



12 December 2017

(17-6842)

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

Original: English

**MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ADOPTED AT THE FIRST MEETING OF
TRADE MINISTERS OF THE g7+ WTO ACCESSIONS GROUP**

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, 10 DECEMBER 2017

The following communication, dated 11 December 2017, is being circulated at the request of the Ministers responsible for Trade and the Heads of Delegations of Afghanistan, Comoros, Liberia, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste and Yemen.

We, the Ministers responsible for trade and Heads of delegations of Afghanistan, Comoros, Liberia, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste and Yemen, have met in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 10 December 2017 on the margins of the Eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference (MC11).

Emphasizing the specific challenges faced by fragile and conflict affected states on their way to sound economic foundation, security and peace;

Recognizing the role of international trade as a universal instrument for economic growth, employment and development and the importance of the meaningful and effective participation in the multilateral trading system to help address these challenges;

Underlining the need for enhanced cooperation and support to ensure faster integration of these states in the global economy and the multilateral trading system;

We officially inaugurate the g7+ WTO Accessions Group, as a sub-group of the g7+, comprising of its WTO Article XII Members and WTO acceding governments, with the objective of establishing a platform for targeted facilitation and tailored support of the WTO accession and post-accession efforts of fragile and conflict affected states, aimed at re-building their economies through WTO-related structural reforms, the establishment of credible economic and institutional frameworks, and the enhancement of transparency and good governance.

We express gratitude to WTO Members and the international trade community for the consistent support provided to WTO accessions of the fragile and post conflict states. These concerted efforts have helped realize WTO membership of Yemen in 2014, Liberia and Afghanistan in 2016 and have promoted the sustained use of the WTO accession process for peacebuilding and sustainable economic development.

Despite this progress, several g7+ states remain outside of the WTO and are proactively pursuing their accessions. Mindful of their specific trade and economic challenges and the urgency in addressing them to help forge pathways out of conflict and fragility, we call upon the expediting and completion of the WTO accessions of these states, on terms designed to contribute to their economic growth and development.

We call on WTO Members and development partners to continue and strengthen technical assistance and support for the trade capacity building efforts of fragile and conflict affected states, during WTO accession and post-accession.

We commit to coordinate our efforts to support WTO accessions and maximize the benefits of WTO membership for the g7+ members, including through experience sharing and peer learning, and

we look forward to engaging with the WTO Membership and development partners to advance these goals.

We call upon all the Trade Ministers gathered in Buenos Aires to give positive consideration to the request by South Sudan to accede to the WTO pursuant to Article XII of the WTO Agreement,¹ at the Eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference.

We express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to Afghanistan for the efforts undertaken in its capacity as the coordinator of the new Group and to Ms Susana Malcorra, Chairperson of the Eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference for her support to inaugurate the Group on the margins of this Ministerial Conference.

¹ Document WT/MIN(17)/16.