

**Communication from Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Hong Kong China, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Myanmar, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Viet Nam;
delivered on 7 May 2018**

1. We, 41 developing and developed Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), consider a well-functioning, rules-based multilateral trading system embodied in the WTO to be of key importance for our economies as well as for global economic stability, prosperity and development.

2. We welcome the marked recovery of world merchandise trade in 2017, to which all regions contributed, and are encouraged by the WTO's positive forecast for 2018 and 2019.

3. However, we are concerned about increased trade tensions and related risks for the multilateral trading system and world trade. We encourage WTO Members to refrain from taking protectionist measures and to avoid risks of escalation. We call on Members to resolve their differences through dialogue and cooperation, including through WTO bodies and, as appropriate, recourse to WTO dispute settlement.

4. We consider that action is needed to address major challenges facing the WTO. We particularly note difficulties in concluding negotiations and divergent positions on trade and development. With respect to the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism, we emphasize the importance of filling all current and future vacancies on the Appellate Body without delay. We underline the necessity for Members to contribute to keeping the WTO effective, relevant and responsive to all Members' needs, and we commit to continue working with all Members to improve the WTO.
