

DECLARATION ON WTO NEGOTIATIONS

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the African Union, meeting at the 8th Ordinary Session of our Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 29th – 30th January 2007;

Recalling the decision of the international community at Doha in November 2001 to put the interests and concerns of developing countries at the center of the New Round of World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations;

Taking into account the enormous financial and human resource costs that have been incurred by our Member States since the launch of the Doha Round in 2001;

Recalling our earlier Declarations on the Doha Development Agenda negotiations;

Mindful of the decisions taken by the Heads of State and Government of the United Nations Organization at the Millennium Summit +5, held in New York in September 2005, regarding the need of development, as well as the ways and means for attaining this central objective;

Further recalling the recommendations of the G-8 Summit held in Saint Petersburg in 2006 and the commitments taken by the major trade players concerning the achievement of the Doha Round objectives;

Taking note of the Report of the Third Extra-Ordinary Session of AU Conference of Ministers of Trade, held in Addis Ababa on 16th January 2007;

Aware that there are many systemic trade issues of importance to Africa's development which are beyond the reach of bilateralism and which can be best addressed within the framework of a rules-based multilateral trading system;

Further aware that Africa will be a major loser if the Doha Round fails to deliver on its development promises and does not lead to a strengthening of multilateralism;

Convinced that a successful completion of the Doha Round, with development at its core, is critical to Africa meeting the challenges of development, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

Taking note of the expressions of support for Africa's development aspirations by some of our development partners.

Hereby:

1. **EXPRESS** our deep concern and disappointment at the stalling of the negotiations on the DDA, which has been due largely to the failure of major players in the WTO process to demonstrate the necessary flexibility in their negotiating positions.
2. **RE-AFFIRM** our support for a rules-based multilateral trading system.
3. **CALL** for a prompt resumption and a speedy and successful conclusion of the Doha Round, with its development dimensions given high priority as agreed in the 2001 WTO Declaration.
4. **REQUEST** the major players in the WTO and our development partners to contribute to the attainment of this objective by translating their expressions of support for Africa's development into concrete development-oriented commitments in the WTO negotiations.
5. **RE-AFFIRM** the need for this Round of negotiations to yield real development results, as promised in the Doha Declaration and the Doha Development Agenda (DDA).
6. **URGE** our trade partners, especially the major players, to provide the necessary flexibilities that will enable African countries to use trade as an engine for promoting development, reducing and eliminating poverty.
7. **STRESS** therefore the need to improve and make workable, the rules, principles and mechanisms of multilateral trade, for African countries, in particular the least developed among them.
8. **UNDERScore** the importance of technical support and financial assistance for the building of supply capacity and the promotion of trade and development in African countries.
9. **REQUEST** therefore the developed countries and the international organizations to make real contributions in the allocation of adequate resources and appropriate technical assistance, through effective channels and mechanisms, for attainment of these objectives.
10. **COMMEND** African Trade Ministers and Negotiators for their continued steadfastness in the defense of Africa's interests in the WTO negotiations.
11. **RE-ITERATE** our position that any outcome of the current Round of WTO negotiations that fails to adequately deliver on the development promises of the DDA will be unacceptable to Africa.

2007

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