

Madam Chair, I extend warm and fraternal greetings from the Government and People of Grenada, and have the honor of delivering this statement on behalf of the OECS Economic Union Members of the WTO.

Chair, it is a signal historic moment for us to be convened here in Nairobi, Kenya for this 10th Ministerial-the first to be held on the soil of our motherland. We join with other Members in expressing our deepest gratitude to our brothers and sisters, the Government and People of Kenya, for the excellent arrangements and facilitation afforded us at this Meeting.

Indeed, this has been homecoming for many of our Delegations.

We have returned home to the origin of an important tributary of our abundantly diverse stream of Caribbean civilization, to pursue negotiating objectives which relates to deliverables in two time frames. Deliverables now “what is possible here at this 10th Ministerial in Nairobi by tomorrow; and Deliverables later, pertaining to those elements which must be brought forward to a Post-Nairobi WTO Process.

Madame Chair the Member States of the OECS Economic Union would like to reiterate the importance of the rules based Multilateral Trading System for our economies. For Countries such as ours, there are no alternative configurations, for trade negotiations with than the WTO.

Madame Chair, our economies, continues to struggle with recovery in the post-adjustment period.

Indeed, the small economies of the Caribbean evidenced four times the growth of other small economies in the early 1970s. Today, GDP growth among Caribbean economies is less than the growth of other small economies, and is forecasted to fall further.

Madame Chair, over the last twenty years the WTO has served us as well as we have empowered it to.

None of us are afflicted with naivety.

Trade negotiations are a difficult craft. And having regard to the multiplicity of factors and circumstances which affects the scope of ambition and content, a Member-driven WTO can only deliver that which the political “market will bear”.

However, after fourteen years of pursuing the DDA, it is regrettable that consensus on major issues of interest has eluded us.

Accordingly, Madame Chair, this is defining epoch for our economies and for the WTO.

It is no secret that the OECS economies have already paid a heavy price for our participation in the multilateral trading system. Still, we continue to make daily installments of goodwill and rank among the world’s most open economies.

But it is also undeniable, that we are among the world’s smallest and most vulnerable economies. And while we have made significant advances in areas such as climate change heralded by the Paris Accord at COP 21 agreed by the global community; OECS Members as SVE’s have experienced significant challenges on the trade front, to the need for accommodation of our specific needs and flexibilities at the multilateral level.

What is even more troubling for us Madame Chair, is the unintended consequence of the policy machinations of developed countries on the one hand and advanced developing countries on

the other, which threatens to hold hostage critical flexibilities, required by SVE's which require them most.

Such is the plight of the OECS.

It is undeniable that as a group of small and vulnerable Developing economies, we greater flexibility to treat with our existential and impending policy imperatives, in agriculture, fisheries, NAMA, rules and services.

Madame Chair, it is critical for our Delegations that we build on the progress of the past several year as they pertain to the flexibilities identified for SVEs thus far, in the negotiations.

Pertaining to Deliverables later, In the Post-Nairobi agenda, it will also be essential for Members to commit to according the requisite accommodation for the additional flexibilities which will be required by Countries such as ours.

Such a commitment is not beyond the capacity of this Ministerial.

There is no denying that developing countries are not all the same. And while recent noises on differentiation continues to take place among some members, we are not particularly interested in this battle per say.

But we are very interested in finding ways to address our particular needs and concerns without the risk of becoming collateral damage.

In that regard, Madam Chair, the work programme on small economies is of critical importance to our Delegations. We welcome the reaffirmation and commitment to that work

programme contained in the draft decision which we anticipate will be adopted at this Ministerial Conference.

Madam Chair, as idyllic Small Island Developing States (SIDS), fishing plays a significant role in our economies from a food security, livelihood security and poverty reduction standpoint.

Preservation of our fishing interest is preservation of our way of life.

We are therefore committed to working towards an outcome in Rules on Fisheries, and regret that our collective ambition could only deliver, what now appear to be “Transparency-plus” commitments. We have joined common cause with New Zealand, Fiji, and other in issuing a Ministerial Statement on Fisheries Subsidies.

Mr. Chairman we affirm our commitment to a positive conclusive outcome on cotton at this the 10th Ministerial Conference.

We also join with other Members in welcoming as new Members, Liberia and Afghanistan into the WTO.

Madame Chair, we wish to fully associate ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of our wider Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Grouping.

We also fully associate with the Ministerial Communiqué and Declaration issued by the SVEs.

I thank you.