

WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Eleventh Session

Buenos Aires, 12 December 2017

Check against delivery

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Peter Matt Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein to WTO

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Government and People of Argentina for hosting this Eleventh Ministerial Conference and for their generous hospitality. Furthermore, I would also like to take the opportunity to express my deep appreciation to our Chair, Her Excellency Susana Malcorra, and her Vice Chairs, whose able leadership will guide us through this WTO Ministerial Conference. Let me also thank our Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo and his experienced team for his work and engagement throughout the last years.

Liechtenstein reiterates its strong support for an open, rules based multilateral trading system. Liechtenstein is pleased to support the Joint Ministerial Statement in support of the Multilateral Trading System published yesterday morning. Let me reiterate the call on all Members to preserve the integrity of this system embodied in the WTO and to even strengthen the system further. Let me also underline that the dispute settlement system is one of core achievements of the WTO and its well functioning must be safeguarded.

Globalisation and digitalisation have opened up many opportunities but also came with many challenges and disruptions. If the WTO is not to be side-lined in view of these developments and in order to preserve its negotiating functions the WTO needs to address new issues important to global trade of today. This is one of the core functions of this Organisation. The WTO is often the only multilateral forum where we can address these issues. Liechtenstein therefore supports the establishment of a work programme on e-commerce as a dedicated body. When the current work programme was established back in 1998, the WTO was at the forefront of development. And we believe that's where the WTO should be. Liechtenstein welcomes other new initiatives like those of the friends of MSMEs or the economic empowerment of women. These initiatives would contribute to make the multilateral trading system more inclusive.

Development continues to be a central pillar of WTO. Trade plays an important role in the promotion of sustainable development as recognised in the United Nations Agenda 2030. Addressing development and the role trade can and should play in this regard is therefore very timely.

Liechtenstein welcomes the good progress that has been made since the last Ministerial Conference on Domestic Regulation. Unfortunately, no agreement on a new set of disciplines could be reached by the membership so far. We should however use the existing momentum and continue to advance and conclude the negotiations on the basis of what we have achieved so far.

Despite this positive momentum we also note with concern the overall lack of progress in negotiations in general. At MC11 we should take the opportunity to at least agree on the way forwards of the many outstanding issues.

To conclude let me reiterate Liechtenstein's commitment to the multilateral trading system. We are ready and willing to engage towards a constructive conclusion of MC11 and for the WTO beyond MC11.

I thank you!