

Seventh WTO Ministerial Conference

30 November – 2 December

‘The WTO's contribution to recovery, growth and development’

(Working Session 2)

**Statement by H.E. Minister Rachid Mohamed Rachid
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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be given the opportunity to speak here today at this important working session on the WTO's contribution to recovery, growth and development, on behalf of Egypt and on behalf of the African Group. However, I am standing here today not only as a representative of Egypt and by extension of Africa, but also as a firm believer of the World Trade Organization and of the contribution it can make to the recovery of the world economy and the growth and development of all countries gathered here.

We are meeting here today with a shared objective. Indeed, all of the countries present here today have a common goal, namely the

achievement of development for our people and a recovery of our economies. In this respect, I sincerely hope and I believe that I am standing here as a representative of all of us. All of us and developing countries in particular, have been severely hit by the global economic crisis. I am strongly convinced of the pivotal and unique role the WTO can play in our mutual recovery and in achieving development for our people and growth for our economies.

Indeed, the World Trade Organization has the potential to make an enormous contribution to recovery, growth and development. This is not only an asset of great value which we have to cherish; it also entails a great responsibility to which we have to live up. We are faced here today with a very important task. We have the opportunity to get millions of people out of poverty; we have the chance to boost economic and social development and to contribute to the growth of our economies. I am honored to be given this opportunity and this chance, but I do realize that it entails a great responsibility. We have to make the most of these opportunities. We cannot lose these chances. We must seize them. I believe that this

is more than a responsibility. It is a duty which lies with all of us. I am confident that all of you will share this view.

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, please let us not forget that we have gathered here today to work together towards our common and shared objective, which is a multilateral trading system that lives up to its responsibility to foster the global economy. All of us gathered here today to bear this responsibility. Let us accept this responsibility, let us perform our duty and make the most of this meeting, let us maximize the WTO's contribution to recovery, growth and development. I am confident that all of you do not want to bear the responsibility for missing these opportunities and are willing to fulfill our duty.

Today's discussions will address the possible new approaches and tools which we need to confront the challenges we are facing and which will enable the WTO to live up to its responsibility to foster our economies and contribute to recovery, growth and development.

In order to ensure that the system plays its full part in promoting recovery, growth and development, I firmly believe that

we have to prioritize a successful, fair and early conclusion of the Doha Round which has development at its core. This conclusion is a *conditio sine qua non* for post-crisis stability. At this critical time, after experiencing a crisis which was partly triggered by a lack of international governance, concluding the Doha Round would be a clear sign of our commitment to a multilateral trading system which contributes to recovery, growth and development.

Furthermore, I would like to stress the importance of the Aid for Trade initiative. Aid for Trade has always been of utmost importance. However, as a result of the global economic crisis, it has become even more than important, it has become indispensable. I call on all developed countries to scale up their resources for this indispensable initiative and to, thereby, take their responsibility and perform their duty.

The economic crisis, ladies and gentlemen, is not the only challenge which is facing the multilateral governance system today. The world has recently been faced with other significant challenges, such as the food and fuel crises, the rising waves of protectionism, and the climate change issues. These crises are questioning our

prevailing economic policy paradigms and require us, all WTO Members, to carefully reassess our tools, models and strategies to deal with such global crises and to promote development. All these challenges are global and they require a global approach. These challenges are a test of the strength of multilateralism in general and of global governance systems such as the WTO in particular. Excellencies, I call upon all of you to address these challenges and to pass this test.

Other world conferences addressing these challenges are taking place at a similar timing as this Ministerial Conference. The UN World Food Summit, for example, recently addressed the critical issue of the global food crisis. However, also at this Ministerial Conference we can and we need to reinforce our efforts to make hunger a history. Food is not just any tradable commodity; it is a matter of life or death. Therefore, Excellencies, I want to ask you here today to make an additional contribution to the commitments we have undertaken to realize the Millennium Development Goals and to acknowledge the right to food. Please translate these commitments into the protection, respect and fulfillment of the right to food in your trade negotiating positions.

From 7 to 18 December, the UN Climate Change Conference will be held in Copenhagen. While I truly acknowledge the importance of addressing the climate change issues, I would like to take this opportunity to recall that developing countries' exports should not be restricted on the grounds of the protection of the climate. We strongly emphasize that measures or decisions taken to protect the climate should be in line and consistent with the rules of the WTO.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I pass the word to you, but not before I asked you one last time to focus on our shared objective which is and remains the realization of recovery, growth and development for our people through the WTO. Let us shoulder our mutual responsibility to realize a pro-development multilateral trading system and maximize the contribution of the WTO to enhancing the multilateral trading system in the current global economic environment.

Thank you.