La pensée de M. Pascal Lamy

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Future of WTO in a Multipolar World

(1)
"Obstacles to trade are changing in the world. Most of them were measures to prevent competition from foreigners and today measures are not anymore to protect the producer but the consumer. This is a shift, which has meaningful consequences."

(2)
"Classical obstacles to trade are vanishing. Protecting the producer does not make sense anymore in a world where economies are integrating very rapidly because of technology."

(3)
"At the end of the day, the one thing that is better than legal disciplines is good sense. This is the end of mercantilism, of this notion. It was a long time in humans that exports were good and imports were bad. This ideology is certainly dead."

(4)
"Overall, what is true is that the level of precaution will rise and this is inevitable. It is part of development. It is a logical consequence of people whose living standards are rising. This is what progress is about."

(5)
"If you negotiate tariffs you have reciprocity. You lower tariffs and your counterpart does the same in other sectors, for instance. It is flat. It is about a non-tariff measure you enter into a field which is much more sensitive in terms of values because precaution is about risk management – it takes ideological control in a mental state about what is good and what is bad."

(6)
"What is happening is that if bilateral convergence is achieved between US and EU for instance, the result will be that this rule will become de facto the international standard."

(7)
"In this new context, the WTO must have a new mandate because it goes further than the SPS/TBT agreements. The WTO should organize and monitor this regulatory process. It does not mean that measures will not be negotiated in other fora."

(8)
"The WTO has a proven record of being able not only to regulate and enforce hard law but also to monitor this sort of process. This is where there is a challenge. I think the challenge is on the hands of the most powerful economies."

(9)
“The process of this regulatory convergence process will be negotiated outside and not in the WTO. The result of convergence can only be at the highest level of convergence.”

(10)
“There is no difference between public or private standards. What matters is what the standard to follow is. If Carrefour or Walmart or Tesco have a standard, I have to comply with it, because I cannot sell my products to a public agency anyway.”

(11)
“(…) nowadays, either you have an agreement with China and it is a multilateral one or you have an agreement without China and it is plurilateral agreement.”

(12)
“What we will not change is the fact that the Dispute Settlement Mechanism will remain important when a country is acting in a manipulative manner when adopting some non-tariff measure. Any protectionist use of precaution is and will remain under the review of DSM. The argument that countries that are not part of the standard setting will be discriminated is not all true.”

(13)
“I think the reality is that the agenda has been made not less relevant but less doable because of changes in the world economy. The Doha Round was based – like all rounds – on the trade-off between concessions by developed in agriculture to get concessions by developing in services and industry. The implicit exchange rate of concessions in agriculture, industry and services has changed with time.”

(14)
“I think in the WTO system we should totally reform the software and it should be: trade is open unless there is a demand by a WTO member to restrict it. The truth is that things are been dealt with in the last 15 years on the reverse software. Trade should be deemed open unless there are good reasons to restrain it.”

(15)
“Trade opening in a multilateral or a regional scope: so what? It was in the origin of the GATT. For me what matters is not the color of the cat but if he catches the rat.”

(16)
“Trade and environment, labor, competition, development…There is a lot to be done, although this implies a risk-taking attitude by the DG. Diplomats do not like it. They often state their sovereign prerogatives, for example in labor standards. The same diplomats accept WTO as observers in ILO but not ILO observers in WTO.”

(17)
“It entails inevitably a limitation to what international organizations can do. This is why I do not put all my hopes in international organizations.”

(18)
“TPP is the last of the old [preferential trade agreements]. TTIP is the first of the New [preferential trade agreements]. They are in the very beginning because it is mostly about nontariff measures.”

(19)
“I agree with you that the G20 is a good place to discuss some issues. There are possibilities. I deeply believe in transparency notifications and discussions. You really have to shake the system if you want new ideas to be brought.”

(20)
“Sovereignty is often the monopoly of incoherence.”