

Statement by Tonga in support of FIC WTO Members' Joint-Statement

In support of the Joint-Statement delivered by the distinguished Minister from the Solomon Islands, Tonga urges leaders of the developed world to take the necessary political leadership to achieve a positive outcome here in Bali.

As a small island state, our economic growth and capacity to trade is hindered by our remoteness and distance from major markets, our smallness and dispersed populations, and our vulnerabilities to external economic shocks and the effects of climate change.

The only way for us to build a strong and robust economy, that would improve the livelihoods of our people, is through increasing and diversifying our trade. We therefore are very much committed to trade and regional economic integration, including through the Pacific Plan and through strategies to meet our Millenium Development Goals.

However, in spite of these commitments, our ability to benefit from international trade is dependent on how fair, how inclusive and how transparent the rules-based system is under WTO. It is critical that the multilateral rules uphold and encourage the key principles of special and differential treatment, and development.

We therefore urge members to:

- Commit to successfully concluding a Bali Package where development is at its core;
- Facilitate the provision of requisite support including capacity building required to implement elements of the Bali Package including the Work Programme for Small and Vulnerable Economies

Thank you