

INTERVENTION: PLENARY

- Chairman, Vice Chairs, Ministerial Colleagues, Director-General Azevêdo and other respected guests, I am honoured to address the eleventh Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization.

- I want to start by thanking the Government of Argentina for its hospitality and leadership in hosting this important Ministerial.

- The WTO is the bedrock of the global trading system that has helped deliver prosperity and trade growth since its inception.

- It has helped lift millions out of poverty and improve living standards for many millions more.

- It creates opportunities for business and, of course, it creates jobs.

- In recent years the WTO has shown that international agreements with real economic impact are possible – such as the Trade Facilitation Agreement at MC9 and the outcome on

agricultural export subsidies at MC10.

- Such outcomes have been possible when WTO members have been flexible and pragmatic about seizing opportunities to make progress in our collective interests.
- We must build on these achievements at MC11. We need to work together to strive for real outcomes at this conference that will benefit our stakeholders
- and, we must deliver some clear guidance by the end of this conference on the course of negotiations in 2018 and beyond.
- Agriculture is a major priority for Australia. There is a clear need for us to address problems with the existing rules on domestic support and to reduce the trade-distorting impact of some of these domestic support policies
- This is an area of deep interest to the majority of the WTO membership and we need to show collective leadership in this area.

- On services, Australia is advocating for improvements in the area of domestic regulation – improvements that would result in real world benefits for all service suppliers
- We encourage members to be open to a productive discussion in this area and to commit to advancing negotiations that would benefit services providers across the globe and unlock the growth potential of this sector.
- We need to make sure that WTO rules address the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century. Today's world is dominated by digital innovation and we should be thinking about how the trading system can support businesses trading in a digital environment
- There is a lot that can be achieved in this space – we need to can work collaboratively.

- On fisheries subsidies, we have seen significant progress in recent weeks which is encouraging and an outcome in this area is clearly within reach for Buenos Aires.

- Outcomes in these areas are important to the future of the WTO. At the same time we need to reinvigorate the system

- There is scope to strengthen the system but we must be pragmatic in how we target and execute reform to ensure it is constructive and effective and has – at its heart – the objective of protecting and preserving the rules-based multilateral trading system.

- In addition, we must all take responsibility for ensuring the benefits of international trade are shared across the entire WTO membership, particularly those on lower income levels.

- Australia is committed to helping developing countries, particularly least developed countries, better integrate into the multilateral trading system.

- Australia remains committed to working with these countries to make progress on these issues at MC11 and beyond.

- Australia is committed to developing a way forward for the WTO that serves the interests of all members, but equally responds to the reality of the contemporary global trading environment.