

Headline: S'pore calls for new ways to break 10-year logjam in trade talks.

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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).

Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Lee Yi Shyan made this call at a policy dialogue on Doha issues and contemporary trade agenda at a local hotel Wednesday morning.

Noting that the talks have been logjammed for 10 years, Mr Lee suggested that one option was to examine scaling down the complexity of negotiations, by reducing the number of issues.

Mr Lee said: "Already, many observers have commented that the Doha stalemate has tempered enthusiasm for the multilateral trading system. We are at the point where the threat of another economic recession - with a debt crisis in the eurozone 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 said Singapore, like many other states, relies on a strong WTO to ensure a rules-based multilateral trading system.

He said concluding the trade talks would have provided a much needed stimulus package for the global economy.

The policy dialogue is attended by senior officials from the WTO Secretariat, senior trade officials from the region and trade experts.

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