

Statement by H.E. Dr. Tawfig Alrabiah
Minister of Commerce and Industry

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Madame Chair,
Director General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Alssalamu alaikum wa rahmatu Allah wa barakatuh

It is with great pleasure that I extend warm greetings to all the participants in the tenth WTO Ministerial Conference.

On behalf of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our hosts; the Government and people of Kenya, for their kind hospitality and for the excellent arrangements for this Ministerial Conference. We also thank the Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo and all Members of the WTO secretariat for the work and continuous efforts made since our last Ministerial Session.

At this very important stage in the history of the multilateral trading system, what is challenging is not only the lack of progress in the negotiation processes, but the uncertainty of the future of the Doha Round and the implications of this for the credibility and future of the WTO as a negotiating forum.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as an active member of G20 and WTO, remains committed to supporting and strengthening the Multilateral trading system, and our commitment to a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round and the importance of our WTO regular work remains, regardless of the difficulties that may lie ahead.

The completion of the Doha Development Agenda will not only secure a fair share for developing countries, especially the least-developed ones, in the growth of world trade, but will also accelerate the achievement of some important Sustainable Development Goals related to trade.

Madame Chair, Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the WTO and Saudi Arabia's 10th anniversary of its accession to WTO, for which we are grateful, pleased and proud. The Saudi economy has benefitted and will continue to benefit from the WTO membership. In this regard, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes that priority should be given to improve and facilitate the accession process to the WTO with fair conditions for developing countries and LDCs, including the Arab countries and members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation who are still negotiating the terms of their accessions.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Seychelles and Kazakhstan for their accessions to the WTO and welcome the accession of Afghanistan and Liberia.

In addition, Saudi Arabia welcomes the participation of Palestine in this ministerial conference and calls on Members to seriously consider the observer-ship status requested by all intergovernmental organizations, including the League of Arab States to the WTO.

Given the fact that 13 Arab States are members and 7 other States are observers in the WTO, Saudi Arabia believes that recognizing Arabic as an official language of the WTO would reinforce the participation of governments of these Arab States and would encourage raising the awareness about the multilateral trading system in the Arab region.

Finally, I am here to reassure you that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will maintain its firm commitment to the multilateral trading system and stands ready to provide all possible support to reach a positive outcome at this Ministerial Conference, and we look forward to a positive and fruitful conference. Thank you.