

Statement
by:

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Federal Government of Somalia

at:

Excellencies, Honorable and Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman,

Before I delve into my discussion points, I first wish to express deep thanks to the organizers of this regional session. The Federal Government wishes to thank the WTO Secretariat, the Department of Economics at the University of Nairobi and the Cabinet Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Trade for the Republic of Kenya for being such gracious and kind hosts. I also take this time to acknowledge all of my counterparts who are here today in support of the ongoing activities of Somalia, the Comoros, South Sudan, Sudan and Ethiopia.

It seems like only yesterday that the historic MC10 2015 happened here in Nairobi - sparking new dialogue, applications and efforts from many African counterparts - an example is Somalia's very own WTO application being submitted at that same time. It is therefore very befitting that this regional dialogue is being held here in Nairobi - the city where the first ever MC10 meeting was held on African soil - setting a new precedent and showcasing to the world that African states very much have a seat at the table in the international trade community and have full ownership of their trade regimes.

Somalia's Accession Process: Updates

I am honored to be sitting here amongst my esteemed counterparts: from those who represent states that are WTO members, to those representing countries currently navigating their own accession process - there is much that can be learned from the experiences and perspectives shared here and I have taken note of many of the salient points raised which I believe will be very helpful for the process that lies ahead for Somalia.

Since Somalia's application was submitted in 2015, much change has occurred in the country. The most notable being the change in political landscape and peaceful transition of the new government in February and March 2017 and that of the former administration in 2012. The new administration is completely committed to Somalia's negotiations and much has occurred since coming into office. It is pertinent to have a multilingual team who could exercise strong negotiating skills, and who have strong ties to their home governments so that Somalia can effectively engage with the WTO Ministerial Conference with some of the obstacles that plagued previously acceding governments regarding accessibility, whether cultural or linguistic, removed.

Our Government understands Somalia's need for extensive support as a LDC joining the WTO, however the recent aforementioned efforts show that our Government is very much dedicated to contributing as much to the accession process as it possible can. As well as make the most of the support already provided for example: the accessions division of the WTO Secretariat and others who have been assisting us

every step of the way.

Interventions: 1) Political Stability and State Participation & 2) Reformative Burden and Scope of WTO Disciplines

Post 1994 and the Marrakesh Declaration - many could argue that more stringent obligations are imposed that are extremely difficult for LDCs, and in particular those that are post conflict, to adhere to. However, there is always an opposing view to this that perhaps these obligations can push LDCs to completely reform themselves and aim to align with international standard practice, allowing for ample opportunities. A lot has been shared already on this panel in regards to LDC perceptions, and I would like to give my interventions from the perspective of an acceding post conflict and restructuring state.

My interventions will be two fold and I will discuss often highlighted challenges that regularly face LDCs: Firstly; Political Stability and State Participation, and Secondly; Reformative Burdens and Scope of WTO Disciplines, and how Somalia is currently tackling, or will tackle them in its negotiating process.

1) Political Stability and State Participation

1) Reformative Burden and Scope of WTO Discs

It is also commonly argued that the WTO accession process is largely one sided - that the deal is mainly imposed on candidates by incumbent members, and as the WTO membership grows, LDCs will be left adhering to more and more requests from a large Ministerial Council with limited resources to do so. Although an Asian example, the examples of the first acceding WTO LDCs: Nepal and Cambodia, for example, were expected to commit three to four times more services sectors than the average WTO member in their negotiations. Much has developed since then, particularly for African states which now comprise one quarter of the WTO membership and we anticipate that this will not be the case for Somalia.

For Somalia, it is important to not accept far reaching concession requests - without securing exceptions and sufficient transition periods. The applying for membership to the WTO is, after all, a purely voluntary process. Suffice it to say, a way of securing sufficient ownership for Somalia's own accession is for example, making it standard practice to seek technical assistance and prepare realistic implementation plans, rather than committing to obligations unprepared where there is prematurity or weaknesses in Somalia's institutional infrastructure that may require delays in the WTO provisions' implementation.

Our Government understands the herculean efforts that lie ahead in Somalia's reformation and look forward to gaining engaging with and gaining the support of our

major trading partners, our fellow member states in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Arab League - of which Somalia has signed both investment

passed. Somalia's Investment Code at the time, for example, was one of the most cutting edge investment laws at the time. At a time when much of Africa was still under colonial rule, the investment code sought to protect the sovereignty of the Somali state and foreign investors offering most favored nation provisions and much more - this for example fulfills our MFTR criteria in accordance with annex 1 of procedures for negotiations under article 22.

Somalia was one of the earlier member states - one of the first African in fact, to become a member state of the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes at the World Bank, also known as 'ICSID'. With Somali signing and ratifying the ICSID convention in 1965 and 1968, respectfully. As we all know, becoin

remembered. Having platforms like this to discuss and be critical where need be allowing both representatives of WTO member states, acceding states and the WTO Secretariat to be both honest and progressive with one another so as to see what needs to be improved and also any progress that has been made.

I look forward to hearing the rest of the discussions here and answering any questions the audience and my counterparts may have.

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