



WTO TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY ACCESSIONS PROGRAMME

SECOND GLOBAL SEMINAR ON WTO ACCESSIONS
SAUDI ARABIA 10-YEAR WTO ACCESSION SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY SESSION
ACCESSIONS BOOK LAUNCH BY WTO DIRECTOR-GENERAL ROBERTO AZEVEDO

*Statement by H.E. Ms. Amina Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary
for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Kenya*

Panel 5: WTO Accessions, the Trading System and the Global Economy

Geneva, Wednesday, 30 September 2015, 13:40 – 13:50, Room W

Good afternoon again,

Thank you Mark Linscott for Moderating this Panel

Distinguished panellists,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. I am delighted to be with you again. The focus of my remarks is on Africa. Before I do, let me make a few comments on the global economy.
2. Currently, in the global economy, this is a moment of uncertainty, transition, absence of momentum and, weak growth with several economies teetering on recession. Many major economies are facing a range of pressures: huge debt loads, BOP pressures and liquidity crises. Several are recovering from turbulence in security markets. Developing countries face a series of tough challenges in 2015, including reduced revenue in the current downturn of the commodity cycle. Recent estimates from major institutions indicate that economic growth this year will be disappointing.
3. This is where the role and contributions of the WTO shall be influential if not determining in supporting domestic economic law and policy, institutional and structural reforms to assist countries modernize, diversify, improve the business environment and diversify. To be clear, to repeat that famous witty expression: "development is what countries do to themselves"; the role of third parties, including multilateral institutions can only be supportive.
4. Africa offers a huge source of opportunity for growth and recovery in the global economy. This is a fundamental message as Members prepare for Nairobi, Kenya and MC10.



5. Here are a few facts and numbers:

- Africa is the second most populous continent with 1.1 billion people in 2013. The market potential is real and growing! It is the Continent growing at a fast pace: Africa's population is projected to double to 2.3 billion by the middle of the century, accounting for over half of the global population growth. By the end of this century, there will be 4 billion Africans, counting for 40% of global population. Imagine how that world would look like then.
- Africa is not only populous, but young. Today, 47% of Africans are below 18 years old. Again, by the middle of the century, nearly a half of new births in the world will come from Africa. The youth brings dynamism to the African economy, but also challenges which require both social and economic infrastructure to accommodate them.
- Africa is no longer just the "dream" of a growth frontier for the 21st century. It is growing fast! Once described by The Economist, with every professional candour, as "the hopeless continent" as recently as the beginning of this century, Africa is significantly different today. Africa has grown at annual GDP growth rate at 5.6% between 2000 and 2010.
- Today, Africa is one of the fastest growing regions in the world, second only to emerging and developing Asia. In 2014, six of the ten world's fastest growing economies were African (i.e. Chad, DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone). The African Continent has turned the corner. Now, Africa is called the "rising and emerging Continent", with abundance of opportunities, optimism and dynamism. Yet, there is a lot more to be done. The Continent is still confronted by governance challenges which impose significant costs.

6. Thanks to WTO Members for choosing Africa, Kenya in particular, to host the 10th Ministerial Conference, on the Organisation's 20th anniversary, to set a new agenda for its future. I see this Ministerial for Africa as a timely opportunity to showcase its growth opportunities and invite investors both domestic and foreign to join-up with us Africans in the work under way reform, modernise and transform the Continent.

7. For Africa, we also want to realize more dividends from our WTO membership which is an instrument for domestic reform, the rules of law, greater market access and investment, regulatory cooperation, and good governance.

8. Trade and investment have already played a role in the transformation of Africa over the last two decades, but we need more. The volume of Africa's goods exports grew by 500%, between 1995 and 2013. And inward FDI has grown from US\$ 9 billion in 2000 to 57.2 billion in 2013, over a 600% increase. All investors agree that the rate of return on FDI in Africa is higher than any other developing regions. But, we as Africans must do better to lower risk levels.

9. We, Africans, know that the "status" of emerging Africa requires a shift in our participation and engagement in the Multilateral Trading System. As an emerging market, African engagement should be offensive and ambitious, based on improved competitiveness, with trade rules connected to 21st Century commercial reality. We also look up to the WTO, through negotiating outcomes, to assist in African's connection to regional and global value chains.

10. Members have seen my concluding remarks from the Informal AU Trade Ministers Meeting held in Nairobi on 20 July. African Trade Ministers held an open, healthy and constructive exchange of views on the directions for African Trade Policy in the "changed global landscape" of the 21st Century. I can confirm to you that the language of African engagement in the WTO is now significantly different. It must be. We cannot dwell on the tedious and sterile language of trade policy that achieved nothing. Nobody eats words, but bread and better! We should seek a high on investments and not from rhetoric!



11. African Ministers are fully conscious that in order to maximize opportunities offered by the Continent's recent growth, our economies must sustain a domestic agenda for reform, modernization and diversification so as to improve competitiveness. The agenda of reforms entails economic law and policy, institutional and structural reforms within a framework of a well regulated market economy, the rule of law and good governance.

12. African economies have started to derive positive dividends from domestic reforms which are reflected in high growth, high returns to investment, emergence of new entrepreneurs and businesses. However, we cannot stop here and must deepen the reform agenda so as to ensure the shifts in resource allocation for rapid economic transformation. The role of the WTO is indispensable. The agenda of the organization matters hugely for Africa.

13. In this regard, the Trade Facilitation Agreement offers the best example of how the Multilateral Trading System can help Africa deepen its domestic reform agenda and deliver on its 21st Century trade agenda. Africa's trade potentials cannot be fully realised unless bottlenecks and impediments are removed at customs and borders, especially for 16 landlocked countries.

14. Africa looks for MC10 deliverables which would further assist the Continent in deepening the domestic reform agenda, based on competitiveness, growth, trade and investment. This should be in addition to finding outcomes and solutions to the outstanding Doha agenda which are key to unlocking the Continent's growth potentials, including in the areas of market access – AG, NAMA and services - AG domestic support, and new and updated rules.

15. Finally, I look forward to welcoming many of you in Nairobi to see and feel yourselves the emerging Continent of growth.
