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## **Africans Ask WTO To Drop 3 of Singapore Issues**

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The African group of countries has stated that the July framework package being worked out by World Trade Organisation (WTO) members should drop three of the so called Singapore issues including investment, competition policy and transparency in government procurement.

On the fourth issue of trade facilitation, the framework should decide to continue the clarification process leading to a possible multilateral agreement, the group said in a communication to the WTO general council listing out what all the July package should include.

The views of the African group is in line with India's stand on the four controversial new issues. India too has expressed its willingness to go along with discussions on a multilateral agreement on trade facilitation subject to a satisfactory conclusion of the clarification process on what the final agreement would look like. The country, too, like a large number of other developing and least developed countries, favours the dropping of the remaining three issues.

Apart from agriculture, it was disagreement over the Singapore issues between developed countries (like the EU and Canada) and developing and least developed countries, which led to the collapse of the Cancun ministerial meet last September.

While the EU was strongly pushing for the launch of negotiations on the issues, LDCs and developing countries stood strong on the point that negotiations could not commence without explicit consensus on modalities among members.

Laying stress on the problems related to cotton subsidies given by developed countries, the representation made by Nigeria on behalf of the African group stated that a separate paragraph should be devoted to cotton.

On the provision on Trips & Public Health, the group said that the framework should make a specific mention of the issue.