

RWANDA

Statement by Hon. Francois KANIMBA, Minister of Trade and Industry

*Mr. Chairman,
WTO Director General, Mr. Roberto Azevedo,
Honorable Ministers,
Excellences,
Ladies & gentlemen,*

1. On behalf of the Government and the people of Rwanda, it is with pleasure and great honour to be here in Bali, Indonesia, to attend the 9th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation. I would like to join previous speakers in expressing my gratitude to the Government and the people of Indonesia for the warm welcome and the effective organization of this Conference. I congratulate you Mr. Chairman, Director General and Chair of the WTO General Council for your tireless efforts and leadership in helping to guide this important conference towards a successful conclusion

2. My delegation fully supports the package negotiated by our Geneva-based teams and subscribes to the statements made by the Ministers of Morocco on behalf of the African Group; Nepal on behalf of the LDC Group and Jamaica on behalf of the ACP.

Mr Chairman,

3. I agree with you, we convene here in Bali at a critical time in the evolution of the multilateral trading system. Faced with over a decade of uncertainty, it is incumbent upon us all to seize the opportunity occasioned by the 9th Ministerial Conference to send a strong signal that this system – our system – is still needed and has to be safeguarded.

4. Rwanda is a vigorous defender of a strong, open and fair rules-based multilateral trading system. We believe that a trading system that is predictable and transparent – while also meaningfully addressing the needs of its most vulnerable Members, serves as an essential foundation for enhancing trade and investment, for creating more and better jobs for our people, and ultimately, for promoting growth, inclusive development and poverty reduction.

5. It is on this basis that Rwanda supports the adoption of a Trade Facilitation Agreement. I cannot stress enough the importance of Trade Facilitation for Africa as a whole, and for Rwanda in particular. Trade Facilitation is part of our national agenda. As a landlocked country, we believe that a Trade Facilitation Agreement is important, not only for its potential to increase the competitiveness of our private sector by reducing transaction costs, but also because it will facilitate our dialogue with our partner countries within our regional economic groupings to cut down the cost of trading across the borders to reach the global markets and participate in the global value chains.

6. Towards these broader aims, Rwanda has been implementing a myriad of reforms to improve the macroeconomic environment and to facilitate business both in goods *and* services, and more generally to support economic growth and inclusive development. As one of the top reformers in Africa, Rwanda is determined to continue these efforts and achieve our growth agenda. We have been working with UNCTAD to assess the current capacity of Rwanda to implement the Trade Facilitation measures as provided for in the

draft TF Agreement. I am happy to report that Rwanda is ready to implement this agreement in a reasonable horizon with the help of our development partners where necessary.

7. Mindful of the role that the WTO can play in the above process, Rwanda calls on all WTO Members:

- To renew and strengthen our commitment to secure a robust outcome from the Doha Round in the post-Bali period – one that delivers on the promise made over a decade ago of placing the needs and interests of developing countries at the heart of our work programme;

- To ensure that initiatives aimed at assisting the most vulnerable economies, and particularly LDCs are fully and effectively implemented, so as to support moves away from traditional commodity exports and towards needed diversification and enhanced value-addition;

- To further support efforts for boosting intra-African trade; and lastly

- To build on our commitment in mobilising the WTO's Aid for Trade initiative to address the still-pervasive supply-side constraints faced by LDCs and to maintain the political momentum in support of the Enhanced Integrated Framework initiative.

8. Allow me to close my statement by reiterating the need for collective commitment, but also concrete actions, to help restore global faith in the WTO as the backbone of the international trading system. I am confident that together we can move closer to this goal here in Bali, as well as in the post-Bali work program. I wish you a peaceful and prosperous year 2014.

I thank you