

## **Statement by Minister Toshihiro Nikai**

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Toshihiro Nikai  
Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan

WTO Director General Pascal Lamy recommended on December 12<sup>th</sup> that the proposed Ministerial Meeting on the Doha Round negotiations should not be held this year; 48 hours have elapsed since then, and it has become clear that this will be the case. We are disappointed to lose the final opportunity to establish modalities for Agriculture and NAMA this year.

We will continue our efforts to ensure that the Ministerial can be held as early as possible.

Under the present economic and financial circumstances, the importance of maintaining and strengthening a free and open trade system has increased further.

Japan remains fully committed to achieving an early conclusion of the Doha Round in close cooperation with fellow WTO members. Further progress needs to be made, not only in Agriculture and NAMA, where revised Chairs' texts have been issued, but also in other negotiating areas such as Rules and Services. In particular, we call for a new text for Rules to be issued as early as possible.

We also call on all governments to join us in continuing efforts to restrain protectionism, in particular by undertaking in good faith the commitments made at the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy and the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting not to raise new barriers to investment or to trade for the next 12 months.