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CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE,  
AT THE KENYAN PARLIAMENT,  
14 SEPTEMBER 2015, NAIROBI – KENYA**

The following communication, dated 21 September 2015, is being circulated at the request of Ambassador (Dr.) Amina C. Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

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1.1. Within exactly three months, Trade Ministers of more than 150 nations will be gathered here in Nairobi, at the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference. This will be the first WTO Ministerial to be held in Africa – and Kenya is proud to host it.

1.2. This conference is key to the future of the WTO and for the advancement of the Multilateral Trading System. The central issues of the current Round of negotiations, the Doha Development Agenda, will be on the table for discussion and decision by Ministers.

1.3. At the outset, let me say that the Government – and myself in particular- are totally committed to making this conference a success.

1.4. Let me take this opportunity to brief you on the substantive side of the Conference and on its preparations.

1.5. As of today, in Geneva, Director-General Roberto Azevêdo is resuming an intensive process of consultations with WTO Members. He is starting this process with a meeting of LDC, ACP and African Group representatives. The objective of this meeting is to hear from these representatives their main concerns and their expectations for the Conference.

1.6. Development, as you may know, is central to all discussions in the WTO. This Round of negotiations was predicated on the reaffirmation of development as the main goal to be achieved through further opening and regulation of international trade.

1.7. At the previous Ministerial Conference in Bali, in 2013, Ministers took several decisions in favour of LDCs. Representatives in Geneva are now discussing how to strengthen and broaden the scope of those decisions. An important proposal was tabled in late July by the so-called G90 group of developing countries to help advance the discussions. The ACP countries also tabled a proposal with several concrete suggestions and calling for a constructive spirit in the negotiations.

1.8. And as we speak of development, the area of Agriculture will be central to any outcomes in December here in Nairobi. A new chairperson – the incoming ambassador of New Zealand - has been selected for the negotiating group on Agriculture, and intensive discussions are continuing in several configurations in Geneva, covering the three areas of Export competition, Domestic Support and Market Access.

1.9. Progress in the discussions on Agriculture will be the main parameter and determining factor of progress in other areas.

1.10. These other areas – and mainly Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA, in the WTO jargon) and Services are also central to the negotiations. Rules (or trade defence issues such as Antidumping), Intellectual Property and Trade and Environment are additional chapters in the negotiations.

1.11. The Director-General is of course keeping all Members constantly informed of the consultations which he is holding and to which he is invited.

1.12. The next weeks will be crucial to determine the results for Nairobi – and all WTO Members will be called to take tough political decisions rapidly. A quick flow of information and a smooth dialogue between representatives in Geneva and governments in capitals – including parliaments – will be key to the progress in these talks.

1.13. Several trade ministers will be meeting in Turkey in early October, on the margins of a G20 meeting. Other opportunities may arise for ministers to meet in different formats before the Conference here in Nairobi.

1.14. To me and to many other Ministers, it is important that the WTO and the trade agenda respond to development concerns, and at the same time also reply to current challenges in world trade.

1.15. Having said that, we also need to keep in mind that the outcomes need to be acceptable to ALL. The WTO, as you recall, takes decisions by consensus. Therefore, a large dose of realism is required, if we are to make progress in this Conference.

1.16. We must also remember that this is not the last round of negotiations. This is not the end of history. Surely the WTO will still be there and other negotiations will take place in thin future. At the same time, we do need to make sure that the results of MC10 represent an advancement over what is currently on the table.

1.17. The Conference we are hosting can deliver that – but we must all work hard - and fast.

1.18. One word on the logistical arrangements: we continue to work hand-in-hand with the WTO Secretariat and the team at the KICC to make sure the logistics for the Conference run smoothly. Several WTO teams have visited Nairobi – the most recent in late August – and some WTO officials are here this week too. From now on, we will be on a count-down mode, to make sure everything is ready when the Director-General, Ministers and delegates, as well as NGOs and invited guests arrive in December.

1.19. The WTO and the multilateral trading system have been an instrument of growth and stability since their creation. It is extremely important that the system is strengthened and continues to progress in the future.

1.20. At a moment of high fluctuations in the markets, of uncertainty as to the economic outlook in some large trading partners, at a moment when the whole world is interconnected and when whatever one government (or monetary authority) does has effects on so many other countries, it is imperative that we retain and care for the safety net which the WTO and its body of regulation represent.

1.21. Our Conference in Nairobi in December can help Ministers in doing just that.

1.22. We will need all the support we can get to make that conference a landmark in advancing the WTO and multilateral trading system.

1.23. I count on all of you for that. Thank you.

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