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**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTERS OF TRADE OF
THE WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION (WAEMU)**

TOGO ON BEHALF OF WAEMU

The Togolese Republic has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Ministers of Trade of the Member States of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo;

Reaffirming our attachment to the multilateral trading system;

Concerned by the negative and long-lasting impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on trade, the economy and the social welfare of our populations;

Concerned by the severe impact of food insecurity, exacerbated by the recent conflict in Ukraine;

Concerned by the extent of the digital divide;

Emphasizing the need for equitable access to, and the expeditious distribution of, effective and safe COVID-19 vaccines;

Recalling that development and special and differential treatment for developing countries and LDCs are crucial and must remain at the heart of the WTO's work;

Convinced that a development-oriented multilateral trading system can effectively contribute to the structural transformation of our economies;

Recognizing the need to rebuild our economies and ensure the health and protection of our populations during the post-COVID-19 period, and taking into account the potential threat of new pandemics;

Taking note of document IP/C/W/688, on the proposal concerning the waiver to the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS);

Recognizing the need to continue providing, and to enhance, funding for targeted technical assistance and capacity-building programmes;

Recalling Resolutions A/RES/59/209 and A/RES/67/221 on the smooth transition strategy for countries graduating from the list of LDCs;

Recognizing the need to facilitate access to trade finance for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), especially in developing countries and LDCs, and particularly against the backdrop of COVID-19;

We hereby declare as follows:

1. Regarding the WTO's response to COVID-19

We welcome the initiative that resulted in text proposal IP/C/W/688 on the TRIPS waiver.

We also welcome China's commitment to forego flexibilities.

We reiterate our support for an agreement on a TRIPS waiver for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19.

We call on other Members to remain flexible in order to reach an agreement on document IP/C/W/688 at MC12.

We support the initiative of the Director-General and the General Council Chair to find horizontal solutions for the WTO with a view to ensuring recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We urge Members to facilitate trade in the medical products used to fight COVID-19. We call on Members to refrain from imposing export restrictions.

2. Regarding WTO reform

We support the creation of a working group based on the fundamental principles and objectives of the WTO.

We urge the WTO Secretariat to provide developing countries in need, and in particular LDCs, with the support required to overcome shortcomings related to the difficulties they experience in implementing notification obligations.

Regarding the Appellate Body, we urge Ministers to find the impetus to restore this body as soon as possible.

3. Regarding agriculture and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures

We call for the adoption of a three-step approach: (i) the building of consensus on the principles that should guide the continuation of the agriculture negotiations after MC12, in respect of the three pillars (domestic support, market access and export competition and restrictions); (ii) the identification of concrete interim measures validating the established principles; and (iii) the building of consensus on the immediate implementation of specific measures to promote food security in low-income and net food-importing countries.

We call upon Members to adopt the proposed declaration on SPS measures, which seeks to address modern-day SPS challenges.

4. Regarding the restrictions imposed on World Food Programme (WFP) purchases

We call on Members not to impose export prohibitions or restrictions on foodstuffs purchased for non-commercial humanitarian purposes.

5. Regarding cotton

We actively support the efforts of the sectoral initiative in favour of cotton (the C4). We call for a concrete outcome on the trade component of cotton at MC12, in particular as regards domestic support.

We call on Members and partners to increase cotton development assistance.

6. Regarding fisheries subsidies

We support multilateral negotiations and agreements on fisheries subsidies disciplines.

Accordingly, we call for an agreement to be reached on such disciplines at the Twelfth Ministerial Conference.

7. Regarding e-commerce

We are determined to contribute to a solution on e-commerce and we therefore support Members in finding proposals. We call for action to significantly reduce the digital divide.

8. Regarding special and differential treatment (S&D)

We call for an outcome on S&D in line with paragraph 44 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, including the 10 agreement-specific proposals put forward by the G90.

9. Regarding the implementation of decisions in favour of LDCs

We welcome the decision of the Committee on Rules of Origin aimed at identifying and adopting best practices on preferential rules of origin and administrative requirements.

We call for the full implementation of the Bali, Nairobi and Buenos Aires Ministerial Decisions in favour of LDCs.

10. Regarding LDC graduation

We underline the importance of LDC-related issues at the WTO, including the need for a longer and uniform transition period to assist graduated LDCs.

We call for an outcome on the LDC graduation proposal at this Ministerial Conference.

11. Regarding services

We draw Ministers' attention to the impact of the pandemic and the challenges and opportunities for services.

We call for the implementation of the Ministerial Decision on Preferential Treatment to Services and Service Suppliers of LDCs, and decisions related thereto.

12. Regarding micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)

We support the proposed declaration on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and call on Members to adopt it at MC12.

13. Regarding Aid for Trade and the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF)

We are pleased to note that the WTO continues to prioritize Aid for Trade and we welcome the outcomes of the Aid for Trade stocktaking event.

We also welcome the EIF's contribution to the efforts made by our countries.

We wish to express our gratitude to all current EIF donors and we urge other donors to undertake funding commitments at this Ministerial Conference.

14. Regarding WTO accessions

We urge WTO Members to take into account the development and capacity constraints of the most vulnerable acceding Members, and call for concessions to be commensurate with their size and their development needs.

We call on Members to respect the General Council's Decision of 25 July 2012 on LDC accession, which reinforces and clarifies the guidelines adopted in 2002.
