

EU statement
Plenary of the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference
16 December 2015

Madam Chairman, Ministers, Director General, vice-chairs, ladies and gentlemen, Ambassadors, dear friends,

I would like to start by thanking Amina Mohamed and the Kenyan people for your hospitality and for organising this conference.

For the last two years we have worked intensively to set the stage for this conference. We started out after Bali with high hopes and high ambitions for a comprehensive deal. We have arrived in Nairobi with a fear that even a smaller outcome is at risk.

The European Union is a strong and dedicated supporter of the multilateral system, and we are worried by this situation. As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of this organisation and the first time we meet in Africa, we should be searching for ambitious outcomes and not worry that politics and tactics will again thwart our efforts.

And we should remember that we are talking about the Doha development round and that means we have the obligation to deliver for the least developed countries.

We have come here to Nairobi with a fixed set of issues to consider. What we have however continued to lack is actual negotiating texts which could serve as a basis for our discussions. This needs to be remedied as soon as possible and I call on the facilitators to do the necessary to make it happen as soon as possible.

The issues we have in front of us are doable. They can be done if there is enough leadership and willingness.

For years we have heard about the importance of agreeing on export competition and the benefits this would bring to developing countries.

The time has come to conclude this deal and there is no better place than Nairobi to do it.

We have done our part. Together with several other WTO Members, we have put forward a joint submission which sets out a realistic compromise on all forms of export support measures. Such a deal would provide tremendous benefits to developing countries and would contribute to making the multilateral trading system fairer. Such a deal would be meaningful and it is doable.

And such a deal coupled with other issues of interest of particular benefit to the Least Developed Countries, would truly make the Nairobi Ministerial Conference a breakthrough moment.

There are several issues in preparation. We are looking forward to them, for instance, we are ready to support more beneficial rules of origin to allow LDC to better integrate in global trade.

However, there are also broader issues to consider. We cannot deny that despite our efforts, this organisation has not functioned as well as we would have liked. We need to create the conditions to allow the machinery of the WTO to advance.

This will not be easy.

What we need is to agree in the coming days on what to do next. Important issues will remain to be addressed and we should continue to negotiate them. We cannot however simply repeat what we have been doing for the last 15 years and expect different results. We need to approach the issues from a different direction and give them the full creativity of our minds.

And, more broadly, we need to inject the dynamism into the organisation by starting to explore here issues that we negotiate in regional deals; this will provide more flexibility to our organisation and allow it to advance in areas relevant for trade today.

If we do that, the organisation we so much aim to support will regain again a central role in trade negotiations.

I look forward to working together with all of you to achieve that.

Thank you Madam Chairman.
