

Plenary Statement by H.E. Khadra Ahmed Dualeh

Minister of Commerce and Industry

Federal Government of Somalia

Excellences', Honorable and Distinguished Guests, Ladies and
Gentleman,

On behalf of the Federal Government of Somalia, and in my personal capacity, I would like to thank the Government of the Argentine Republic and the authorities of Buenos Aires for bringing us all together and organizing the 11th Ministerial Conference. We extend our sincere appreciation, to MC11 Chair, Her Excellency Susana Malcorra - who as a truly global diplomat has her own historical links to Somalia having worked there in the past, and moreover who has graciously lent her support to myself and my delegation in the lead up to MC11.

On behalf of the Federal Government of Somalia, I would like to congratulate the re-election of Roberto Azvedo, the distinguished Director - General, and warmly welcome Ambassador Alan Wolff in his new role of the Deputy Director - General.

I am honored to be sitting here amongst my esteemed counterparts: from those who represent states that are WTO members, to those representing countries currently navigating their own accession. It seems like only yesterday, Somalia's WTO application for accession took place during MC10 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya. Somalia's Accession helps to showcase to the world; indeed, an African state has a seat at the table in the international trade community and has full ownership of their trade regimes.

The Ministerial Conference has always been a great opportunity to detect the issues WTO Members deem necessary to enhance their work. Previous gatherings highlighted, some of the lasting issues facing the trading world, with Nairobi voicing the problems in agriculture, Bali reiterating the importance of alleviating the position of LDCs, the Geneva talks addressing the surging interrelation between trade and development and Doha tackling the interplay between TRIPs and public health among other issues. The last one, held in Nairobi, allowed the Federal Government of Somalia to announce its very own request for the WTO application while the efforts and talent put in achieving the accession to the WTO of Afghanistan and Liberia have been largely

celebrated.

Learning from such successful stories, the Federal Government of Somalia put in an extraordinary effort to maintain its commitment to the WTO accession, despite the extended periods of instability. Most recently, in August 2017, we were supported in the first Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa where we introduced the first outline of our Memorandum on Foreign Trade Regime - also known as the MFTR. Bearing in mind, that it has normally taken on average more than four years for LDCs to accomplish this early step, I am delighted to announce that our MFTR has been drafted in four months.

Suffice it to say, the success that Somalia has achieved in this regard promises that 2018 will be successful year for the substantive discussions at the level of the Working Parties and work within the newly formed g7+ WTO Accessions Group. This week is historical for many other reasons - letters of credit for example were reintroduced to Somalia by premier bank and supported by my Ministry.

Somalia has recently taken bold steps to address corruption. The Anti-Corruption Bill critical in putting in place measures for good governance and accountability has been enacted. The leadership of Somalia has also reiterated its zero tolerance for corruption. Furthermore, the Communication Bill has been approved and we are ready to submit the Company Law to the Cabinet.

The Federal Government of Somalia, has shown on numerous occasions the commitment to this important goal of acceding to the WTO. Somalia is well known for a dynamic private sector that has survived and indeed thrived in the most difficult of circumstances. As a result, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is working closely with the private sector through PPD to improve the overall Investment Climate.

As an LDC Member, Somalia would like to share the voice of all the LDCs and emphasize the importance of incentivizing the implementation of the Decision on the Accession of LDCs both in its 2002 and 2012 LDC Accession Guidelines' Versions. In the same spirit, Somalia is calling for the operationalization of the decisions of the 9th Conference in Bali, in particular on the LDCs priorities.

In line with its nature as an LDC country, our Negotiating Team is aware of the importance of not being requested to undertake more than it can deliver. WTO members must give consideration to the special and differential treatment of the acceding LDCs as well as their application for waivers. On its acceding path, Somalia recognizes that it is important not to accept far-reaching concessions requests, without securing exceptions and sufficient transition periods.

The Federal Government of Somalia, warmly welcomes the thematic focus of the MC11 – “WTO Accessions and the Business Environment”, recognizing in this regard the important work the International Trade Center has been pursuing in fostering SMEs in countries similar to Somalia with the objective of faster integration into the Multilateral Trading System and promotion of peace, security and stability through more developed business environment.

Although the needs of the SME sector in Somalia are myriad, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has determined a package of policy and financial incentives that will strengthen the integration of the

Somali SME sector in the global economy, in order to reach our goals, technical assistance is crucial to enable our Negotiating Team to deliver promises rather than delay the process.

Finally, we salute our partners who have contributed in making this accession process a resounding success so far, and we wish to assure you, that Somalia is open for business as a respectable partner. We also want to affirm, we fully subscribe to the common African position on strengthening the rules-based multi-lateral trading system for the “Africa we want” sounded on principles of respectable, fair and transparent global trade and with mutual benefit for all.

In conclusion, it is of the utmost importance for the Federal Government of Somalia to note the exceptional support and assistance, provided by the stellar WTO Accessions Division Team, and in particular, by Ms. Maika Oshikawa and Mr. Stefan Sandstad. We are looking forward to collaborating even more with the whole WTO family on the path of reaching our goal to acceding to the multilateral trading system and WTO rules, which include over 98% of global trade. I look forward to meeting with many of you over the course of MC11 - reestablishing ties

with old friends and also making new friends.

Thank you for your kind attention.