

**WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION****MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE****Eight Session****Geneva, Switzerland****15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> December 2011****STATEMENT BY BELIZE**

Chairman Aganga,

Director General Pascal Lamy,

Ministers,

Distinguished Officials and Representatives,

Let me at the onset join the chorus of those before me who have spoken to the importance of a rules-based multilateral trading system (MTS) and of the central role of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). As a small vulnerable economy (SVE), we know very well, that in these challenging economic times, an effective WTO is key especially as it serves as a fire wall against protectionist tendencies.

While we have no doubt about the importance of the MTS and the WTO, we are also very disappointed that this is not a Ministerial that seeks to complete the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). Completion of the DDA is critical in order to correct imbalances and to secure more equitable, fair and transparent rules. As beset as the world now is by all sorts of crises, it must not be an excuse for inaction. It is especially in times like these that Members must show the necessary resolve to translate political commitments into concrete actions.

Despite failures to advance in the DDA, Belize is no less committed today to maintaining the principle of a Single Undertaking in pursuit of a balanced and development centred outcome of negotiations.

And as we strive for that outcome, Belize cannot over emphasize the importance of Aid for Trade (AfT). We urge Members to re-commit to the AfT initiative and to see to its expansion and to the effectiveness in the delivery of resources. Without development cooperation, developing countries will not benefit from trade openness.

We are pleased that talks on the special needs of small vulnerable economies have been constructive so far, and we urge that these continue as we seek to address the trade and trade-related issues of SVEs with concrete and appropriate solutions. In this regard, going forward it is important that we preserve the flexibilities for SVEs in the modalities in Agriculture, NAMA, and Services. We also expect to obtain flexibilities in other negotiating areas such as Fisheries Subsidies, Domestic Regulation and Trade and Environment.

We add our voice of welcome to the four countries acceding to the WTO: Vanuatu, Samoa, Montenegro and the Russian Federation.

I cannot close, without first recognising the very good work being done by the WTO in developing and promoting programmes that deliver tangible results to Members. I refer to Aid for Trade (AfT), Trade Facilitation (TF), and the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) - all essential programmes for the advancement of developing countries' trade agendas. As we commend the Director General for the good work, we also make the call for these to be strengthened and continued.

Thank You.