

**ADDRESS BY H.E. MINISTER RACHID MOHAMED RACHID
MINISTER OF TRADE & INDUSTRY OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT
TO THE Developing countries' Groups MEETING**

**THE SEVENTH WTO TRADE MINISTERIAL MEETING
(Geneva, 30 November to 2 December 2009)**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour and privilege for me to be here at this important gathering of developing and least developed country groupings which signifies the everlasting solidarity between our countries.

In fact, one of the main issues we stressed in the African Trade Ministerial we held last month, was that it is indispensable that we maintain the solidarity and the coordination among all developing country groupings. This is not surprising, in view of the fact that the African group comprises members from several developing country groupings.

All of the countries present here today have a shared objective, namely the achievement of development for our people. Our

countries have been - even more than others- negatively affected by the combined crises and challenges recently experienced by the world economy. We are strongly convinced that our salvation lies in a successful, fair and early conclusion of the Doha Round which has development at its core.

Although there have been many political signals and commitments to conclude the current Doha round by 2010, no progress has been achieved so far. Paradoxically, we are risking backsliding in the negotiations and we are witnessing an increasing reliance on small group consultations.

Thus, you may share the view that we should all deliver a strong and unified message on the importance of the translation of recent political signals and commitments into real negotiating positions which lead to a successful, fair and early conclusion of the DDA. This unified message should also voice our deep concern regarding the lack of inclusiveness and transparency of the negotiating process and our demand for full participation of all developing country groupings in all areas of the negotiations. We also need to underscore the necessity of adhering to the agreed principles of negotiations and caution against any form of

backsliding, re-interpretation or re-opening of the mandate. All of this is reflected in our joint communiqué.

We need to be stressing that this is a development round. Developmental outcomes should be evident in each of the negotiating tracks and the overall outcome of the round. Priority should be accorded to issues of particular importance to developing countries, that are still suffering from the consequences of the financial crisis on our economies, exports and investments. Early harvest needs to be achieved on issues like Cotton, Duty free Quota free market access; furthermore, additional resources need to be secured for Aid for Trade while improving the aid supply mechanism and strengthening its monitoring and assessment .

In addition to disseminating our unified message through the meetings' sessions, it is very important that it is communicated through the media. We need to build up a public opinion that empathizes and supports our demands and puts pressure on the concerned developed countries. We should bring about the wide understanding that we are currently, due to mere political concerns

of some rich countries, losing the opportunity to get millions of people out of poverty and to boost the economic and social development in poor countries.

So, despite any possible varying and sometimes conflicting stakes we might have in relation to the specific aspects of the WTO negotiations, we need to focus on our shared objective which and remains the achievement of development of our people through the successful conclusion of the DDA with development at its core. In this respect, we might benefit from the fact that this conference is not a negotiating one. This enables us, even more than at real negotiating meeting, to use it as an opportunity to express our solidarity and deliver our unified message to the world.

Finally, I would like to stress that the African Group's members are fully committed to work with all of you in order to realize our common objective which is a pro-development multilateral trading system.

Thank you