



National Statement of the Republic of South Sudan

delivered by

Hon. Deng Deng Hoc Yai,

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at

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Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to speak at this Panel Discussion on *Trade for Peace: Integration of fragile states into the global economy as a pathway towards peace and resilience*. I would like to seize this opportunity to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to the WTO Secretariat for providing a platform to discuss this important topic.

The economy of the Republic of South Sudan presents many opportunities and a few challenges. As the youngest nation in the world, the Republic of South Sudan, like many other least developed and post-conflict countries, has a huge potential and it remains largely unrealised due to the protracted conflicts. The Republic of South Sudan has vast oil reserves; over 640,000 square miles of arable agricultural land; plenty of water from rainfall (7-9 months a year) and River Nile; over 40 Million heads of cattle; and one of the biggest wildlife migrations that can take your breath away. These huge natural resources can greatly contribute to the global economy.

For this reason, trade is a fundamental pillar of the growth strategy of the Republic of South Sudan. As the world economy is becoming deeply interconnected and interdependent through global value chains, we strongly believe that multilateral trade will allow South Sudanese firms to participate in a larger market that offers prospects to economies of scale and productivity gains. Our desire to join the WTO stems from this strong belief. And the first step towards realising this desire has been fulfilled with the establishment of the Working Party on the Accession of South Sudan at the last WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires. The Republic Of South Sudan is already a Member State of the East African Community and its trade policy is compliant with that of the WTO.

That said, we have significant challenges— one of which is the restoration and sustainability of peace and stability. However, our President, H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, signed the Revitalised Peace Agreement in Addis Ababa on 12th September 2018 and we are more confident and optimistic about the future. In my view, the WTO accession process can contribute to peace and stability in many ways. Firstly, the reform nature of the WTO accession process can provide a means for South Sudan to institutionalise international best practices in reforming its economic policies – which is essential for overcoming tensions caused by general resistance to reform. Secondly, the all-encompassing reform process can allow South Sudan to strengthen its economy, which can consequently foster peace. After all, studies have demonstrated that countries that went through the WTO accession process have exhibited more resilience in response to crises. Thirdly, the WTO accession process can provide an avenue for South Sudan to establish inclusive and collaborative mechanisms among key stakeholders. This is essential in any peace-building process, which we all know starts with inclusive dialogues. Finally, being a Member of the WTO shows the world that South Sudan is ready for business and that we want to attract foreign direct investment. It is our firm belief that this will contribute towards poverty eradication by creating jobs for our youth, who constitute 72% of the population and who are attracted to conflicts and lose their lives fighting senseless wars.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my Government's commitment to accede to the WTO in accordance with the principles of the rule of law, transparency, good governance and respect for human rights. South Sudan is an economy in the world and it makes a common sense to ensure that it is integrated into the world economy.

I thank you all!