

Statement of H. E. Mr. Tofail Ahmed, MP
Minister for Commerce
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Madam Chair

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Good Afternoon,

I congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election. Our thanks to the people and Government of Argentina for making excellent arrangement and extending the gracious hospitality to us. We congratulate His Excellency Mr. Roberto Azevedo for his re-appointment as Director General of the WTO for second term. Let me express Bangladesh's full support to the statement made by the coordinator on behalf of the LDC Group.

2. We value WTO's contribution in advancing the rules-based multilateral trading system. Balanced rules and trade liberalization help us secure WTO's pre-eminent role in global trade and ensure equitable benefit for all its members, especially the LDCs.

3. Following a gradual increase during 2010-2013 LDCs exports have been declining since 2014 and stood at 0.94 percent in 2016. Such a declining trend poses huge challenges for LDCs to meet the SDG target of increasing LDCs' export share to 2 percent by 2020. Full implementation of decisions on DFQF market access, Preferential Rules of Origin and service waivers for LDCs in letter and spirit along with technical and financial support to address supply side constraints are key to reverse this trend and meet the SDG target.

4. We attach utmost importance to reviewing S&DT provisions. We have been looking for an outcome on this long-standing issue. Any discussion on trade and development must take stock of our discussions during the period between 1998 and 2001, which resulted in specific decisions in this direction.

5. We are committed to meet the SDG target 14.6 on fisheries subsidies and we are looking for an outcome at the WTO capturing marine fisheries with effective and operational S&DT for developing and least developed countries.

6. We appreciate the initiative to develop discipline in services domestic regulations. We expect that such discipline addresses the core issues, increases the trading opportunities of LDCs service suppliers and provides policy space to us. A permanent solution on public stockholding, that extends to the programmes of LDCs is necessary.

7. With a vision of Digital Bangladesh, my country attaches great importance to development of electronic commerce, which has the potential to benefit our SMEs. WTO must give more emphasis on harnessing this benefit by taking a holistic approach and renewing the work programme with specific targets. DFQF market access will stimulate the LDC suppliers to engage in e-commerce and any decision in this regard will be an initiative in right direction.

8. Finally, let me highlight that some LDCs have graduated from LDCs status and many are on the way to graduation. These countries are facing enormous challenges in many areas including in trade. We, therefore, urge members to take positive measures to address trade-related challenges of these countries in post-graduation phase.

I thank you Chair
