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From: POLITICO Pro
Sent: Wed 6/21/2017 2:59:49 PM
Subject: WTO members support resumption of talks on green goods trade deal

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06/21/2017 10:56 AM EDT

The United States remained silent at a meeting where Japan, the European Union and even China expressed varying degrees of support for concluding negotiations on a stalled agreement that would cut tariffs on a broad range of green goods.

The statements in support of the Environmental Goods Agreement came at a Tuesday meeting of the World Trade Organization's Committee on Trade and Environment, according to diplomatic sources in Geneva, and marked the first efforts to encourage a resumption of talks, which stalled in December.

At the meeting, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Switzerland called for negotiations to be brought to a swift conclusion. China, which complicated efforts to reach a deal last year, even voiced support for it on Tuesday, saying it would be one way the WTO could contribute to addressing climate change. However, the Chinese delegation cautioned that "common but differential responsibility" among nations must be reflected in a final agreement, diplomatic sources said.

The European Union said Tuesday it was committed to concluding a deal "once circumstances allow us to do so and participants are ready for engaging," sources said.

The EGA talks were halted late last year after the 18 WTO members involved failed to reach a deal on the nature and length of tariff cuts on roughly 300 environmentally friendly goods, like LED light bulbs, oil-spill containment booms and reagents used to test water quality.

After trade ministers failed to reach consensus in December, negotiations went into hibernation amid the change of administration in the U.S.

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