



*Permanent Mission of the
Arab Republic of Egypt
Commercial Office
Geneva*



Statement of
H.E. Tarek Kabil
Minister of Trade and Industry, Egypt
Plenary Session
WTO Tenth Ministerial Conference
Nairobi - Kenya
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**Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegations,**

It gives me great pleasure to participate for the first time at the WTO Ministerial Conference. And I am proud it being held for the first time in Africa; in the brotherly country Kenya, to whom we express our gratitude for hosting this conference, and for the warm welcome and hospitality we received from the people and government of Kenya since our arrival.

The last ministerial meeting on African soil was the one held in Marrakesh, Morocco in April 1994, to establish the World Trade Organization. Since the signing of the Marrakesh Agreement, the multilateral trading system has come a long way. It is timely that we meet again in Africa to celebrate twenty years of hard work in pursuing our vision of a rule-based multilateral trading system that promotes the growth and development of all its Members.

As you may well know, Egypt has been experiencing political transition and economic transformation that posed several challenges, leading to the current situation where Egypt's economy is poised to launch into a new phase of growth and development during which Trade and Investment Policies will take a centred stage.

As a market economy, Egypt's policy orientation is clear. The creation of a competitive environment hospitable to productive foreign investment and generating employment opportunities, is a priority for the leadership and government. This also highlights the importance of the WTO's rule-based system for Egypt's trade and investment.



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In addition, with the recent conclusion of the parliamentary elections, Egypt's new Parliament will soon be in a position to ratify the Trade Facilitation Agreement among other agreements in the pipeline.

Mr. Chairman,

The track record of the WTO over the past twenty years has been solid, to say the least, across all those functions except one. The negotiating function has obviously not been advancing very well and reached a point today where it became the biggest institutional challenge facing the WTO.

Our biggest and most important question today, is how can we make the negotiating arm of the WTO operational once more. Our determination in establishing this system envisioned the WTO as a forum for continuing negotiations aiming at serving the interest of all its Members. Today, unfortunately, the reality is that this function has not performed anywhere close to our aspirations.

Having said so, the vision of Egypt encompasses the following:

- The Doha Work Programme was conceived to serve our negotiating objectives and to deal with our priority issues as developing countries.
- Most of those issues are still outstanding, and what we really care about is addressing the issues and resolving them through satisfactory outcomes according to our priorities and the collective will of the Organization membership.
- In other words, the issues under the Doha Work Programme will not go away and sooner or later, will have to be taken up.
- More importantly, the integration of the development component in trade governance is not just associated with the Doha Work Programme, but it is there to stay.
- Outcomes of trade negotiations must provide the policy space for economic diversification for industrialisation.



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- Important principles, such as Special and Differential Treatment for developing countries, as well as Less than Full reciprocity, shall remain the overarching principles in trade liberalization.

We wish the Conference every success.

Thank You.