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**Ministerial Conference  
Eleventh Session  
Buenos Aires, 10-13 December 2017**

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**MINISTERIAL COMMUNICATION OF THE  
GROUP OF ARTICLE XII MEMBERS**

BUENOS AIRES, 10 DECEMBER 2017

The following communication, dated 10 December 2017, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu on behalf of the Group of Article XII Members.

1. The Group of Article XII Members welcomes the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference as an important opportunity for all WTO Members to collectively renew their commitment to a **robust, rules-based and predictable multilateral trading system**, and to the WTO as the principal institution to safeguard and promote fair trade and liberalization.
2. We are **concerned with the stalemate** in the current negotiations. Our view is that negotiations should build on what has been achieved to date.
3. In the same way as the previous Doha and Hong Kong Ministerial Declarations, as well as the Doha Work Programme adopted by the General Council in 2004, **paragraph 27 of the 2015 Nairobi Ministerial Declaration** once again recognizes "the special situation of the Members acceded in accordance with Article XII of the *Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization* who have undertaken extensive market access commitments at the time of accession" and states that "[t]his situation shall be taken into account in the negotiations".
4. **Article XII Members have already made exceptionally deep and extensive commitments** to the WTO at the time of their accessions. The Group therefore expects the gap between our commitment levels and those of the original WTO Members to be significantly narrowed on the conclusion of the current round. It would be totally unreasonable and unacceptable for Article XII Members not to be compensated in the current round of negotiations, **in a fair and proportionate manner**, for the high price we have all paid in advance to trade liberalization. We urge original WTO Members to make every effort to match the level of our commitments and thus ensure balanced outcomes in the negotiations.
5. We note that **the WTO faces growing difficulties and challenges**. We reaffirm our determination to strengthen and improve the multilateral trading system, with a view to better enable us to respond to the needs of economic, financial, inclusive and sustainable development. We are committed to work with other WTO Members towards a successful 11th Ministerial Conference, and we strongly urge Ministers and Heads of delegations at the Conference to give the clearest possible directions for our future work towards a successful and balanced conclusion of the ongoing negotiations.
6. **The accession of new Members to the WTO**, including developing countries, and in particular Least-Developed Countries (LDCs), continues to broaden the scope of international trade covered by WTO disciplines. We welcome Liberia and Afghanistan's membership of the WTO and Somalia and Timor-Leste as observers in 2016. We are also encouraged by the

reactivation of some accession processes since the last Ministerial, as well as by the new application from the Republic of South Sudan at the MC11. We call on Members to support efforts to further facilitate WTO Membership accession negotiations.

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