

UK STATEMENT TO THE WTO 10th MINISTERIAL PLENARY

This is a historic moment in WTO history, the first conference to be held in an Africa country.

Congratulations Kenya for hosting, concluding a year of major development, climate and trade conferences.

This affirms the central role of Africa in trade and global economic growth.

The WTO is committed to strengthening the multilateral trading system.

It's worth reminding ourselves why: trade is crucial for jobs, growth and development.

On the 20th anniversary of the WTO, there is much progress to celebrate.

The WTO has proven its value in preserving and progressing open global trade.

Our community has grown to 161 members, accounting for 98% of global trade flows, and the cost of average tariffs has halved.

To enable all countries to participate in the global trading system, support is provided for those members most in need.

Increasingly solid global trade rules are implemented and respected, trade barriers are historically low.

WTO plays a key role in achieving this.

We uphold our commitment to development and inclusiveness by ensuring members can effectively craft the rules governing global trade.

Increasingly countries recognise the benefits of WTO membership.

This week we welcome Afghanistan and Liberia to our community.

Accessions all the more significant as these are countries emerging from conflict on the cusp of joining the global trade system.

I'm proud of the support of the UK and our partners in making this happen.

This signals to investors that Afghanistan and Liberia are open for business.

But while we should celebrate progress, we cannot be complacent, challenges prevail.

Reaching agreement here in Nairobi won't be easy, but we must persevere and make progress where we can, maintaining momentum towards liberalisation.

We're on the verge of an important agreement on agricultural export competition.

Let's use this week to conclude negotiations and send a message to farmers that the days of distorted export subsidies and trade barriers are ending.

In Bali, we agreed the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

We must not wait another two years before implementing TFA.

Concluding the second phase of the Information Technology Agreement signals that we can agree deals in the WTO with will and momentum.

We cannot afford to let 2016 be a year of reflection only, we must advance world trade.

This means considering new ideas, new ways of working together and new compromises where necessary.

This will ensure the WTO remains central to improving the open global trading environment.