

Crisis has boosted will to reach Doha deal: Brazil

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By Raymond Colitt

BRASILIA (Reuters) - The global financial crisis has increased the political will of the member-nations of the World Trade Organization to reach a deal on the Doha round of trade talks by the end of the year, Brazil's foreign minister said on Wednesday.

"The political will is there," Celso Amorim told reporters in Brasilia, the capital. "The difference since July is the crisis," he added, referring to the last time WTO members met in a bid to reach a trade deal.

Amorim also said a WTO ministerial meeting needs to take place by December 8 to comply with the G20 nations pledge to reach a deal on Doha by the end of the year.

The weekend of December 6-7 would allow member countries to hold bilateral meetings beforehand, Amorim said.

WTO chief Pascal Lamy is assessing this week whether the prospects for talks are good enough to call a ministerial meeting.

The WTO holds its last policy-making General Council on December 19 before closing for Christmas and the New Year.

Analysts say some countries may be reluctant to put all their cards on the table because they fear President-elect Barack Obama may not stand by what the outgoing U.S. administration agrees on Doha.

But Amorim said it would be easier for Obama to accept an accord reached by 150 countries, albeit imperfect, than starting negotiations over again.

Brazil is a key player in global trade talks representing developing nations.

(Reporting by Raymond Colitt, Writing by Todd Benson, Editing by David Wiessler)