

**PLENARY STATEMENT BY HE JOHN DR FORD, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
GUYANA TO THE WTO, AT THE 11TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, DECEMBER 12, 2017**

Madame Chair, H. E. Minister Susana Malcorra

Distinguished Ministers

Director-General Roberto Azevedo

Excellencies, Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Guyana, I wish to congratulate the Government and the people of Argentina for this 11th Ministerial Conference in our hemisphere.

Madame Chair,

I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the Chair of this and pledge Guyana's full support for a successful encounter.

The Delegation of Guyana wishes to associate itself with the statements made on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group (ACP) of States, African Group, Pacific Group and the Group of Small and Vulnerable Economies (SVEs).

Trade and Development

My delegation reaffirms its endorsement of the Presidential Declaration of Buenos Aires issued by South American Presidents on Sunday December 10, 2017 on the occasion of this Conference through which Guyana has reiterated its unequivocal support for the multilateral trading system.

Guyana appreciates the considerable efforts which have been made in Geneva over the past year by the Director General and WTO Members to advance work on key areas of trade negotiations for this Conference. However, we share the widespread disappointment among WTO members that consensus was not possible in Geneva on any issue on the table and call for the necessary political impetus here in Buenos Aires to deliver an outcome through a transparent, inclusive and member-driven process that I, dare say, is needed to strengthen and safeguard the multilateral trading system and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

We had hoped that the promise of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) would have contributed to facilitating development-oriented solutions to problems faced by economies such as ours in a world characterized by the opposing forces of increased trade protectionism and expanding globalization.

Guyana and the rest of CARICOM are all small developing and vulnerable economies that are open and highly dependent on trade. The success of our efforts to build trade institutional capacity and industry competitiveness will be

enhanced by adequate aid for trade resources and meaningful market access. We continue to work towards building a rules-based multilateral system that fosters fair and sustainable trade.

Trade and Climate Change

Madame Chair,

Trade policy should also promote sustainable production practices that protect both the planet and livelihood systems. CARICOM Member States continue to pursue policies to protect the environment and mitigate the negative impacts of climate change. Guyana, for example, has long advanced a national programme, including the Green Economy agenda to integrate its tropical rainforest as part of a global initiative to reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation. It is important that trade policies promote sustainable forest product trade.

As you will know, the assessed impact of climate change on the Caribbean Community has already shown significant damage to the livelihoods of our people, trade infrastructure, agricultural production and food security. Several of our members – small vulnerable states - have been decimated by the 2017 hurricanes which visited the island states of the Eastern Caribbean. These countries, which are perpetually vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, have lost years of critical infrastructure and capacities at all levels. The impact of the economic destruction is felt throughout the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME).

The multilateral system, including the multilateral trading system at the WTO, needs to respond and we call upon Ministers here in Buenos Aires to do so - to consider meaningful trade policy responses to support the reconstruction of these economies and livelihoods of these worthy members of the WTO family.

Beyond Buenos Aires

Madame Chair,

This WTO Ministerial is a critical one for the multilateral trading system. We must achieve tangible, meaningful outcomes here in Buenos Aires, outcomes that are recognized by the global community as an important contribution to advancing national, regional and global economic development goals. What we achieve here will also shape the processes and products of our [future] work. Our representatives in capitals and in Geneva must leave understanding the clear and positive next [negotiating] steps.

Madame Chair, in closing, the Delegation of Guyana reiterates its full support towards making this eleventh Ministerial Conference an unequivocal success. It is the small and vulnerable economies that stand to lose the most if success eludes us here in Buenos Aires. For us, failure will be disastrous. We must succeed.

I thank you.