

9th WTO Ministerial Conference

Plenary Session 4 December 2013

**Address by Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-
Ammann**

Mr. Chairman, Minister Wirjawan;

Distinguished colleagues;

Director-General Roberto Azevêdo;

Honourable Delegates and Guests;

Let me first thank Indonesia and our host Gita Wirjawan for having invited us to hold the WTO Ministerial Conference in beautiful Bali.

I appreciate the work, which has been done in Geneva and I share the concerns expressed on the state of play of the negotiations of the "Bali package".

We have to live up to our responsibilities we must take this unique opportunity and complete the last mile.

Colleagues, we have an almost finished negotiating package in front of us, which is of

high value.

Stabilised texts shall not be reopened.

Instead, we need to focus on the remaining outstanding issues and solve them here and now.

On Trade Facilitation we have a groundbreaking instrument for increasing Members' ability to benefit from global value chains and for delivering assistance and support for the better integration of developing and least-developed countries into global trade flows.

For the least-developed countries we have improvements on duty-free-quota-free market access; simplified rules of origin for their exports; improved market access for the services sector and a renewed push for the cotton negotiations.

Furthermore, we have a mechanism for the review and the strengthening of Special and Differential provisions in all WTO agreements.

On agriculture, we will give an impetus to further reform export subsidies and all

measures with equivalent effect. We provide for a better implementation of tariff rate quota commitments. We also offer a temporary shelter for public stockholding programs and we will address concerns regarding the sustainability of legitimate food security and food aid programs after Bali.

By concluding the Bali Package we will pave the way to further progress in the Doha Round. We will show that we can craft new agreements that benefit all members. This will end a long period of deadlocks in the WTO negotiations. And the Bali Package is the evidence that we are able to negotiate trade issues on a multilateral level.

However, if we fail to deliver the Bali Package, we will all be on the losing side. This would be a grave setback for the multilateral trading system. And to be honest with you, it will put the WTO negotiating function to a halt for many years.

Instead, negotiations would continue outside the WTO - at least for the Members who have

the possibility to do so. This would be very regrettable - in particular for the poorer and more vulnerable Members among us.

Colleagues, do we want a strong WTO? Do we want to achieve progress in WTO? If we want this organization to be vibrant and if we want to develop a common and credible Post-Bali agenda, we have to succeed here and now.

We need to conclude a single package covering trade facilitation, agriculture and development issues. As the DG said in the opening sessions you cannot remove a brick from this package. As well, postponing this decision until after Bali is not an option.

Therefore, we shall focus our efforts on the outstanding issues and solve them.

Mr Chairman, the global economic outlook is still bleak. And the growth rates of world trade are historically low. Therefore, resisting protectionist trends and reversing protectionist measures remain the top priority. New import restrictions would only harm the

global economy. The same goes also for export restrictions. By monitoring these measures the WTO assumes a crucial role in containing protectionism.

I am also pleased to see the continued attractiveness of the WTO. Switzerland warmly welcomes Yemen which will be joining the WTO as a full Member in 2014.

Mr Chairman, a successful Bali outcome will not be the end of the road. It will be the beginning of a new journey. We should continue to advance negotiations where progress can be achieved. We should have an open and frank discussion about what is doable. Do we really want to leave market access improvements to bilateral and regional trade agreements?

Switzerland remains committed to the WTO and to a strong Multilateral Trading System on which we all depend.

Finally, a word of gratitude for you Roberto and for your outstanding engagement to bring

convergence among WTO Members. You can be assured that Switzerland will fully support all your efforts to bring the Bali Conference to a success.

Thank you, Mr Chairman
