

**WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION**

**MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
Tenth Session
Nairobi, 15 – 18 December 2015**

AUSTRIA

Statement by H.E. Ms. Bernadette Gierlinger
Vice Minister

First and foremost, I would like to convey my deep gratitude to Kenya and the people of Nairobi for hosting this Tenth Ministerial Conference in their heartfelt hospitality. Furthermore, I would also like to take the opportunity to express my deep appreciation to our Chair, the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Her Excellency Amina Mohamed, and her Vice Chairs, whose able leadership will guide us through this first WTO Ministerial Conference taking place in sub-Saharan Africa.

Let me also thank our Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo and his experienced team for his work and engagement through the last two difficult years. Since our gathering in Bali in 2013 many challenges had to be overcome. Again we are facing a very difficult moment and we trust in the DG's ability to lead us towards a positive and respectable outcome. In the year of its 20th Anniversary, the WTO as the guardian of a rules based multilateral trading system must show the necessary leadership to make this conference a success.

Austria is very satisfied to acknowledge the steady increase of the WTO family. With gratification we notice the accessions of the Seychelles and very recently of Kazakhstan as new Members to the WTO after long and difficult negotiations. And we welcome in particular Liberia and Afghanistan who have been formally invited to join as new members. These decisions will support the deeper and better integration of the newcomers into global markets and at the same time send a strong signal to those LDCs who remain outside of the WTO still. It is pleasing to see that the WTO continues to be attractive and evolves as a truly global multilateral trading system.

Trade liberalization has been and will be a decisive factor for our economies, for economic growth and for development. The clearly best solutions are always those which can be negotiated and implemented on a multilateral basis. However, with the exception of the information technology agreement for 20 years the WTO has not delivered on new market access; no surprise that many countries look for alternatives to offer new trade opportunities to their business and try to meet their expectations. We have always seen bilateral and regional engagement as complementary to the multilateral system. Nevertheless, this only works, if we advance on the multilateral level at the same time. Lack of dynamics in Geneva endangers both, the multilateral basis and the bilateral agendas. The world is a dynamic place and we have to move forward – with a strong multilateral concept at its heart.

In the next days we will have to make up our mind on the so called Nairobi package. For some time now it has been clear that, like in Bali two years ago, this package is not a big one; neither does it meet all our hopes and long term expectations for the Doha Round. But on the other hand, we should not disregard what is before

moderate results and packages and in vain efforts in key areas of the negotiations like market access in all three pillars and domestic support in agriculture cannot be seen as a very convincing approach. We have to think about alternatives, about new and more promising negotiating models, even if this means to interpret existing negotiating frames and mandates in a new light. "Business as usual" as a result of this conference would be very difficult to sell to our enterprises and would represent a devastating signal to the outside world.

It is not a big secret that the EU and Austria desire to explore new issues. It would be a wrong step to think that we have still more time in the WTO to sit back and hope for the Doha Round to be concluded soon. Reality does not wait for us. Consequently we have to start brainstorming about other areas that need to be dealt with on the multilateral level. The