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MOZAMBIQUE

Statement by H.E. Mr Salvador Namburete
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Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Mozambique and, indeed, on my own behalf, upon your election to preside over our deliberations at this Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference. We will continue to fully cooperate with you in the discharge of your noble duties.

Let me join the previous speakers in thanking the Government and people of the State of Qatar for hosting this Conference, for the warm hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in this beautiful country, and for the excellent working arrangements put at our disposal to ensure the successful holding of this event.

As I am taking the floor after the statement by the honourable Minister of the Republic of Malawi, who spoke on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), I would like to take this opportunity to associate myself fully with the said statement, particularly with regard to a number of critical issues of paramount importance, not only for the developing countries, but for the overall concerns within the multilateral trading system requiring our concerted efforts for the common good.

As we stand ready to continue to work together with our trading partners, it seems to us that time is of essence in achieving the desired solutions in many outstanding issues. You will agree with me that since the adoption of the Marrakesh Agreement, several issues stand short of implementation for a better participation of the developing countries, and especially for the least-developed countries (LDCs) like Mozambique, in the multilateral trading system (MTS).

On many occasions we have expressed our frustration and serious concern at the imbalances resulting from globalization. Therefore, in order to address these imbalances, Mozambique reaffirms the view that Special and Differential Treatment (S & D) for the developing countries, particularly the LDCs, is a core principle of the WTO. In this regard, this Conference needs to devise special measures to assist LDCs in their efforts to integrate themselves into the multilateral trading system, by providing them with the required technical and financial assistance.

We have an excellent opportunity to capitalize on the Plan of Action agreed at the LDC III Conference in Brussels last May and ensure that the best endeavour language contained in the WTO agreements and decisions is made meaningful and operational, by adopting a decision in Doha, turning them into legally binding commitments.

It seems that the recently created Integrated Framework Trust Fund is not proactive enough to respond to those issues to which we urge more proactive actions by the WTO, in coordination with the other core agencies involved.

We want to place on record our appreciation for some important market access initiatives taken by developed countries, such as the EBAS under the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement, the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA) by the USA, and other preferential schemes including bilateral agreements.

We are, however, seriously concerned about the lack of security of access due to the autonomous nature of GSP and other preferential schemes, whose benefits are permanently threatened by the possibility of a unilateral introduction of limitations or exclusions to products or beneficiary countries; by the uncertain criteria for the triggering mechanisms for such limitation or exclusions; and the limited timeframe of application of preferences. All these factors contribute to the high degree of unpredictability of existing preferential market access schemes.

Another area of serious concern for my delegation with regard to preferential market access arrangements is that of imposing non-trade related conditionalities in the qualifying criteria, aggravated by stringent rules of origin with respect to the industrial capacity of the LDCs.

With regard to access to medicines, Mozambique reaffirms that the flexibility provisions contained in the TRIPS Agreements, whereby Members can take actions to allow for easy access to affordable medicines to combat communicable diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, be upheld. My delegation reiterates the need for the protection of traditional knowledge, through an adequate multilateral legal framework. It also reiterates the need to respect international instruments, such as the Convention on Biodiversity, the FAO Agreement on Access to Vegetable Genetic Resources and the OAU Model Law on the Rights of Local Communities to Biological Resources, among others.

With regard to the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), and bearing in mind the importance of this sector in Mozambique as the main source of rural livelihoods, employing more than 80 per cent of the labour force, it is our view that the objective should be to achieve substantial improvement on market opportunities for all agricultural products of export potential and interest for developing countries through a considerable reduction of tariffs and the elimination of quotas.

We recognize that the progress made in the negotiations on trade in services should be in a manner to eliminate the imbalances between developed and developing countries in the development of this sector.

Before I conclude, allow me to express my delegation's view that implementation issues should be given primacy over the new ones, in the context of any future work of our Organization.

On Singapore issues, Mozambique recognizes that issues such as trade and investment, competition, government procurement, trade facilitation, trade and environment and e-commerce are of utmost importance. However, we have the view that these issues are not a priority at this stage and that the on-going study processes should continue in order to prepare for possible future work.

It is our understanding that WTO should continue playing a proactive role, based on transparent rules with a view to restore the confidence among its Members in the process of liberalization and globalization of the world economy.

Let me conclude by adding my voice to those who preceded me in welcoming and congratulating the People's Republic of China on its accession to the family of the WTO.

We equally welcome, in anticipation, the accession of the Customs Territories of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu scheduled to take effect during the course of this Ministerial Conference.