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**STATEMENT BY H.E. MS ASSOME AMINATA DIATTA
MINISTER OF TRADE AND SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES**

SENEGAL

I would like to express to you, on behalf of His Excellency Mr Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, and on behalf of the entire Government of Senegal, our deep appreciation for the successful organization of this session of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

I would also like to congratulate the Director-General, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and her team for their considerable efforts to move forward in the negotiations and achieve results.

Following the encouraging results achieved in Nairobi in December 2015 and Buenos Aires in 2017, it is now time to follow up on and consolidate the fruits of our commitment to building an increasingly effective multilateral trading system for all.

Now more than ever, multilateral trade has a key role to play in reducing inequality among Members and must contribute to sustained growth and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations.

It is worth remembering that this Ministerial Conference is taking place in a global context marked by an unequal and fragile post-COVID-19 economic recovery and a tense geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe. All these factors have a substantial impact on world trade, the multilateral trading system and vulnerable populations around the world.

In these tough circumstances, developing effective WTO responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the food crisis is urgent and must be an integral part of the initial results of MC12.

My delegation therefore welcomes the recent progress made in the negotiations on the waiver of certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement and calls for the substance of the original compromise text resulting from these talks not to be watered down.

The success of CM12 depends very much on our ability to redress and correct the imbalances inherited from the Uruguay Round of negotiations in the area of agriculture, where agricultural subsidies continue to distort international markets and increase poverty in urban and rural areas in developing countries, in particular in least developed countries (LDCs).

In this regard, my delegation believes that the revised farm-oriented agriculture modalities of 2008 on considerably reducing trade-distorting domestic support, among others, provide a good basis for continuing the reform process to establish a fair trading system for agricultural products while preserving the necessary flexibilities for developing countries and LDCs.

My delegation also remains convinced that a definitive solution on public stockholding for food security purposes is necessary, as is a flexible and effective special safeguard mechanism for developing countries and LDCs.

In addition, I remain confident that a ministerial decision prohibiting export restrictions on food purchased for humanitarian and non-commercial purposes by the World Food Programme could

contribute significantly to the fight against food insecurity, which is increasingly threatening the most vulnerable States.

Further, Senegal supports the full implementation of previous WTO Ministerial Decisions taken to support LDCs.

My country also calls for the challenges associated with compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary standards to be taken into account and for the provision of the trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building needed to capitalize on the opportunities afforded at the multilateral level to integrate LDCs into world trade in goods and services.

In addition to continuing the reform process in agriculture, Senegal supports a WTO reform that must adhere to the principles of transparency, justice and equity in the balance of rights and obligations of its Members while ensuring that the interests of developing countries and LDCs are taken into account.

My delegation believes that development must remain at the heart of the multilateral trading system, and the system must continue helping developing countries and LDCs to further their integration into global value chains.

The industrialization, diversification and structural transformation of our economies are key to meeting this objective. I therefore invite WTO Members to give their consideration and make the necessary political commitment to the G-90 proposals on special and differential treatment.

As regards fisheries subsidies, my delegation continues to support an ambitious and balanced multilateral outcome that will contribute to the sustainable use of marine resources and their preservation for future generations. The expected outcome will therefore need to include the necessary flexibilities for developing countries and LDCs that are facing constraints in their fisheries management systems.

With regard to the graduation of countries from the LDC list, I would like to recall and, most importantly, express my delight, that in December 2021, Senegal became one of five countries whose graduation is being considered by the United Nations Committee for Development Policy. This is thanks to the significant progress made by my country in achieving its development objectives as part of the implementation of the Emergent Senegal Plan, among other factors.

I invite WTO Members and development partners to implement the United Nations resolutions on the smooth transition strategy for graduated countries, including the need to provide a long, uniform transition period to assist these graduated countries in adapting to the multilateral trading system. In this regard, the adoption of the draft decision proposed by the LDCs will be a highly valuable outcome of MC12.

My delegation is of the view that the plurilateral initiatives for joint development are important and act as levers for economic and social development.

These initiatives, however, must not overshadow the major concerns of developing countries and LDCs regarding outstanding Doha Development Agenda issues and must not be conducted in such a way that they ignore the differences in the levels of preparation and development of WTO Members. Indeed, one of the strengths of our Organization is its ability to move forward at a harmonious pace, taking into account the differences, needs and aspirations of its Members.

We take this opportunity to acknowledge, once again, the work carried out in support of LDCs under the Enhanced Integrated Framework programme, which has helped eligible countries to better integrate trade into their national development strategies, which, in turn, has helped them to build their production and export capacities in recognized growth sectors.

I urge bilateral and multilateral partners to further support this mechanism.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Senegal's commitment to the multilateral trading system and by underlining the importance of consolidating the foundations of our Organization, as stipulated in the Marrakesh Declaration and other WTO documents.

In order to maintain this momentum and open up new opportunities, my wish is that the decisions we take here reflect the principles of transparency, fairness and inclusiveness. This is what will ensure the success of CM12.
