

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HON. ALAN JOHN KYEREMATEN, MINISTER
FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA, AT THE
ELEVENTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION(WTO MC11), BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, 10TH – 13TH
DECEMBER, 2017.**

**MADAM CHAIR,
COLLEAGUE HONORABLE MINISTERS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF WTO
EXCELLENCIES,
DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

I wish on behalf of the Government and people of Ghana, to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Government and people of Argentina for hosting us in your very beautiful and historic country.

2. My delegation also congratulates you Madam Susana Malcorra, for the able manner in which you are steering the deliberations of the Eleventh Ministerial Conference.
3. Furthermore, my delegation wishes to pay special tribute to all those who have played substantive roles in the Geneva process leading to MC11.

Madam Chair

4. I am sure I will be preaching to the converted if I stand before this august Assembly and attempt to pontificate about the importance of the multilateral trading system in promoting growth and development around the world. The fact that many of us have travelled long distances to attend this meeting is itself a demonstration of our commitment to the cause for which we are gathered here in Buenos Aires.

5. I believe there are three fundamental challenges that confront us as a member driven organisation. First is our inability to reconcile our differences, and subordinate our individual interests for the benefit of the greater good. This I believe is an indictment on all of us - rich, poor, big, small, developed, developing, least developed etc.

6. Second, is the very laborious and often divisive nature of the Geneva process of negotiations and consultation. For example, how do we explain the fact that we do not currently have a draft text from Geneva before us for our consideration, even if incomplete? We need to remember that Ministerial meetings are not designed to be primary negotiating forums. They are essentially meant to provide political and strategic guidance to resolve

outstanding issues arising from the Geneva process. Aligned to this, is the problem of overcrowding and recycling of issues brought before Ministerial meetings.

7. Third, are the complexities arising out of the current categorisation of member states under the WTO and the implications for taking on different obligations.

8. Fourth, is the poor implementation of commitments made by member states in respect of various disciplines, and the lack of enforcement thereof.

Madam Chair,

9. All the above observations in my humble opinion, point clearly to one conclusion: the need for reform in the WTO. The challenges confronting us are symptoms of deeper problems which need to be addressed in a substantive way.

10 Having said that, **Madam Chair**, if there was ever a time in global history when the importance of trade as a catalyst for growth has been manifested, then that time is now. For many of us in Africa, there are two key elements that have dominated our development narrative in the last few years. First is **industrialisation** and the second is **trade**. In my own country for example, the President of the Republic has articulated a new vision of a “**Ghana beyond Aid**”. This means that our development focus is gradually shifting from aid to trade and investment. Against this background, we have embarked on a very ambitious and comprehensive ten point agenda for industrial transformation. This includes among other things, a “One District One Factory” initiative, under which Government is working with the private sector to establish one major industrial enterprise in each of the 216 Districts in Ghana to bring industrialisation to the doorsteps of the ordinary people.

11. Secondly, the “One Region One Park” initiative, under which the Government is again working with the private sector to establish at least one major industrial park or special economic zone in each of our ten administrative regions.

12. Thirdly, the establishment of a number of strategic anchor industries that will diversify our economy beyond cocoa and gold and create new growth poles for the Ghanaian economy.

Madam Chair

13. The significant expansion in industrial capacity to be realised from these interventions, requires an aggressive trade promotion agenda focusing on both the domestic and export markets.

14. In this regard, the critical role being played by the WTO in setting trade rules and enforcing them, enhancing market access opportunities, removing trade barriers across nations, resolving trade disputes, and fostering sustained growth and employment opportunities for all, cannot be overemphasized.

Madam Chair,

15. Let me conclude by stating that the delegation from Ghana is looking forward to a balanced outcome from this Ministerial meeting that will incorporate the interests of both developed and developing countries, and in particular the LDCs.

16. Firstly, to reduce significantly, the Overall Trade Distorting subsidies currently prevailing, as well as the elimination of harmful subsidies in Agriculture, to ensure a fair global agricultural trading system. Talking about harmful subsidies, we also expect the elimination of those subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing in the fisheries sector. Secondly, we expect a permanent solution to Public Stockholding for food security purposes.

17. Last but not the least, we expect consensus that will lead to enhanced engagement and consultation on investment facilitation and e-commerce for substantive consideration in our next Ministerial meeting.

Madam Chair

18. Ghana is committed to the success of this Ministerial Conference and the sustainability of the multilateral trading system.

I thank you for your attention.