



**STATEMENT OF HON. LUCIA IIPUMBU, MINISTER OF  
INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
NAMIBIA AT THE 12<sup>th</sup> WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE,  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 12 JUNE 2022**

**H.E. Mr. Timur SULEIMENOV (Kazakhstan), Chairperson of the WTO  
12th Ministerial Conference**

**Dr Ngozi Okonjo-IWEALA, Director-General of the WTO**

**Ambassador Didier CHAMBOVEY (Switzerland), Chair of the General  
Council**

**Honourable Ministers; Ladies and Gentlemen.**

1. First, let me congratulate His Excellency, Ignazio Daniele Giovanni Cassis, President of the Swiss Confederation and H.E. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Kazakhstan for hosting the 12<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference.
2. This Ministerial Conference is taking place in our time when the Coronavirus pandemic has ravaged communities globally. In addition, the geo-political situation and financial uncertainty has further exacerbated the significant slowdown in global growth contributing to high costs in food commodity prices and energy.
3. According to the World Economic Outlook of April 2022, Fuel and food prices have increased rapidly, hitting vulnerable populations in low-income countries hardest. Multilateral efforts to respond to the

humanitarian crises, I to prevent further economic fragmentation, to maintain global liquidity, manage debt distress, tackle climate change, and end the pandemic, are essential.

4. Namibia's economy has equally suffered a notable decline in trade flows where prospects for growth are constrained. According to Bank of Namibia's economic outlook on the domestic market, "the real GDP growth is estimated at 0.9 percent for 2021 and is further expected to accelerate to 3.4 percent in 2022 and to 3.7 percent in 2023. The projected improvement is mainly on account of anticipated better growth rates across all industries, with diamond mining expected to register robust growth rates".
5. The risks to domestic growth remain dominated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also include swings in rainfall pattern as well as high prices for energy products such fuel and gas and supply disruptions around the world. The possible new waves of corona virus infections, supply chain disruptions and the slow pace of vaccinations in Namibia are also associated risks to domestic growth.
6. Namibia is one of the founding Members of the World Trade Organisation since 1 January 1995 and a Member of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) since 15 September 1992. In this regard, we remain committed to multilateralism, to promote equitable development, growth, and prosperity for all WTO Members especially, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Developing Countries.
7. However, it is very disappointing to note that, since WTO's Fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, in November 2001 in which the fundamental objective was to improve the trading prospects of

developing countries yet to date has not been fulfilled. We still have long outstanding issues to be addressed.

8. To mitigate some of these challenges, the WTO should play its pivotal role to address long outstanding Ministerial Decisions that have negatively affected small economies to grow and mitigate global challenges such as addressing food security concerns (decline in production due import surge of agricultural commodities that are heavily subsidised from Developed Countries), deteriorating terms of trade and devastating effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
9. In recognition of the different levels of economic development of WTO members, it may be time to prioritise necessary flexibilities in policies for developing countries to create opportunities for industrialization and diversification of their economies.
10. Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) are an integral part of the WTO Agreements, without the application of this principle, it will be difficult to bridge the development gap between WTO Members. Namibia fully supports maintenance of the Special and Differential Treatment principle, which is at the centre of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) for inclusive growth of developing countries.
11. As such, we must renew our commitment to the DDA mandate, which at the core, aims to mould a multilateral trading system that should deliver on redressing imbalanced economic development across the WTO Members. Our efforts must lead to the creation of a fair, equitable multilateral trading system that enables developing countries to create opportunities for our people.

12. Food Security remains our priority to address socio-economic challenges facing our countries such as poverty and hunger in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1: *End poverty in all its forms everywhere* and Goal 2, which aims to *end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030 as universal access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food at all times of the year*. Supplemented by our very own efforts under the Harambee Prosperity Plan II, Social Progression pillar that calls for – zero death from hunger and poverty. We cannot have a declaration on Trade and food Security without addressing the longstanding issues pertaining to public stock holding for food security purposes, the two are intertwined and must be addressed concurrently.
13. Still on Agriculture, it is important to highlight that Agriculture is the sector from which 70% of the Namibian population derives their livelihoods. In addition, Namibia is extremely vulnerable to and negatively affected by climate change. Therefore, support the call for developing countries to find a permanent solution to public stock holding for food security reasons and reduce trade distorting domestic support as a result of subsidies by Developed countries. In this regard, rules set at a multilateral level have the potential to either create opportunities for our communities or an enabler for long lasting poverty.
14. On Fisheries subsidies, my country considers fish a vital source of food, nutrition and foreign currency earnings. Hence, appreciate the efforts by WTO Members to conclude the negotiations on fisheries subsidies ahead of the 12th Ministerial Conference in June 2022.
15. The outcome on fisheries subsidy negotiations, should address the capacity constraints and the need for policy space to build and develop

domestic fishing industries. This could be achieved through a negotiated outcome on Special and Differential Treatment (SDT).

16. Furthermore, National authorities should be allowed to determine Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) and, situation of overfished stock, in their respective Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and through Regional Fisheries Marine Organizations (RFMOs).

17. On WTO's response to the pandemic and Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Waiver, Namibia is one of the co-sponsors to the waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS agreement for the prevention, containment, and treatment of covid-19, we need to be pragmatic, flexible and work in solidarity with a view to ensure timely, equitable, and secure access to safe, effective and quality COVID-19 vaccines and other therapeutics for the treatment and containment of COVID-19.

18. In this regard, Namibia appreciates your efforts and hard work in your capacity as Director General of the WTO in finding mutual grounds on the process you initiated and progress made thus far regarding the outcome of talks between the European Union, India, South Africa, and the United States ("the Quad") to reach an agreement to waive patents on Covid-19 vaccines.

19. With regards to the issues pertaining to the appointment of Appellate Body Members, Namibia wishes to re-emphasize that priority must be given to resolve the impasse on the appointment of Appellate Body Members. The appointment will ensure that the Body continues to function and maintain independence, integrity as well as impartiality in resolving disputes.

20. In conclusion, Namibia remains committed to multilateralism and remains open to engage positively and constructively in finding the best possible landing zones with a view to address challenges to the benefit of people and bring confidence to the Namibian nation that WTO can still deliver on its mandate.

21. We wish all of us a fruitful and successful Ministerial Conference that would address outstanding issues to the benefit of our people.

**I THANK YOU**

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