

Dear Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the government of Israel, I congratulate the World Trade Organization on the occasion of its Eleventh Ministerial Conference.

Before moving on, a word of gratitude to our gracious hosts and friends, the Government and people of Argentina and especially President Macri and Minister Malcorra - it is wonderful to be here and we thank you for your kind hospitality and hard work.

Israel is a trading nation with liberal values and a world center for innovation. High tech products and related goods and services represent a significant volume of our total exports. This has not been an easy feat; it is the result of many years of gradual market opening on the one hand, and of nurturing a culture of ideas, research and innovation.

Israeli cutting edge technologies in the medical area, water, agriculture and cyber security have a global impact and this could not have happened without the structure that the WTO and the multilateral rules-based system provides.

At times of accelerated changes in all realms of life we find ourselves at a crossroads between the so-called 'unfinished business' of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) and the need to respond sensibly to the common challenges we face at present, and as we walk into the future. A good example could be our support for the establishment of a working group on e-commerce.

We need to have both reflection of the lessons learnt and vision, making sure that no one is left behind. For Israel's part, this signifies restating our full commitment to the WTO and its preeminent role in advancing trade liberalization and promoting economic growth. But it also means making compromises and finding new approaches.

In our efforts to lower the cost of living in Israel we have pursued various unilateral liberalization initiatives. We thus rely on the WTO system's three pillars that continue to be at the center of our global trade strategy.

However, Israel is concerned with the serious challenges this system faces. Currently, the negotiating function is at a stalemate due to increasing difficulty to reach consensus.

There are calls for improving the monitoring function, and at the same time the dispute settlement pillar is facing one of its biggest challenges with three vacant Appellate Body positions.

There is no doubt that we will need to discuss the concerns members have on the appellate body functioning but at the same time we call upon all members to launch the appellate body member selection process.

To conclude, Israel strongly believes in this organization and its key role in our world. The challenges we face across the WTO system can be resolved and we count on our collective commitment to do that.

For Israel's part, we remain ambitious, forward looking and we will continue working with determination with all Members towards building consensus.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.
