agency said.

Rockwell said the overnight talks made some progress but wide differences remained. He refused to give details.

Earlier, some trade ministers participating in the negotiations also cited slight progress, but they all admitted that difficulties remain and work remains to be done before gaps could be bridged.

The Doha Round has missed repeated deadlines for conclusion in the past seven years, mainly due to differences on agricultural trade and industrial market access.

Trade and agricultural ministers from 35 major WTO members have been in Geneva since Monday, trying to break the deadlock.

According to Lamy's arrangement, key WTO members should reach agreement first, and then their agreement would be sent for approval by the full WTO membership.

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