

NINTH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND,

3RD - 6TH DECEMBER 2013

*Statement by H.E. Mr. Olusegun Aganga, CON
Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment*

**Mr. Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates**

I wish, on behalf of the Nigerian delegation to commend the Chairman of the 9th Ministerial Conference, Minister Gita Wirjawan; the Director-General of the WTO, Mr. Roberto Azevedo; and his dedicated team for the extraordinary efforts that have been made to invigorate and guide the negotiations, in a transparent and inclusive manner, and more importantly, for the remarkable progress, which serves as inspiration and encouragement to Members. I also commend the Chair of the General Council, Ambassador Shahid BASHIR for the supportive role and guidance throughout the preparatory arrangements for the Conference. None of these would have been possible without the flexibility, commitment and leadership shown by you, the Members of the WTO. I wish to thank Indonesia, in particular, for the hospitality and facilities at our disposal. I wish to also thank the Chairpersons of the various subsidiary bodies for the comprehensive reports on the activities of the WTO since the last session of the Conference in 2011.

Mr. Chairman,

2. At the outset, I would like to endorse the Declarations by the AU Ministers of Trade; the ACP; LDCs; Informal Group of Developing Countries; the G-20; and the G-33.

This journey started at MC8, which I had the honour and privilege to chair, where we acknowledged the reality that not all the elements of the Doha Round could be concluded simultaneously; and therefore committed ourselves to advance negotiations where progress could be achieved, with a view to reaching agreement on those elements on a provisional basis; including the Bali package.

3. The challenge we face today calls for renewed commitment and deeper collaboration as a matter of urgency. In a world of increasing economic interconnections, the challenges facing us are great, but so are the opportunities. Nigeria also shares the view that this Ministerial Conference is taking place in the context of a challenging and dynamic global economic environment, which has brought about significant challenges to national economies and governments, given the fact that the world economies are moving at different pace. However, we are happy to note that, despite these difficult circumstances, that the leadership at the WTO has achieved tangible results and exceeded our expectation; now is the time for Ministers, based on the MC8 mandate, to help reach convergence here at MC9. That is the reason why Nigeria is fully supportive of having a Bali package (that is development –oriented; or very soon after Bali, should the situation arise). It is also Nigeria's expectation that this Conference would provide the necessary political guidance and direction towards the successful conclusion of the Doha Round and the future of the WTO.

Mr. Chairman,

4. These expectations are based on the belief that it is mostly those policies, which allow economies to remain open to trade and investment that are capable of promoting economic recovery and sustainable growth. Indeed, available empirical evidence shows that it is generally those countries which have significantly liberalised and achieved a greater level of integration into the global economy that are usually associated with successful development experience.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Taking into account this reality, Nigeria is deeply concerned that the Doha Round, which was launched as "development" Round with a view to, inter alia, addressing the imbalances in the existing Agreements, boosting international trade and global economic growth, as well as facilitating the successful integration of developing countries into the global economy, remains inconclusive after more than twelve years of negotiations. Nigeria stands ready and willing to support any effort necessary to achieve a positive outcome on a single package on trade facilitation, agriculture, development and LDCs issues, bearing in mind that Bali's success is vital for the future of the multilateral trading system.

6. It is on the basis of the foregoing that Nigeria would like to encourage Members, especially the major players, who are in a position to help reach convergence, to continue to demonstrate the required leadership by exercising the requisite flexibilities that will ensure that we collectively overcome the present impasse. Furthermore, Nigeria is happy to note that the rule-based multilateral trading system embodied in the WTO provides stability and predictability in international relations, and therefore encourages Members to recommit themselves to addressing the specific challenges and situation of the LDCs, Small and Vulnerable, the NFIDC, the low-income countries, the small island countries, the land-locked and the C-4 countries, among others.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Nigeria is pleased to note that, in spite of the prevailing challenges, MC9 has been able to take some important decisions on TRIPS non-violation and situation complaints; E-Commerce; SVEs work programme; extension of transition period for LDCs under Article 66.1 of the TRIPS Agreement; the LDC services waiver; and the accession of Yemen. On this note, Nigeria would like to welcome Yemen to the WTO

family and hope its membership would be beneficial to the multilateral trading system.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Since the last Ministerial Conference, Nigeria has continued the efforts to implement a comprehensive reform agenda to further transform the country and the economy under the able leadership of Mr. President, which is why for the second year running, Nigeria is the no.1 destination for investment in Africa, and one of the fastest growing economies in the world. It has also been working proactively to improve the economy by creating conducive environment for doing business. The Government has taken necessary steps to diversify the productive base away from over reliance on oil as the mainstay of the economy, by encouraging the development of the non-oil sector. The various efforts and reform put in place to restructure the economy have started yielding results. Trade and development policy has been assigned a very critical role in the NV 20:2020, and the subsequent implementation plans. In that regard, Nigeria is reviewing its existing trade policy framework, in order to fully take advantage of its participation in international trade at both multilateral and regional levels. Nigeria would welcome and appreciate support and assistance from development partners, in order to sustain the trade capacity necessary to meet our international obligations, as well as achieve our development objectives. This support is indispensable given the implementation challenges arising from the commitment associated with the Trade Facilitation Agreement. As a result, Nigeria wishes to call for increased collaboration between the WTO and other international organisations, with a view to ensuring coherence in economic policy-making.

11. In conclusion, let me reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to the objectives and principles of the multilateral trading system, and assure that Nigeria will work assiduously with all Members in the pursuit of our shared goals. We fully support the statements made by Morocco on behalf of the Africa Group; Jamaica on behalf of the ACP, Nepal on behalf of the LDCs and Burkina Faso on behalf of the C4.

12. I thank you.