

Singapore calls for move on Doha talks

SINGAPORE – Singapore has asked the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to explore new ways to overcome issues causing a logjam in world trade talks, known as the Doha Developmental Agenda (DDA).

The Minister of State (Trade and Industry), Mr Lee Yi Shyan, said: “Already, many observers have commented that the Doha stalemate has tempered enthusiasm for the multilateral trading system.”

He made this call at a policy dialogue on Doha issues and contemporary trade agenda yesterday.

Noting that the talks have been logjammed for 10 years, Mr Lee asked if there was a need to scale down the complexity of trade negotiations by reducing the number of issues.

He said it was critical to resolve this because the world is at a point where the threat of an-



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Minister of State (Trade and Industry) Lee Yi Shyan (picture)

other economic recession – with a debt crisis in the euro zone and a weakening US economy – may

lead to a resurgence of protectionist tendencies.

“It is, therefore, important and crucial that the Ministerial Conference succeed in providing guidance for the WTO to start the new year productively on the Doha Development Agenda and address the many issues and challenges that confront the WTO,” Mr Lee added.

Singapore, like many other states, relies on a strong WTO to ensure a rules-based multilateral trading system and Mr Lee said concluding the trade talks would have provided a much needed stimulus package for the global economy.

The policy dialogue was attended by senior officials from the WTO Secretariat, senior trade officials from the region and trade experts. **RYAN HUANG**