



23 October 2015

(15-5606)

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General Council

Original: English

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR (DR.) AMINA C. MOHAMED,
CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE,
AT THE AFRICAN UNION (AU) INFORMAL MINISTERIAL MEETING
20 OCTOBER 2015, BRUSSELS - BELGIUM**

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

1.1. I am pleased to address this AU informal meeting once again. I thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report and for the invaluable observations and insights on the way forward in the negotiations on MC10.

1.2. As I mentioned yesterday, in just a short while, within just 54 days to be precise, we will be meeting in Kenya for the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference. This Conference is the last of a series of large gatherings this year that have addressed global governance and development issues. It has the potential to deliver concrete gains for all countries.

1.3. You have just heard the report by the Director-General on ongoing activities in Geneva. As we heard, there remain serious gaps in the path that we in the African group and the broader membership wish to pursue to ensure that Nairobi delivers the concrete negotiated outcomes to which we all aspire.

1.4. While it is encouraging that engagement has not waned in Geneva, it is imperative that we, as Ministers, put all of our political weight behind the intensive efforts that are being made in Geneva and provide the required political direction and guidance. As Nairobi edges closer, political support and clear instructions on our part will be essential in making substantial progress.

1.5. The 10th Ministerial Conference is an opportunity to build on the success we achieved in Bali two years ago and to continue strengthening the multilateral trading system. It will not be easy; but difficulties notwithstanding, we need to continue infusing new energy into the WTO negotiations by making steady, incremental progress. A successful Ministerial Conference would be a step in the right direction and would give us the impetus we need to push the multilateral trade agenda forward.

1.6. For the Conference to be successful, we have to aim for outcomes that are realistic and acceptable to all Members. Of course, and as we have all agreed, development and LDC issues as well as agriculture, food security, services, NAMA trade and environment and fishery subsidies will have to be core elements of any outcome.

1.7. Let me tell you, nonetheless, that I - and I believe other Ministers - have not totally given up on other issues that are of critical importance to us, such as Domestic Support. I am aware that this area has been quite challenging, but I remain optimistic that with a true collaborative effort we may be able to reach a compromise acceptable to all. But this will require a lot of common sense and realism by all of us.

1.8. The overall result might not be as comprehensive as many of us are hoping for, but I believe that it can represent a significant step forward from the status quo. A meaningful package of results in Nairobi will ensure that we continue to tackle the key issues of our concern, with the momentum generated, especially on the important unresolved issues.

1.9. Therefore, I agree with the Director-General that we also need to start thinking about our work post-Nairobi. We need to instruct our negotiators to work on a draft Ministerial Declaration that recognizes the progress made and gives clear guidance on future work.

1.10. This will not be easy - I am aware of the differences in points of view regarding the post-Nairobi work. But I think it is possible to work on something which will be acceptable to all, and which will ensure that we all continue to talk in Geneva after Nairobi.

1.11. I believe that we must seize the opportunity that Nairobi offers to deliver a positive outcome for the Organization, and for the future of multilateral trade relations. A "no result" scenario is not a viable option. A successful conference would be the springboard for further progress in the WTO and would pave the way for future discussions at the multilateral level.

1.12. If we are not successful this December, we cannot hope to restore credibility to the negotiating arm of the WTO - not now, nor in the future. Nairobi cannot be allowed to fail.

1.13. With the countdown clock ticking, we must act with a sense of urgency. While negotiators in Geneva continue to work on the more technical issues, it is imperative for us to provide them with clear political guidance to define - clearly and quickly - the outline of a Nairobi outcome.

1.14. Ultimately, it is our responsibility, as Ministers, to ensure that our Conference is successful - it is, after all, a Conference of Ministers responsible for international trade. I am encouraged by the fruitful sessions we had yesterday that culminated in the Declaration on AU position on the outcome of MC10. I am confident we can deliver and the document is crucial in providing direction to our negotiators.

1.15. Personally, both as representative of the Kenyan Government and as Chair of the Ministerial Conference, I can reassure you of my full commitment to the success of this Conference. The Kenyan Government - and I personally - are taking our role as MC10 host and MC10 Chair very seriously.

1.16. I will continue to reach out to Ministers and I remain available to offer my full support to all of you in the coming months.
