

WTO 11th Ministerial conference, 10-13 December, 2017
Address by Mr Edgars RINKĒVIČS, Minister of Foreign Affairs of
the Republic of Latvia

Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to express my sincere appreciation to Argentina – in particular, President Macri, Minister Faurie and chair of MC11 Madame Malcorra – for hosting us in the beautiful city of Buenos Aires.

This February the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) entered into force.

It is one of the main deliverables of the WTO in its history. One hundred twenty five members have already ratified the Agreement – clearly showing our continued commitment to the multilateral rules-based trading system. The reduction of trade costs by implementing the TFA would be particularly of benefit for those, who had most challenges in international trade.

Open and mutually beneficial trade is a key driver of economic growth and a major engine for prosperity and development. Today, in Buenos Aires, we have to look at the trade policy from a business perspective. What does the business expect from us? How can we support the entrepreneurs, be it in developed, developing or the least developed country?

Today, as we approach the end of the Ministerial conference, we have to double our efforts for reaching a meaningful outcome of the MC11. We must commit ourselves to continue our work on agriculture, development, rules, and services. At the same time, there is no time to be complacent with the current work of the WTO. Our work also ought to reflect today's economic realities. We should signal on how – not if, but how – the WTO can contribute to digital trade, e-commerce, and promotion of increased participation of SMEs in international trade and global value chains. We must provide a clear political guidance for the future work on those issues.

Dear Members,

A strong, viable organization is essential for all members and for those in the process of accession. We should be responsible and bold in our decisions and we should embrace the unique role of the WTO as the most inclusive framework for global trade governance. Our ultimate goal is to ensure the continued credibility of the WTO – we can strengthen the organization itself, improve the daily work, and the enforcement of the commitments made.

And of course we must strive to deliver meaningful results to ensure that all people and business could reap benefits of a more prosperous and sustainable economic world.

Thank you.