

HE Mr. Zayed bin Rashid Alzayani

Minister of Industry, Commerce, and Tourism, Kingdom of Bahrain

At the Tenth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization

Nairobi, Kenya, 15-18 December 2015

Madam Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

I am honored to represent the Kingdom of Bahrain at the WTO Ministerial Conference in the capital of the Republic of Kenya, Nairobi.

I am also greatly honored to convey the greetings of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the King of Bahrain, as well as the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Bahrain to H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta, the Government, and the people of the Republic of Kenya, and to commend their kind hospitality and the excellent organization of this important Ministerial Conference.

Our meeting here today in the heart of the African Continent gives a clear message about the pivotal role embodied in the World Trade Organization, for the solid maintenance and support for the multilateral trade system stability, the sustained expansion of world trade and the economic and social development of developing countries and least-developed countries as well.

Bearing in mind that Africa holds the largest representation of developing, and LDCs membership of the WTO, (43 Countries) it becomes imperative for our meeting here to deliver the maximum trade policy options and commitments in favor of economic development. In this context, we would like to renew our support for reaching a landmark consensus on LDCs and

Small and Vulnerable Economies “SVE” flexibilities, LDCs package including Duty-Free Quota-Free “DFQF” market access, preferential rules of origin, services waiver, Aid for Trade and cotton.

We are equally pleased to note that our meeting here this year marks the 20th Anniversary of the WTO. During such a short span of time, the WTO and its innovative and comprehensive Uruguay agreements generated unprecedented world trade expansion and diversification. While world trade has grown with a faster pace, new sectors like services, intellectual property rights, global value chains, the digital economy, and e-commerce have taken precedence to traditional trade sectors like agriculture and raw materials.

While world trade has more than tripled since the establishment of the WTO in 1995, we take pride in Bahrain’s trade expansion by over 400 per cent during the past twenty years, and we are sure that many WTO members have achieved more impressive trade performances.

Our more accelerated economic reform and diversification, bilateral and regional trade liberalization, and the launch of our 2030 Economic Vision in 2008 rendered Bahrain among the leading service economies, and liberal trading countries at the regional and international levels. Such performance has been enhanced by the rules and principles of the WTO, and commended during our WTO regular Trade Policy Reviews.

We would like also to re-affirm Bahrain’s commitment to the diligent implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement. Upon the approval of the agreement by the Bahraini Government, we have already communicated our notification about implementing list A Measures of the agreement to the WTO. Meanwhile, the legislative proceedings are also on track for the parliamentary ratification of the agreement.

Actually, the unparalleled flexibility and functionalism of the WTO has also supported the creation and operation and monitoring of hundreds of

regional and intra-regional free trade areas and economic integration partnerships, as well as several pluri-lateral agreements.

Moreover, the WTO's role in the world trade governance, trade monitoring, trade policy reviewing, and dispute settlements has also been respected and acclaimed at all its membership levels, small and major countries alike. Such role has been so vital for containing the severe repercussions of the acute world financial and economic crises.

The successful launch of the DDA in 2001, with its ambitious objectives for international trade in general, and for developing countries and LDCs in particular has culminated in the successful conclusion of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in Bali, and in formulating the pressing needs of the developing countries and LDCs.

We are therefore supportive of the view to retain all the hard reached valuable flexibilities, compromises, and formulae of the Doha Declaration, and the ensuing WTO negotiating packages from Bali and Nairobi Ministerials as a building stock for future multilateral negotiating options.

I am also pleased on this occasion to commend the WTO for its success in achieving the full membership of thirty-six new countries during its first twenty years, including the membership of a number of the world's major economies such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, China and Russia, being all members of the G-20.

Madame Chairperson,

It is worth noting that the WTO negotiating machinery has been intensively engaged into tough membership accession negotiations which lasted in some cases for 15-18 years, and resulted in more profound trade liberalization levels and further trade rules commitments, for the benefit of all WTO membership. Among the new members were also 5 Arab Countries, which brought the total Arab membership to 13 countries, in addition to 7 more Arab Countries still seeking WTO membership.

In this regard, Madame Chairperson, Bahrain is for the strengthening of the WTO, by attaining its full universality, especially by further facilitating the accession process for observer developing and least developed countries. We would like here to renew our support for according the WTO observer status to the Arab League, which is an eminent International Governmental Organization “IGO” for almost 70 years, and for Palestine, which has also gained the UN observer status.

For ensuring the future of the multilateral trading system, and the vital role of trade in achieving economic development as stipulated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we have to reach a positive consensus for our Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, especially about S&DT, LDC and Small and Vulnerable Economies “SVE” flexibilities, LDC package including Duty-Free Quota-Free “DFQF” market access, preferential rules of origin, services waiver, Aid-for-Trade and cotton.

In conclusion, Madame Chairperson, we are so grateful for your able guidance and gracious chairing of our Ministerial Conference, and for the Government and People of Kenya for the hosting, and for the hospitality enjoyed by all our conference participants.

Thank you