

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. ALI AL-SUNAILY, THE
MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF THE SULTANATE OF
OMAN AT THE 9TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Bali, Indonesia

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates Ladies and Gentleman

It is a great pleasure for me and my delegation to represent the Sultanate of Oman at this 9th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization. I am overwhelmed by the warm welcome and lavish hospitality extended to me and my delegation by the Government and the people of Indonesia. I offer my hearty thanks to them and congratulate them for excellent arrangements for this important Conference.

My compliments to the Director General and the staff of the WTO Secretariat for the comprehensive and high quality documentation for the Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

This Conference is taking place at a critical juncture in the life of the WTO. The decisions we take will go to rehabilitate the tarnished image of the WTO. It will put the organization at the centre stage in the fight against protectionism and in the advancement of liberalization and expansion of world trade. Our decisions

will convey a message to the world at large that the WTO is back in the business of multilateral trade negotiations.

The Sultanate of Oman is a genuine believer in the basic principles of the multilateral trading system and is a strong supporter of the WTO. The Organization not only lays down mutually agreed and legally binding rules for the conduct of world trade but also provides effective mechanism for the implementation and enforcement of the rules. It has stood the test of time. There is no better substitute available.

We urge all Members to strengthen the WTO to fulfill its role as a bulwark against protectionism. Though the WTO has succeeded in preventing a wholesale retreat into protectionism, yet the fact remains that protectionism has been raising its ugly head in recent years. Oman has an experience of this as its exports have been adversely affected by protectionist actions and measures. It is important to streamline the monitoring mechanism against protectionism. That will benefit all WTO Members and specially small developing countries. It may be a good idea to adopt a standstill commitment at this Conference.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

It is a matter of disappointment that the Doha Development Agenda negotiations have been stuck in a slow moving, never ending cycle. This Ministerial Conference will be a big success if we set a realistic deadline to conclude the DDA negotiations with a balanced and substantial package of results within a reasonable time frame. The Sultanate of Oman will join efforts with other WTO Members to this end.

The rejuvenated negotiations must remain true to the original objectives of Doha Ministerial Declaration; these should not be compromised or diluted. New

subjects of negotiations should not be added to the agenda. Understandings and compromises reached earlier after hard bargaining must not be questioned or reopened. And it is most important that the interests and concerns of developing countries must remain at the heart of DDA negotiations. Oman expects, and urges, developed countries to muster political will and to show magnanimity in supporting developing countries position and proposals on development dimensions in different areas of the negotiations.

Oman has actively participated in DDA negotiations as a Recently Acceded Member (RAM). We had successfully campaigned for special consideration for RAMs. The understandings already reached in this regard should be maintained and safeguarded.

Mr. Chairman,

Oman joins other WTO Members in supporting a successful outcome of the Bali Ministerial Conference. That, however, is not the end of Doha Round negotiations. It is in fact putting the negotiations back on rails. A positive outcome from this conference will show that the WTO is capable of taking consensus decisions on negotiations. It is a big push to Doha Round. The momentum is there. WTO Members should seize this opportunity to work towards successfully concluding the Doha Round negotiations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman