

**Statement BY H.E. MINISTER RACHID MOHAMED RACHID**  
**MINISTER OF TRADE & INDUSTRY OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT**  
**Plenary Session Meeting**

**THE SEVENTH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**  
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Distinguished Ministers,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the African Group, I have great pleasure in joining the Ministers of trade gathered here in Geneva in welcoming you all to the Seventh Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization. I feel deeply honoured to address such a distinguished audience of this very important Conference.

I would like to express my appreciation to Director-General, Pascal Lamy and the General Council Chair, Ambassador Matus, for their painstaking preparation of the Seventh Ministerial, and to the WTO Secretariat for the work in preparing this important Ministerial.

The Seventh Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference comes while the global economic situation is recovering, but this recovery remains uneven, fragile and many difficulties still lie ahead.

The world is still to be in a “state of development emergency” as declared by the Global Monitoring Report of 2009. And as far as the multiplying effects of the food, fuel, financial and economic crises are sweeping thousands of people into poverty and hunger every day, we should all work hard with a high sense of urgency.

As for the African economies, many countries are still suffering from the impacts of the economic crisis. Recalling in this regard, the African Development Bank estimates that the losses in export revenues will reach \$251 billion in 2009 and \$277 billion in 2010. These losses are most likely to be increased if the protectionist trends which started during the crisis continued to restrict and threaten the trade liberalization.

At the mean time, the Doha Development Round launched in November 2001 with the expectation for conclusion in December 2005 missed several deadlines.

We all recognize that trade is a strategic force in developing countries' battle against poverty and hunger. So, when we know that the protectionist measures associated with the crises and the opportunities we lost due to not reaching a Doha Deal are hampering developing countries way towards achieving the World Millennium Development goals, we should work hard to get the WTO to live up to its responsibility in fostering the global economy and achieving development.

We reaffirm that the most effective means of sustaining and securing our recovery, as well as dealing with protectionist tendencies is a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round, with the developmental component at its core, in 2010. This is in addition to our hard work in the review of WTO activities having the development perspective as our guide.

In order to reach this goal, drawing roadmaps will not be enough; the most importantly is that we work together and to be ready to take difficult, even hard, decisions. The action we need here is flexible negotiating positions driven by a high sense of urgency and responsibility, and a real determination to achieve our target building on the progress achieved so far and avoiding any backsliding or regression in negotiations.

In every international negotiation there is a time for discussion and a time for decision. Since Doha, sufficient time has been spent in discussing in depth the issues at stake. This preparatory process has been of extreme value with an intensive dialogue and very active participation of the developing countries. It is now up to us, Ministers, to take the political decisions by showing courage, determination and flexibility on all sides to settle the remaining open questions with a view to achieving a positive and balanced conclusion of the Doha Round. It is not my intention to re-explain our positions, which are well known. I would like to limit myself to emphasizing some parameters of crucial importance for our work in the near future:

- (a) Firstly, we should not miss the target. Our priority is to examine the difficulties to the conclusion of the Doha Round, and to define the solutions. The high-level political commitments to concluding the Doha Round in 2010 have not yet been translated into tangible progress in the negotiations.

We urge our partners to exercise leadership and all possible flexibility to accelerate the work and close the gaps. The works should build on the progress achieved to-date, including with regard to modalities.

We call on our partners to draw on the energy of the G20 to overcome difficulties and speed progress in the WTO. G20 Leaders provided a forceful lead in Pittsburgh in September, recognizing that ambitious and balanced completion of the Doha Development Agenda, during 2010 at the latest, is an essential prerequisite in underpinning and sustaining any significant revival of world trade. We urge our governments to reengage with a commensurate sense of urgency exploring all options to boost confidence and move forward together on all three market access pillars towards a settlement that will achieve positive growth in world trade.

- (b) Secondly, we should aim at a stronger WTO. If the WTO remains passive we run the risk of falling back to protectionism and unilateral actions.
- (c) Thirdly, the central theme of the negotiations should be to focus on all-round development capable of eradicating poverty. Economic integration cannot advance if the interests of the poor are left behind.

The main theme of DDA is Development. It is there as a matter of deliberate choice. At Doha we chose development as the guiding philosophy of this ninth round of multilateral negotiations because we believe that trade is an engine of growth, and that it must work for development.

What we are seeking to do is to help developing economies better integrate into the global system so that they too can reap the benefits of free and open trade. Let us remind ourselves of this as we set the direction of our work for concluding the DDA.

For us, active participation in the WTO is, by default, the only mean with which we can achieve our developmental goals. The WTO's rules-based multilateral trading system helps sustain a dynamic but stable international market environment, in which our goods and services can compete on a level playing field. And in the event of disputes, it allows a fair hearing for all, regardless of size and economic well being.

- (d) And fourthly, significant progress has to be achieved in key issues of interest to Africa; we aspire to give the necessary priority to issues of importance to African and LDC Members.

As a sign of our determination to get the multilateral trading system work for development, we can start by an early harvest for the issues of cotton and LDCs, as well as ensure increasing resources of Aid for Trade.

If we do something just for cotton now, we will be saving millions of people out of poverty in African countries which rely on cotton for 50-80% of their exports. Every day we miss for this product only means leaving millions of people to suffer. So, what about the whole package?

To conclude, I would like to emphasize, on behalf of the African Group, that the realization of these hopes is a responsibility which rests upon us all. We will work at this organization to ensure that we succeed. Together, we will achieve our goals.

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