

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Director General, esteemed ministers and delegates,

On behalf of the government of Israel, I congratulate the World Trade Organization on the occasion of the 9<sup>th</sup> ministerial conference.

I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for organizing this event and hosting us on this beautiful Island.

Thank you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From Tunisia to Egypt, Jordan to Syria and Libya to Lebanon, a storm has hit the seas that surround Israel.

It is a storm that has just begun and could last for 10, 20, or maybe even 50 years.

But there is one place which has withstood this storm.

This place is Israel.

*Israel is a lighthouse in a storm.*

Like a lighthouse, Israel has strong foundations – a flourishing democracy, a strong economy that's growing and Jewish roots to the land that date back 3,800 years.

But a lighthouse is not just about having strong foundations.

It also projects light.

As a global leader in innovation, we in Israel understand that our economy cannot just be about doing *well*. We also have to do *good*.

That is why, as minister of economy, I have put an emphasis on the development of five different technologies – agriculture, water, cyber security, medical devices, and alternative energy.

These are lighthouse technologies.

In each of these areas, Israel can export its innovation to help make the world a better place.

But while innovation accounts for more than 60% of our exports today, this was not easy to achieve.

It took years, but we succeeded by understanding that we needed to open our economy and break down all barriers.

Today, we can proudly say that Israel is a world center for innovation.

We believe that the WTO framework is critical in making this possible and that it can play a key role in setting the standards needed for the global market.

The vision that led to the establishment of the WTO - of global prosperity through open markets – needs to be safeguarded.

We cannot allow economic crises, negative forecasts and stagnant growth to change this sentiment from one of openness to one of caution and suspicion.

Part of the solution is the innovation Israel has to offer. I invite you to join me and my country in working together to break down barriers as we pursue the joint goal of global prosperity.

Israel's innovation is open to the world through R&D agreements and cooperation. Come and join us.

Economic ties can create bridges for peace.

As minister of economy, I anxiously await the day I can sit down and sign free trade agreements with all of Israel's neighbors as well as other Arab and Muslim states in the wider region.

That is why, I urge you today not to forget the importance of the multilateral trading system.

Opening markets is in all of our interests.

It creates prosperity. It stabilizes the world and it creates peace between neighbors.

In short, it makes the world a better place.

Thank you.