

**10th World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference
15-18 December 2015, Nairobi, Kenya**

**Statement by HE Mrs. Zhanar Aitzhanova
Minister of Economic Integration of Kazakhstan
at the Plenary Session**

Wednesday, 16 December 2015

Dear Minister Amina Mohamed,
Director General Roberto Azevedo,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

This is a big honor for me to address such a distinguished audience as a new, 162-nd member of the WTO. Today – 16-th of December - the day when Kazakhstan is celebrating 24th anniversary of its independence.

Our journey to WTO membership was not an easy one and was full of challenges. This is proved not only by length of our accession process (almost 20 years of 24 years of our independent history we were inspiring to become a WTO member), but also by the complexity of issues that we addressed jointly with our WTO members in the course of our accession process.

Kazakhstan's accession was possible thanks to bold market economy and trade liberalization reforms undertaken by the government under the leadership of President Nazarbayev, as well as his political commitment and personal involvement. This was also possible thanks to constructive engagement, continued support and creativity of our Working Party members and the able team of the Secretariat.

As many of you may know, Kazakhstan is a landlocked country, remotely located from the major markets for its exports of commodities. As one of the top exporters of wheat, we used to apply export subsidies to cover part of the transportation cost for export of wheat to the Black sea.

Yet, in order to join the WTO, we made a very painful decision to our economy – we committed to eliminate export subsidies from the date of accession.

Today, as a newly conceded member, I would like to ask WTO members to follow the example of Kazakhstan and come up from this Ministerial Conference with the firm agreement on export competition, particularly on elimination of export subsidies for agricultural products.

This will demonstrate one more time the relevance of the WTO to our constituencies back home. In this regard, I would like to note that the WTO is very much relevant, this is proven by the fact that 35 members joined this organization since it has been founded and another 20 countries are at different stages of the accession process.

Here, I would like to congratulate Liberia and our regional partner Afghanistan with successful completion of their accession negotiations.

I also would like to inform that Kazakhstan ratified along with its WTO accession package the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Dear Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlement!

Using this opportunity, I would like to invite your governments and companies to take part in EXPO 2017 which will be hosted by Kazakhstan

in Astana. The theme of EXPO – Energy of future, about alternative energy sources, clean technologies, environment and sustainable development. The EXPO 2017 in Astana will promote implementation of the remarkable agreement achieved last week in Paris on climate change.

Despite its brief history as a sovereign nation, Kazakhstan has an extensive experience in a broad array of international initiatives, from nuclear disarmament to international peacekeeping.

Using this opportunity, I would like to mention one the most important recent initiative of my country.

Kazakhstan is bidding for a seat as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for 2017-2018.

If we get elected, we are going to prioritize the issues of international security, fight with terrorism, food and water security, climate change and sustainable development.

Coming back to the agenda of this Ministerial Conference, let me conclude by my favorite quote from Nelson Mandela “If not us then who, if not now, then when?”

Thank you for your attention.