

World Trade Organisation Tenth Ministerial Conference

South Africa Country Statement

Nairobi, Kenya

16 December 2015

At the outset and on behalf of the South African delegation, I want to thank the Government of Kenya for generously hosting this 10th WTO Ministerial here in Nairobi, the first such conference to be held on our mother Continent. We were very encouraged by President Kenyatta's keynote speech at the opening session of the conference yesterday, particularly in respect to his observations that Africa has prioritized industrialization and that Africa is on the path to deepening regional integration. He also underscored the importance of the Doha Round objective to reform agricultural trade by removing subsidies in developed countries that undermine Africa's ability to compete in international markets.

Let me also confirm that South Africa fully associates itself with the statements made by the Africa Group, the ACP and the G90.

We welcome the accession of Liberia and Afghanistan to the WTO as a step towards the universality of the WTO membership.

South Africa reaffirms its commitment to the developmental mandate contained in the Doha Declaration of 200. This established the important principle that we believe must inform all the work of the WTO now and into the future. This principle is found in the opening paragraphs of that Declaration that affirms that the needs and interests of developing countries, the majority of the membership, must be at the centre of the WTO's work programme.

The Doha mandate also established that reform of agriculture would be prioritized as distortions here are among the biggest impediments negatively affecting livelihoods of poor communities in developing countries. We support the position that the level of ambition established in agricultural reform must set the ambition for other issues under negotiation. These principles and priorities must continue to shape our work and the post Nairobi work programme.

Africa has defined a developmental trajectory for itself that involves moving away from its current insertion in the global trading system as a producer and exporter of primary commodities and an importer of finished goods. In this regard Africa, has defined a very clear agenda to move up the value chain and industrialise through an ambitious developmental integration programme that combines market integration alongside infrastructure development and cooperation to develop regional industrial value chains. This ambitious work programme is contained in Africa's Agenda 2063 and can be recognized as Africa's "mega-regional", one constructed to meet Africa's specific challenges and objectives.

Any outcome in Nairobi or in future in the WTO therefore must in our view support this vision and certainly, at a minimum not undermine or complicate its realization. African and other Developing Countries must be offered the necessary policy space to pursue their objectives of industrialization and transformation.

South Africa remains committed to working constructively with other Members for a successful outcome in Nairobi. We support a small package that should prioritize issues of concern to LDCs, strengthened provisions of Special and Differential treatment and achieve an outcome on some agricultural issues as a stepping stone to further work on the DDA post MC10.

I thank you.