

STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. Ahmad Bin Jassim Bin Mohammed Al Thani**

**MINISTER OF ECONOMY & COMMERCE**

**OF**

**STATE OF QATAR**

at the

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in

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Her Excellency, Chairperson Susana Malcorra  
HE Roberto Azevedo, Director General of WTO  
Distinguished Colleagues,  
Ladies & Gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my deep appreciation to the Government of Argentina for hosting the 11<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference in this beautiful city of Buenos Aires, and for the warm hospitality we have received from the Government and the People of Argentina.

I would like to recall the achievements made by this Organization in promoting multilateral trade and development; particularly the WTO's biggest undertaking and achievement the launch of the Doha Development Agenda.

I reaffirm my delegation's commitment to a successful conclusion of the DDA. Qatar has long been a strong proponent for an open and inclusive World Trade Organization, whereby members could discuss any issue they deem important to the multilateral trading system.

As a small country, Qatar has always advocated an all-inclusive multilateral trading system and is an active member within this organization. We are a nation that has, throughout history, been dependent on trade. Therefore, the recent rise in protectionism that we are witnessing today is of growing concern. Studies show that the world's top 60 economies have adopted more than 7,000 protectionist trade measures on a net basis since the financial crisis, and tariffs are now worth more than \$400 billion. Qatar recently has been at the forefront of this rising tide of protectionism. We reiterate our

serious concern on the current regional situation and its trade-disruptive implications not only for Qatar but for many other WTO Members trading with Qatar. Let me state without any ambiguity that Qatar will always abide by all of its multilateral and bilateral trade obligations owed to all of its trading partners, regardless of their political tendencies. We reaffirm our commitment to the rule of law which is essential to protect our rights under agreed WTO disciplines.

Madam Chairperson,

The accession of new members is essential to creating an inclusive multilateral trading system. We encourage the support of accession of all countries, including the Arab countries currently in process of accession.

Thus, extend our full support to Sudan, Somalia, Algeria, Iraq and Lebanon to accede and benefit from membership to the organization. Moreover, we extend our full endorsement for observer status to the State of Palestine.

We fully understand that there is a need to conclude the outstanding issues of the Doha Development Agenda. There are many members, and we include ourselves among them, who strongly advocate the importance of expanding that agenda to include certain other issues such as MSMEs, Investment Facilitation and E-Commerce. It is our belief that the inclusion of such issues for discussion in the WTO will help recalibrate the required balance for concluding the outstanding DDA issues.

On Investment Facilitation, our long history of inward and outward bound investment has convinced us of the essential link between trade and investment. Investment facilitation policies and measures can help countries foster development, diversify their export capacity, integrate into global value chains and link up to the digital economy. As a member of the Friends of Investment Facilitation for Development we look to structured discussions on the issue at the WTO, and look forward to receiving guidance during the Ministerial Conference on the way forward.

With regard to MSMEs, we believe that MSMEs play a vital role in the economies of

developing countries and would thus support any discussions looking to further integrate and support MSME's in the multilateral trading system.

Finally, on E-Commerce, we believe that there is an essential and growing relationship between Trade and E-Commerce. Furthermore, we believe that the application of E-Commerce in businesses is a strong propeller towards development. With the world of E-commerce growing at an exponential rate, it is essential that the WTO adapt to facilitate this growth.

Madam chairperson,

Buenos Aires presents all WTO Members with a chance to reaffirm our commitments to the Multilateral Trading System and preserve the credibility of the WTO. Qatar stands ready to contribute to achieving fruitful and meaningful outcomes, here at MC11. This will allow us to regain traction towards preserving a functioning and inclusive multilateral trading system.

Thank you,