



## **Inclusive Trade Through WTO Accessions as a Means of Achieving UN SDGs:**

**Speech by: HE Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri**

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**Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning, and thank you for being here today.

Before beginning, and as first speaker, I would like to welcome the new WTO Deputy Director General, Mr. Alan Wolff, and wish him the best of luck at the Organization and look forward to working with him in the future. I would also like to thank the WTO Accessions Division for their efforts in organising this event in cooperation with the Arab Group at the WTO.

The Arab Group at the WTO, is currently composed of 13 members, and has been growing since the WTO was established. Since the year 2000, 4 Arab countries have acceded: Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia and more recently Yemen. Through the WTO, these members have been able to noticeably develop their economies through the power of inclusive trade being part of a rules based multilateral trading system.

Inclusive trade through the World Trade Organization has long been recognised as a catalyst for the economic growth and poverty reduction that contribute to the promotion of sustainable development both by the 2030 Agenda and its accompanying Sustainable Development Goals.

More concretely, trade-related issues in the SDGs are reflected primarily under SDG 17: "to Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development which has three trade-specific targets."

The first target, promotes a "universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the WTO", including through the conclusion of DDA. This focus on the WTO in this Agenda sends a clear message of the centrality of this organization to sustainable development.

The next target, a rather self-explanatory one, aims to "Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020".

The final specific trade target, calls for "implementation of a duty-free and quota-free (DF-QF) market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries." This, as many of you know, has been a very active and fruitful discussion at the WTO, as evident in the recent Bali and Nairobi WTO decisions that encourage both developed countries, and developing countries declaring themselves in a position to do so, to provide or improve DFQF treatment to imports from LDCs.

However, that is not just restricted to trade in goods. For many Arab economies, the development of their services sector and open access to global services markets after Accession will continue to be crucial to help them achieve a number of the SDGs.

Through the WTO's GATS Agreement, Acceding government are put well on their way to achieve a number of SDGs, such as SDG 8.10 "to Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all."

As well as SDG 9.c "to Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020."

The liberalised and open global services market that the WTO fosters, and with the recent adoption of the Bali and Nairobi Ministerial Decisions on Preferential Treatment in Favour of Service Suppliers of LDCs, can all pave the way for both developing and LDC countries to achieve the aforementioned goals.

This all presents a great opportunity to countries currently in the process of acceding to the WTO. Currently there are 8 Arab countries in the process of accession, many of which have gone through very lengthy negotiations and extensive domestic reform in order to prepare themselves to the join the organisation.

We are of course fortunate to have with us today representatives from Comoros, Sudan, and Somalia who will be providing us with information on the process their countries have gone through in order to achieve accession to the WTO.

In conclusion, membership at the WTO ensures that Arab states can be sure of sustained growth in a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the WTO, it also insures their seat at the negotiating table to help shape the future of world trade for the benefit of their people.

Thank you.

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