



Speech by

H.E. Salah Ahmed Jama

Deputy Prime Minister (DPM)

Federal Government of Somalia

at the

1st Working Party Meeting for Somalia's Accession to the World

Trade Organization (WTO)

Geneva, Switzerland
17 February 2025

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great honor and pride that I stand before you today as the representative of the Federal Republic of Somalia at this historic moment which is the first Working Party Meeting of Somalia's accession process to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Our nation stands at a transformative moment, embracing trade as a catalyst for economic growth, stability, and regional integration. Today, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to leveraging trade and investment as key pillars of our national progress.

Somalia today is a nation on the rise, one that departed with the challenges of the past and has keenly focused on a prosperous future. Our government, under the leadership of His Excellency President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud, has indeed embarked on very transformational changes and I would like to highlight few of the many positive developments that have transpired in the years prior to today.

Political Sphere

Somalia's political trajectory continues to be moving in the right direction, with the pursuit of one-person-one-vote horizon and deepening of federalism. In foreign policy, Somalia has actively taken a proactive

foreign policy where we engage in dialogue to strengthen bilateral and multilateral relations.

We continue to pursue cooperation agreements with neighbouring countries and strategic partners – focusing on security and economic partnerships culminating in the election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2025-2026 term. Multilateralism centred on trade is our foreign policy objective.

National Transformation Plan (Trade as a vehicle for growth)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have a National Development Plan – that we have renamed as a National Transformational Plan –, that is aligned with our current philosophy that departs from our policies of the 70s and 80s in which the role of the state was too large for the economy.

- Our Vision 2060 and National Transformation Plan places trade at the heart of our economic agenda.
- Our NTP aims to attain sustainable development goals and has the following objectives.
 - Transformational governance
 - Sustainable economic growth
 - Human-capital development
 - Environmental and climate resilience

- Infrastructure development

The overarching agenda is sustainable economy that uses trade and investment as the vehicle for growth. Our government's philosophy and vision is grounded in the belief that private sector and trade are the vehicles for achieving the above goals.

Economic Sphere

- Joining the EAC marks a significant milestone in our commitment to regional integration and economic cooperation. EAC membership gives us experiences and know-how to build on when it comes to negotiating trade.
- In addition to integration into African and regional economic forums, such as COMESA, East African Economic Community, and the larger African Economic Framework, Somalia has successfully concluded a series of bilateral and economic cooperation agreements (Turkey, China, Gulf States and neighbouring countries etc)
- Debt relief process under HIPC which took a decade and helped to put in place the regulatory, legal and policy and accountability frameworks which helped us to deal with international partners and build our capacity.

It is with these experiences and preparation and our vision for improving the economic conditions of our society that we come here today.

Somalia's geostrategic location, abundant resources and entrepreneurial citizens

I would like to highlight our geostrategic location, our resources, and most importantly, our human capital as the Somali people are highly entrepreneurial and a trading society throughout history.

Somalia is strategically located in between the Arabian Gulf, East Africa and along one of the world's busiest shipping routes, with a coastline that stretches over 3,000 kilometers. Somalia does not only have continental Africa's longest coastline but is strategically placed in between Bab al Mandab strait, and the Indian Ocean – where 10% of global trade and 30% of global oil shipment passes through annually. That gives us the impetus to become a trading nation. We are blessed with abundant marine resources and fisheries. We have 70 million livestock, and huge potential in agriculture, energy, alternative energy and solar energy. All these elements of the economy and our Somali entrepreneurial community makes us well positioned to benefit from our membership in the World Trade Organization, contribute to the economic growth of our landlocked neighbors, and also become a strategic supply line for global trade and goods.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to emphasize that Somalia is working on multiple dimensions of the economy. Somalia is committed to aligning its trade policies and regulatory frameworks with WTO principles. Over the past years, we have made significant progress in modernizing our trade and investment laws, improving customs procedures, and strengthening institutional capacity. I have been briefed by my team about what the meticulous WTO accession process entails in terms the standards to be met and the efforts that we need to dedicate from our side.

We are also highly counting on the partnership of the Members. With your support, we look forward to an inclusive, fair, and successful accession process that will unlock new opportunities for our people and for global trade.

To conclude, Somalia's story is one that has evolved. In the past, the picture of Somalia used to be portrayed in the global media by others, but today – I just arrived from Munich Security Conference where global issues of this magnitude were being discussed – Somalia, as a Member of the Security Council, presented its views and experience as a State that has

recovered from difficult challenges in the past. We are establishing relationships with key actors.

Our story is one that is futuristic, focusing on sustainable economic growth and anchored on private sector and trading capabilities that we have had historically and hope to improve in the near future.

Together, let us build a brighter future for Somalia and strengthen the global trading system for the benefit of all.

Thank you