

U. Palo kõne WTO plenaaril 11.12 Buenos Aireses

Chairperson,

Ministers,

Dear Delegates,

The eleventh WTO ministerial conference taking place in Buenos-Aires is an important milestone for the WTO. Firstly, I would like to thank our hosts for their warm hospitality and the excellent organization so far.

It is my pleasure to outline Estonian views on global trade agenda. Estonia has experienced throughout its history how free and open trade is a source of prosperity and growth. We continue to be strong supporters of free and rules-based trade.

Today globalization is a reality, whether we want it or not. Countries are economically more interlinked than ever before through global value chains. As ministers and decision-makers, we need to show leadership for advancing the global trade agenda and making sure the global rules follow the economic reality.

This been said, today's global trade agenda is more complex than ever. Countries are negotiating bilateral and regional agreements in order to open new markets and promote their economic growth and employment. However, these agreements provide no substitution to the role of the WTO. We have to make everything in our power so that all the pillars of the WTO would remain well functioning and strong.

Even at this challenging time, we have a major milestone for the global trading system to report from this year - in February this year the Trade Facilitation Agreement entered into force. I welcome the entry into force of this agreement, which means that the movement, release and clearance of goods across borders will be faster and easier. The agreement will – when properly implemented – create a significant boost for commerce and the multilateral trading system as a whole.

Making sure everybody benefits from trade is very important. Particularly fragile and least developed countries need Aid for Trade support to benefit from global trade opportunities. The European Union has just updated its strategy on Aid for Trade. I am happy to say that trade related assistance will be targeted where the need is greatest.

As a minister for entrepreneurship and information technology, I strongly believe that we need to remain ambitious and intensify work on e-commerce. In the current world, where everything, including trade, is online, there is no need to ask why we should think and act on e-commerce; it is a question of how to do it.

To conclude, I would like to invite all participating members to more flexibility and goodwill. Only this will ensure that we will achieve results here in Buenos-Aires.

Thank you!