

10th WTO Ministerial Conference
15-18 December 2015
Nairobi, Kenya

Statement by Senator, the Honourable Arnold J Nicholson
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Jamaica

Jamaica wishes to congratulate Kenya, host of this Ministerial Conference, for the excellent arrangements for this conference and to assure the Government of Kenya of Jamaica's full support in ensuring the success of this historic Ministerial.

I also wish to congratulate Liberia and Afghanistan on their accessions which bring the membership of the WTO to 163. This demonstrates our confidence in the rules-based multilateral trading system (MTS) and the role of the WTO. A rules-based Multilateral Trade System is critical as it provides greater predictability and transparency in global trade relations. This is particularly important for small and vulnerable economies (SVEs), like Jamaica and other CARICOM countries, which are highly dependent on trade and for whom trade is a primary engine of growth and development.

The MTS is not perfect. There are necessary reforms that must be undertaken in order to ensure that countries, such as those in the Caribbean, can truly secure economic gains from trade and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030. As you know, trade is a means of implementing these Goals.

The WTO Doha Development Agenda (DDA) is expected to deliver essential changes to the multilateral trading system placing the needs and interests of developing countries at its core. We have been concerned about lack of progress in the DDA and the failure to deliver on a work programme to complete it as we instructed at Bali. Indeed, we are now gravely concerned that after the promise of

renewed effort to address all aspects of the DDA some Members are precipitously questioning the utility of the DDA and are calling for the WTO “to turn the page on the DDA”. If we heed this call, we would be delivering a mortal blow to the WTO’s commitment to the issue of development.. Can we realistically send such a message to the international community? There is need for greater coherence in our approach to trade and development. On the one hand, we have agreed in the UN on SDGs and have even highlighted the role that trade can play as an implementation measure in Goal 17. On the other hand, we are calling for the end of DDA . While we recognise that there may be need for recalibration, this reality check cannot be hinged on the abandonment of the DDA. Rather, we should be uniting in a concerted effort to find ways to secure a successful outcome to the negotiating agenda to which this organisation has committed itself for the better part of its existence.

We must not lose sight of the DDA’s original mandate- which is to *“make positive efforts designed to ensure that developing countries secure a share in world trade that is commensurate with the needs of their economic development.”* This commitment cannot be abandoned especially at a time when we have united in commitment to sustainable development goals as the overarching focus of the international system To this end, we must draw on all the positive elements of the DDA and the progress already achieved such as was demonstrated at Bali. Special and differential treatment must remain a fundamental pillar of the work of the WTO.It must be translated into tangible outcomes including less than full reciprocity and the provision of appropriate flexibilities for developing countries, such as Jamaica, other CARICOM countries and SVEs.

As you know very well, the WTO has sought to address the acknowledged vulnerabilities of SVEs including to exogenous shocks. The vulnerability of SVEs derives from a combination of factors including structural weaknesses, which characterise their economies. In many cases these are being exacerbated by climate change. Trade support instruments can assist SVEs in building their resilience and in strengthening their capacity to absorb exogenous shocks. The DDA made valuable progress in advancing measures that can play a role in

supporting SVEs in their efforts to use trade as an instrument for resilience building. These remain important to all SVEs. In terms of the DDA we recognise that the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement which we agreed at Bali will contribute to efforts to use trade as an engine of growth and development, based on efficiency gains and ease of doing business which is a priority for our stakeholders. Jamaica has now deposited its Instrument of Ratification to the WTO and will now join the growing number of Members that have done so.

The stakes are high for the multilateral trading system. We need to take bold steps to secure the development agenda which we reposed in the DDA. All WTO Members, large medium and small must be able to benefit from global trade and to achieve sustainable economic growth and development. The WTO cannot be decoupled from the Global development agenda. It would be a tragedy if the disconnection of the WTO and its trade negotiating agenda from the universal push for sustainable development were to be the legacy of Nairobi. My delegation is ready to work with others to ensure that this is prevented. We wish to seize the moment and make Nairobi and MC 10 historic not just because of this special place we find ourselves – in Africa, or the time at which we are gathered, the 20th year of our organisation. Let it be known as the place in which we confronted the role of trade in advancing the goal of sustainable development, especially for the weaker and more vulnerable among us. Let us here in this place of history and great struggle named after a giant of this continent, forge a new and lasting commitment to ensuring that the trade rules and programmes of the WTO foster sustainable economic growth and development for all.

CARICOM STATEMENT

**DELIVERED BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE,
SENATOR THE HONOURABLE A.J. NICHOLSON, Q.C.,
ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY AT THE
TENTH WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE,
NAIROBI, KENYA
16TH DECEMBER, 2015**

Madam Chair,

On behalf of the Caribbean Community, I wish to say that it is indeed a pleasure to be here in Nairobi, the first WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in the great continent of Africa. We would like to thank and commend our hosts, the Government and the people of Kenya, for their very warm hospitality and excellent arrangements for this Conference. The fact that the WTO is also celebrating its 20th anniversary gives special meaning to our presence here this week.

CARICOM has been a strong supporter of a rules-based multilateral trading system. We joined the consensus to launch the Doha Work Programme, commonly known as the Doha Development Round. This Round promised that issues of particular concern to developing countries, including small and vulnerable economies and least developed countries, would be at the heart of our work and decisions.

Our countries engaged fully in the Doha negotiations in Geneva and with the close involvement of our capitals. We emphasised the principles of special and differential treatment and less than full reciprocity. At the same time, we recognised that we would be required to undertake new commitments once agreement was reached. In this context, we are pleased that five of our Member States have already ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement, adopted at the Bali Ministerial Meeting.

CARICOM continues to support the Doha Development Round. We regret that after 14 years of negotiations, we have not been able to reach an agreement which would have delivered the development dimension which brought us to the negotiating table. We recognise that it may be necessary to discuss, post Nairobi,

appropriate ways in which we can address the issues in the Doha Agenda, in order to achieve successful outcomes. In this effort, it is vital that we preserve and secure the progress achieved over the past years, particularly those contained in our Ministerial decisions and negotiating texts which relate to special and differential treatment, less than full reciprocity, special measures and flexibilities for small and vulnerable economies and least developed countries.

Madam Chair, 2015 has been a good year so far for multilateralism. The decisions taken on Financing for Development, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and most recently, COP21, give us hope that the world community can collectively find solutions to pressing global issues. CARICOM hopes that this meeting in Nairobi will take meaningful decisions which will signal that the multilateral trading system, embodied in the WTO, can do the same.

We hope, therefore, that we will be able to adopt, inter alia, decisions relating the G90 proposals on Special and Differential treatment provisions including those related to small, vulnerable economies and least developed countries; agricultural issues, including the Special Safeguard Mechanism, which was proposed by the G33 in November, 2015; Fisheries Subsidies; the Work Programme on Small Economies; and special measures for least developed countries.

Finally, CARICOM wishes to congratulate the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Liberia on their accession to the WTO. We wish to recall that one of our Member States continues to pursue its accession negotiations. We urge the WTO Members to recognise that as a small, vulnerable economy, it should not be called upon to make concessions beyond its level of development and vulnerability.