



Republic of Botswana

STATEMENT

**BY HON VINCENT T. SERETSE
MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**AT THE
TENTH SESSION OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
OF
THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION**

**16 DECEMBER 2015
NAIROBI, KENYA**

**Madam Chairperson Mrs. Mohamed, Director-General Azevêdo,
fellow Ministers, Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

1. First and foremost, we wish to join others in expressing our gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Kenya for their customary warm hospitality as well as the conducive environment for our deliberations.
2. As we mark the twentieth (20th) anniversary of the establishment of the WTO, we acknowledge the continuing relevance of the rules-based Multilateral Trading System and its contribution to global growth and stability. For small countries like Botswana, the platform is crucial as it offers us an opportunity to participate in matters that affect us. It is thus opportune to reaffirm the principles and objectives set out in the 'Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO', in particular Article III relating to the functions of the Organisation.

3. **Madam Chairperson**, in Bali we adopted the Agreement on Trade Facilitation which brought hope to continued engagement on the remaining Doha Development Agenda issues. We as developing countries have made and continue to make efforts to ratify and facilitate the implementation of the Agreement upon its entry into force. We did and continue these efforts in the good faith that we will in-turn invigorate efforts towards the conclusion of the Round.

4. We note with great regret that our Post-Bali Mandate has proved difficult to achieve. This adds to the fact that after a decade and a half of a collective effort towards the conclusion of the DDA, and at a great cost to small economies like ours, we have limited results to show especially in the gateway issues of Agriculture, NAMA and Services. We should, therefore, take the opportunity to reflect on how best to reorganise ourselves so as to achieve our objectives and realise the ambitions we set for ourselves.

5. In this regard, we have to take into account changed landscape since 2001 when we agreed on the Doha Mandate. This way, we can explore together what is profitable and reaffirm that it is only fair that commitments be commensurate with the level of development. Doing so would strengthen the basis for a meaningful contribution to global sustainable development.
6. In shaping the outcome, **Madam Chairperson**, it will be important to reaffirm the principles that have brought us this far such as: the centrality of development, Special and Differential Treatment, Less-Than-Full-Reciprocity for developing and least developed countries, consensus-based decision making, inclusiveness, transparency and member-driven process. These principles should remain an integral part of the WTO's future work.

7. **Madam Chairperson**, as I conclude, let me say that, we should recognise that our common interests are greater than the sum of our differences. So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will leave Nairobi without a clear understanding and commitment on how we progress or shape the future of the WTO's work. This would deal a devastating blow to one of the core WTO functions as a forum for multilateral negotiations. The unfortunate reality is that in the process, the loss will be most heavily borne by Members that can least afford it such as Botswana.

8. Finally, **Madam Chairperson**, let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Liberia and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on their accession to the WTO in 2015.

I thank you **Madam Chairperson**.