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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

It is my pleasure to address the WTO Ministerial and do so on the Argentinian soil. I thank our hosts for their outstanding hospitality and laborious efforts in laying grounds for our success.

The situation we find ourselves in today is certainly not easy. Despite the fact that this year the world trade growth has bounced back to a healthy average and went over three percent baseline, trade landscape still remains rather fragile and faces multiple setbacks. Expanding isolationist and counter-competitive practices pose an increasing threat to the openness and fairness of the multilateral trade.

To our regret, the recent years have also demonstrated an emergence of a new trend – one of the utmost aggressive forms of protectionism. Sanctions. Already now we have enough evidence that proves that one of the reasons for counties to so cynically impose sanctions on their WTO trade partners is to provide their own companies with preferences and benefit their domestic markets. It is our duty to set the multilateral trading system free of this abusive phenomenon.

Furthermore, the ever-changing trade pattern itself calls for further adaptive responses from us. Those disciplines that have been considered progressive and ambitious before, do not demonstrate as much relevance today. In order to withstand such turbulent times, the WTO has to go hand in hand with the ongoing global reforms and adapt to the modern day realities.

In the modern economy investment is a driver and enabler of trade. On this note, we support the initiative to deliver an outcome on investment facilitation in the WTO during this Ministerial Conference. We urge the Membership to adopt a Ministerial Decision on Investment Facilitation for Development.

We urge the Ministers to address the issues of e-commerce and MSMEs. The number of proposals on e-commerce demonstrates the high level of engagement and interest from Members. We would like this engagement to be transformed into a serious in depth work after MC11.

The disciplines on domestic regulation could significantly contribute to development of business environment. There is already a huge support of these disciplines among Members, and the Russian Federation counts for multilateral outcome on this matter.

We support efforts to increase transparency and efficiency of the multilateral trading system and welcome respective initiatives launched by several Members, including the EU proposal on transparency of regulatory measures for trade in goods and Singapore proposal on export restrictions. This suggests that the work on enhancing transparency disciplines in the WTO continues and RTAs Transparency Mechanism remains one of its priorities.

Fisheries subsidies. We are, thus, happy to see the draft Ministerial Decision containing a prohibition on subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing. IUU fishing is the global challenge to sustainable development of seas and oceans – the resource that we all rely on in our food policies. To this end, we welcome the introduction of comprehensive and effective discipline related to IUU fishing at MC11.

Finally, I'd like to address our agricultural agenda. One of the outstanding issues here is Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes. I trust that we can jointly reach the permanent solution on the issue building on the respective Bali Ministerial Decision.

On Domestic Support in Agriculture Members still have quite divergent views. We, thus, support the idea to continue our negotiations further with the objective of imposing additional proportionate restraints on trade-distorting domestic support, including for Cotton. In order to facilitate our future work, we propose to adopt the Work Program on Domestic Support at the Ministerial Conference.

Further negotiation on Market Access in Agriculture could be a part of the post Buenos Aires Work Program. We see this as a chance to reach the balance between ambitious commitments of very recently acceded Members and the commitments of founding Members that yet have to be improved. One of the doable and rational steps forward in this regard could be the gradual elimination of Special Safeguard measures in Agriculture. Although normally inactive for the majority of Members that have not used this instrument since 2001, it still harms agricultural trade predictability. We remain convinced that this instrument has fully played its role and can now be dismantled.

Last but not least, in accordance with paragraph 31 of the Nairobi Ministerial Declaration Members commit to advance negotiations on all three pillars of Agriculture, including Export Competition. We support the initiative on the continuation of agriculture reform in this regard.

The Russian Federation has made its fair contribution and heavily invested into preparations for the Ministerial through both textual proposals and co-sponsorship. We are certainly moving at a steady pace and we call on all the other WTO Members to act likewise. I thank many delegations for their positive feedback on our efforts and call for a joint action with my fellow ministers to turn the rich paperwork on the table into compelling outcomes.

We must not forget, however, that there are also broader issues to be considered. It cannot be denied that the WTO has not performed to the best of its abilities. Here we stand in full solidarity with certain WTO Members that an institutional reform is long due. Together we have to consider what could be done to facilitate WTO's functioning in order for it to remain an effective platform for international trade cooperation and rules-making.

It is to our delight that recently we have witnessed certain countries advocating fair trade, as well as strict and timely implementation of WTO commitments by the Members. Fair trade for all is something that we too applaud and encourage. However, we believe that this concept doesn't provide for the 18th century principle of equivalent exchange. And while back in those times this concept was rather fitting, today we live in a globalized World, where such tactics are no longer deemed appropriate.

Finally, to make the WTO truly universal, we believe that the accession of new Members to the Organization is essential. Thus, Russia attaches great importance to the accession of Belarus to the WTO. Successful and timely conclusion of these negotiations would help advance and strengthen the universality of the WTO.

Let's move to action and lead the World by example.