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## INFORMAL WORKING GROUP ON MSMEs

### PROPOSAL FOR MSMEs WORK PROGRAM PLANNING ON BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN LOCAL BUSINESS AND GLOBAL ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH TRANSPARENCY AND INCLUSION

*Communication from the United States of America*

The following communication, dated 16 April 2024, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of the United States of America.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. A central theme running through the work of the Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) Informal Working Group (IWG) is the importance of transparency and inclusion. From the Trade4MSMEs platform and the Global Trade Helpdesk to the compilation of compendia to direct engagement with the private sector, tremendous effort has been made by the signatories of this IWG toward helping small businesses access the information they need in order to engage more effectively in international trade.

1.2. As the MSMEs IWG looks forward to the next biennium of work, the United States of America believes there would be value in exploring the "last mile" of this information sharing and transparency: how small businesses in members' respective economies are linked to the mechanisms that shape trade policy. And, how do small businesses engage with and derive benefit from activities, discussions and information available through International Organizations (IOs) including the WTO?

## 2 STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

2.1. The MSMEs IWG could explore this linkage by inviting local chambers of commerce, trade associations, and/or other local organizations to share with members how they engage with both policymakers and MSMEs in the interests of transparency and inclusion.

2.2. A conversation could explore, for example, how these civil society groups:

- help bridge the gap between IOs and MSMEs by raising awareness of publicly available trade-related information and documentation;
- promote transparency by supporting consultation mechanisms and dialogues with stakeholders;
- incorporate underserved, marginalized, disadvantaged or under-represented communities into trade policy decision-making processes.

### **3 OUTCOMES**

3.1. Pursuing this line of work could lead to members' enhanced understanding of the challenges MSMEs face in obtaining and making use of information made available by international organizations, particularly the WTO. It would also shed light on the challenges MSMEs face in making themselves heard by international organizations, and how local organizations play a role in amplifying the voices of small businesses.

3.2. This work could also provide an opportunity for local organizations of different sizes and from different regions to connect with each other in a unique way and broaden their professional networks.

3.3. After hearing from speakers, the signatories of the MSMEs IWG could consider circulating a room document summarizing the discussions.

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