

STATEMENT BY HON. EKWOW SPIO-GARBRAH,
MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY OF GHANA
AT THE TENTH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE, NAIROBI, KENYA
16 DECEMBER 2015

Madam Chair,

Director General of the WTO,

Colleague Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you H.E. Ambassador Amina Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary of the Republic of Kenya, and your Vice Chairs on your election to preside over this Conference which is the first of its kind to be held in Africa by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

2. On behalf of the Government and people of Ghana, I wish to express gratitude for the warm welcome and hospitality extended by Government and people of the Republic of Kenya.

3. We also commend the efforts of the Director-General (DG), the Chair of the General Council and all those involved for their relentless efforts and salute you all on the twentieth anniversary commemoration of the establishment of the WTO.

4. My delegation would also like to support the group statements made by the distinguished representatives of Lesotho and Barbados on behalf of the African Group and the ACP Group respectively.

Madam Chair,

5. Ghana reaffirms the WTO's role as the pre-eminent forum for multilateral trade negotiations through which many of the poorest and most vulnerable countries can truly benefit from international trade as well as the objectives embodied in the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) to bring growth, development, and trading opportunities to Members.

6. However, Ghana's expectations have not been met by the on-going DDA negotiations' inability to secure meaningful development outcomes. The need to address the imbalance in the Multilateral Trading System remains urgent and critical, and that the prime objective of the Doha Development Agenda with development at the center remains justifiable.

7. The surge in plurilateral, preferential trade and bilateral trade agreements undermines the functionality of the WTO negotiating mandate. It is therefore crucial that the negotiating role of the WTO is reinvigorated to restore the credibility of the organization. We call on key WTO members to show leadership by bringing their energies back to the multilateral negotiating table, as opposed to pursuing these plurilateral initiatives.

Madam Chair,

8. Ghana recognises the Mini-Package for Nairobi and acknowledges its systemic importance for LDCs integration into the global trading system; we reiterate that agriculture remains central to Africa's agenda at the WTO and emphasize the urgent need to enhance its market access to support value added products, job creation, poverty alleviation and overall development of the Agriculture sector.

9. We are all widely aware of the development narrative that these negotiations hold and as such require a dynamic and timely approach as I asserted earlier. It is our expectation that negotiations on these issues will

be expedited and concluded in a manner that would give true meaning to the DDA upon our return to Geneva.

10. In this spirit we recognize and welcome progress made to date in the regular work of the WTO including in the Accession of Liberia and Afghanistan to the WTO community. We further welcome the decision to continue the work on eCommerce based on the existing mandate and guidelines of the Work Programme for Members to maintain the current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions until our next session which we have decided to hold in 2017.

Madam Chair,

11. To conclude, Ghana wishes to reiterate that the DDA will not be successfully concluded until the developmental objectives and all areas of interest to African countries, particularly Agriculture, Development and LDCs issues, have been fully addressed and the systemic imbalances in the multilateral trading system that disadvantage developing countries have been redressed. My delegation remains committed to the Multilateral Trading System which gives confidence to the entire trading community.

I thank you for your attention. Asante Sana