



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF TRADE AND
INDUSTRY, ALHAJI USMAN BOIE KAMARA

AT THE
NINTH WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO) MINISTERIAL
CONFERENCE

(December 3-6, 2013, Bali, Indonesia)

Mr. Chairman,
Director General
Colleague Ministers
Distinguished Delegates

Sierra Leone would like to express its gratitude to the Government and people of Indonesia for hosting this Conference and for the generous hospitality that it has accorded to delegates. My delegation would also like to thank the Director General of WTO, Mr Roberto Azevedo for his untiring efforts to ensure the successful conclusion of this Conference.

It is a great pleasure and honour for me, to make this brief statement at this 9th WTO Ministerial Conference, assembled in Bali today, on behalf of the government and people of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

As a member of WTO, Sierra Leone shares the common objective to demonstrate the importance of the Multilateral Trading System, which governs global trade, and the inclusiveness offered by it, as well as the need to keep it alive and strengthen it.

Without this system, its fairness and transparency, we risk being excluded from the integration process with severe consequences for LDC's development agendas. That is precisely why I would like to express the concern of Sierra Leone over the

lack of progress on most of the issues of the Doha Development Agenda, which undermines the aspiration of LDCs and perpetuates poverty.

Sierra Leone has been recovering from conflict over the past decade. Our aspiration is to achieve middle-income status by 2035. Our vision, as reflected in our recently launched *Agenda for Prosperity 2013-2017* is strongly linked to trade for growth and development. A key element of this *Agenda* is to build a stable and diversified economy, founded on private sector-led growth and competitiveness.

In relation to the proposed Bali package, Sierra Leone would like to make the following observations.

First and foremost, the Trade Facilitation Agreement would offer Sierra Leonean and foreign enterprises benefits, in terms of reduced time and costs to import into or export from our country. However, we would need considerable investment in infrastructure services, such as transport, power supply and telecommunications, in order to ensure an enabling environment for us to reap the full benefits of this Agreement. Sierra Leone is heartened by the flexibilities accorded to LDCs in this Agreement.

In addition, Sierra Leone notes the component of the package on Agriculture. Agreeing on these provisions would allow us to move on with the more substantive issues related to Agriculture as contained in the Doha Development Agenda.

Furthermore, Sierra Leone would like to acknowledge the significance of the LDC package that has been negotiated in Geneva, in preparation for this Conference. This package, even if it does not fully meet our expectations, in terms of coverage and commitments, could still be beneficial to us, and would serve as a stepping stone for continued engagement in the context of the Doha Development Agenda.

Finally, to this end, Sierra Leone calls for the conclusion of this Bali package, which has been put on the table, so that we can continue with the main business of further establishing a fair and inclusive multilateral trading system, which allows each one of us to fully utilise its comparative advantage, for the benefit of sustainable long term development.

Reaping the benefits from WTO membership does not come automatically. Sierra Leone continues to be in need of trade related capacity building to address shortcomings in the public and private sector institutions. In this regards, Sierra Leone appreciates the Aid for Trade agenda including the Enhanced Integrated

Framework. This Framework has assisted us over the years to formulate and implement sound trade-related policies, strategies and projects.

We support a continued role of EIF in leveraging funds to meet the challenges of integrating with the global trading system. In addition, the EIF could be instrumental in meeting the commitments flowing from the Bali package, especially in the area of Trade Facilitation.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to stress that we need to preserve and strengthen the Multilateral Trading System. But it would need to deliver concrete and convincing results. The Doha Development Agenda has been under negotiation for much too long. It is now time to give it some impetus. Sierra Leone believes that in order to identify the bottlenecks that have hitherto hampered progress, and to identify ways and means to move it forward, a close and transparent examination needs to be made. It is in this connection that my delegation calls on this Conference to recommend steps in this direction.

A longer term development perspective should be aimed at ensuring inclusiveness and a more beneficial multilateral trading system, offering opportunities to all, including the least privileged countries.

Mr Chairman,

The world stands at the crossroads of history. Through trade, we can transform the lives of people throughout the world. Developed countries have a duty to their people to ensure that resources are not wasted. Developing countries have a duty also to lift their people from abject poverty. To meet both objectives, we need to engage each other with honesty, transparency and flexibility.

I thank you for your attention.