

Sierra Leone

Statement by Hon. Mabinty Daramy Acting Minister for Trade and Industry

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Heads of Delegations

Director General and staff of the WTO

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure and honour for me, on behalf of the Government and people of Sierra Leone, to make a brief statement at this 10th WTO Ministerial Conference. Let me begin by joining previous speakers to congratulate the WTO Secretariat and the Government and people of Kenya for successfully organizing the MC10. I salute the WTO on its 20th anniversary and reaffirm its importance in ensuring an open, rules based multilateral trading system, and that developing countries and LDCs among them, secure an increasing share in the growth of world trade in line with their economic development needs and aspirations.

We are gathered here in Nairobi to ensure meaningful deliverables on the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). It is a challenge that we must all rise to. Although the DDA negotiations have been going for over 14 years, it is clear now that the deliverables that may be possible in Nairobi are significantly smaller than those expected by the Membership at the time when the DDA was launched. Recent developments provide a clear indication that the DDA cannot be concluded without delivering on the cornerstone issue of development including LDC priorities.

I would like to use this opportunity to highlight Sierra Leone`s position on the key deliverables at this Nairobi Ministerial Conference as follows:

- Prioritization of issues of concern to LDCs, as elaborated in previous ministerial sessions and the July Framework, as well as by the international community at the 4th UN Conference on Least Developed Countries. These are in particular:

1. Duty free and quota free market access (DFQF) with the accompanying simplified and transparent preferential rules of origin
2. An ambitious and expeditious outcome on cotton in the three pillars of market access, domestic support and export competition
3. The services waiver
4. Agreement specific special and differential treatment Proposals
5. A meaningful outcome on agriculture on the basis of the Rev. 4 modalities
6. Tightened disciplines on fisheries subsidies
7. A permanent moratorium on Non-Violation and Situation Complaints under the TRIPS Agreement

I would like to welcome the recent decision of the TRIPS Council to extend the transition period under Article 66.1 of the TRIPS Agreement with respect to pharmaceutical products and on the waivers from the obligations of Article 70.8 and 70.9 of the TRIPS Agreement until 2032.

I would further like to welcome our neighbour in West Africa, the Republic of Liberia, and our fellow LDC, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, into WTO membership and underscore the principle of accelerating accession procedures without imposing onerous concessions and commitments.

In regard to future work and a post-Nairobi agenda, Sierra Leone remains committed to a successful and multilateral conclusion of the DDA negotiations pursuant to paragraphs 45, 47 and 48 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration. Sierra Leone expects that special and differential treatment for developing countries, particularly LDCs, shall be an integral part of all future negotiations and shall be operationally effective as set out in paragraph 13 and 16 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration. Sierra Leone expects that a Ministerial Declaration in three parts will be the main outcome documents of this ministerial conference. And, in particular, it is our expectation that part III of the Ministerial Declaration will prioritize the continuation of the DDA negotiations.

Before I conclude, I would like to note the importance of the Enhanced Integrated Framework and the Aid for Trade initiative for LDCs in general and Sierra Leone in particular. As Sierra Leone enters into the recovery phase from the Ebola Virus Disease, we face sizable trade constraints and lags in implementing effective

policies to overcome domestic and cross-border trade barriers. High transport costs, poor infrastructure and an underdeveloped logistics services sector limit Sierra Leone's ability to develop competitive value-added exports and raise the cost of imported goods. To this extent enhancing technical assistance and capacity building support to LDCs including through Aid for Trade remains crucial. Providing transitional support under the EIF Phase 2 facility to countries like Sierra Leone that are at the end of the Phase 1 process and are facing challenges to sustain the results achieved is also crucial.

In all this Mr Chairman, I must commend the EIF Board (chaired by Sierra Leone) and the Executive Secretariat of the EIF in Geneva and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) who have been working tirelessly with our country teams in this direction.

While as an LDC we appreciate the Aid for Trade initiative, we must however, reiterate the need for additional, predictable and timely delivery of Aid for Trade resources, if the expected results are to be achieved.

We are also of the view that for Aid for Trade to be meaningful and effective, actual focus should be on implementing programmes and projects both at country and regional level that can address the real capacity constraints of the LDCs, including, the building of productive capacities, trade facilitation and human resource development.

In conclusion, I must emphasize that while LDCs remain committed to the conclusion of the Doha Round of negotiations, any outcome must not be at the cost or the sacrifice of the just and legitimate development demands of LDCs.

I thank you for your kind attention.