

**Statement of H.E. Dr. Bekele Bulado BUKANA
Minister of Trade of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,
at MC11 Plenary,
Buenos Aires, Argentina, December 12, 2017**

**Her Excellency, Ms. Susana Malcorra, Chairperson of the 11th Ministerial Conference,
Director General Roberto Azevêdo,
Excellencies, Ministers and Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me a great pleasure and I feel honored to address the Eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference on behalf of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and myself. I would like also to congratulate and extend my deep appreciation to the Government and the People of Argentina too, for the hospitality we have been receiving since our arrival to this beautiful city of Buenos Aires and for the well-organized management of all events.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is a well-established fact that trade can serve as an engine for development and an instrumental for poverty reduction and a vehicle for prosperity, facilitates diversification of products for the market, encourages exchange of innovation and know-how, enables transfer of technology and attracts investment. Multilateral trading system guarantees investors by creating a level playing field, fair treatment for all, predictability and consistency by discouraging distortions and availing a systematized a rule based resolution for any trade related disputes.

For weak economies, trade has proved as engine of growth through increased commercial opportunities and broadening the productive base. It is not only true that being a Member of the rule-based system will be a security to a reliable market access but also being the Member of the rule based system can build investors' confidence by assuring security and predictability of the market, especially for Foreign Direct Investment. As an acceding country, we strongly believe that a rule-based multilateral trading system with increased market access opportunities in trade in goods and services will help in achieving the SDG and in promoting the private investment. We acknowledge that the multilateral system ensures a level-playing field for international trade. We also strongly believe that a rule-based

multilateral trading system with increased market access opportunities for trade in goods and services will help us in achieving our national developmental goal.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Though the process of our accession seems inactive for the past few years, the Government has been taking various pre-accession legal and institutional reforms that confirm compatibility to the WTO requirements and procedural rules. We view WTO membership as an essential element of our effort to strengthen our trade and investment framework and establish the environment for greater economic opportunities that shall eradicate poverty and install prosperity. To this regard, my government in its 2nd Growth and Transformation Plan has clearly stated its political commitment to conclude the accession process within the plan period.

In conclusion, we appreciate flexibilities exercised to expedite the recently acceded LDCs; Liberia and Afghanistan, in concluding their accession. However, quite a good number of LDCs are still out of the system and we still observe accession process of the LDCs is lengthy, costly and complex and acceding LDCs face challenges and difficulties in their process. In order to speed up the accession process of the LDCs, it requires a real support of all Members which can be demonstrated through full implementation of the set benchmarks for tariff bindings and Members restraint in seeking market access on areas that demand policy space for the development. In other words, if the LDCs need to exploit the opportunities offered through Market Access Measures waiver, there should be a real Non-Market Access Measures and a real Technical Assistance and Capacity Building that can be demonstrated on the ground from sides of non-LDCs member states and other partners.

I therefore, would like to urge Members to understand the challenges and difficulties that LDCs face in their accession and show maximum flexibility and restrain in seeking commitments that is beyond the level of their development and concessions that hinders exercise their policy space. We expect that the decision to be taken by this Ministerial Conference will speed up the accession process of those of us in the process to join the multilateral family. We look forward to becoming a WTO Member soon so that we hope to participate actively in the work of the multilateral trading system and in managing process of this important organization.

Thank you for the attention!