

Statement by
His Excellency Mr. Humayoon Rasaw, Minister of Commerce and Industries at
the
Plenary Session of MC11
12th of December 2017
Hilton Hotel, Room Pacifico, Argentina

Dear Chairperson, Honourable Ministers, Ambassadors, Distinguished Delegates:

At the outset, let me extend my sincere appreciation on behalf of my delegation to the Government and people of Argentina for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality. I thank Madame Malcorra and Director General Azevêdo, for their leadership in engaging the entire membership towards a successful Ministerial Conference in the beautiful city of Buenos Aires.

I am honoured to participate in the Eleventh Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, where for the first time Afghanistan is participating as a full – fledged member of the WTO.

On behalf of HE President Ghani and government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, I take the privilege of offering my sincere gratitude and appreciation for your support in helping Afghanistan to become the WTO Member.

The tenth Ministerial Conference in Nairobi was indeed a historic milestone in Afghanistan's aspiration to integrate into the multilateral trading system, and I am very hopeful that the 11th WTO ministerial conference will be another high point for all WTO members to add on the functioning, achievements and underscore the important role played by this great institution.

We understand the important role of our close cooperation with the WTO to catalyse implementation of the planned economic reforms in Afghanistan. Thus, to act on this realization, we have established our dedicated Permanent Mission to the WTO in Geneva to optimally utilize our membership to the organization and also developed the WTO-Post Accession Strategy to accelerate the economic growth process in Afghanistan.

Honorable Chair;

Our views and aspirations are contained in the LDC ministerial Declaration that we adopted on 9th December here in Buenos Aires. In addition, Afghanistan

supports the ministerial declarations of the LLDC and g7+ WTO accession groups and call upon all members to transform them into concrete actions.

Dear Chair;

Afghanistan is located at the heart of the ancient Silk Route. It is in great position to link the markets of Central Asia to South Asia and the middle east as a transit and trade hub for further regional connectivity, trade facilitation and transit improvement. In this respect we have already taken some very remarkable steps by either initiating or completing a number of highly important regional connectivity projects.

To achieve region wide socio-economic development, it is imperative to create a robust and conducive environment for the private sector growth so that we create more jobs and new economic opportunities, alleviate poverty, and thereby contribute to peace and stability. Hence, the government of IR of Afghanistan is committed to reform the business climate to attract investment and transform Afghanistan from an import dependent country to an exporting source. And, such vision could not be achieved without the technical and global credibility of the WTO.

Dear members; before closing let me assure you that Afghanistan is in the process of implementing all the post accession activities by a dedicated and dynamic team in our capital and as well as in Geneva. We will contribute to the mandate of the various technical Committees, Councils, and multilateral trade negotiations. In addition, we plan to play an active role in the LDC and LLDC Groups. The launch of g7 + WTO Accession group with the purpose of better structuring and strengthening our work to facilitate the integration of post-conflict and fragile economies into the multilateral trading system through WTO accession is a historic milestone in this regard.

On behalf of g7+ WTO accession group we call upon all the trade ministers gathered in Buenos Aires to give positive consideration to the request of South Sudan to accede to WTO pursuant to Article XII of the WTO agreement at the WTO MC11.

I sincerely wish this Ministerial Conference all the success it deserves, and hope what we accomplish today will further facilitate global trade in particular for LDCs and LLDCs.

Thank You!