Statement by Ambassador Amina Mohammed

Cabinet Secretary for Sports, Culture and Heritage

Addis Ababa and the Multilateral Trading System:

WTO Reform and the Future of African Trade Policy

Note: Ambassador Mohammed is unable to be with us today because she has remained in Nairobi to attend the funeral of His Excellency the late President Daniel arap Moi who, sadly, passed away last week. She has asked me to read her prepared remarks in her absence.

It is a great pleasure for me d(is)Tj0 .(04 E Td( )TjEMC /P 0 .(04IgID 20 BDC weRh)TjEMC /P

A widely quoted number that illustrates the potential for gains from deeper African integration is that intra-African trade only represents some 16 per cent of total African trade. The modesty of that share tells the story of the massive potential that can be unleashed by deeper integration among our countries. Within the European Union, for example, and among the member countries of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) grouping, their respective shares of intra-trade are two-thirds or more of their total trade.

In order to realize this potential for closer regional cooperation, our governments must foster closer links amongst our nations by growing the flows of goods, services, capital and ultimately people across the continent. This means continuing to transform a post-colonial pattern of infrastructure and communications into a truly trans-continental network of interconnectivity. We know that it will take time and money, but we are committed now more than ever.

A second prerequisite, of course, relates to policy. As has already begun under AfCFTA, we are moving gradually towards policies that will integrate us into a continental whole. Starting with trade in goods and services, we shall move on in Phase 2 to tackle investment, competition and intellectual property rights. These

of access to markets are defined, countries may not exercise further discrimination between domestic and foreign supplies and suppliers of traded products.

These guarantees are valuable and speak in favour of engagement with the WTO. There is a sense, however, in which the WTO baseline rules will be superseded by the AfCFTA, which is expected to provide more favourable treatment to its members in terms of access to one another's markets. This should provide richer integration opportunities across the continent, favouring increased trade flows, more diversification and greater scale economies, and more development, job opportunities and growth.

A caveat is in order, however, relating to the appropriate balance between the conditions of competition among AfCFTA countries and the conditions of competition with third parties in the rest of the world. Striking the right balance is essential to an upward trajectory of growth and development, supported by both the AfCFTA and the WTO.

Let me end with a few observations about the WTO. It is no secret that since its creation in 1995, the WTO has not done as well as it might have in terms of advancing a global policy agenda that can benefit all. With just a few notable

with a stronger, more unified African voice, an opportunity to shape the system to be more responsive to Africa's needs and to participate more fully in defining the WTO's agenda and vision.

It is this frame of thinking that answers the question I posed at the beginning. What can the WTO do for Africa? A vibrant WTO can help to create the conditions for profitable African trading opportunities with the rest of the world. And what can Africa do for the WTO? Africa can bring its growing influence to bear on renewing the WTO as an effective instrument of international cooperation. This is a need that has become particularly pressing in light of the challenges faced by the multilateral trading system. Let us rise to the occasion.

Thank you very much.