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**STATEMENT BY H.E. MS KALTHOUM BEN REJEB EP GUEZZAH  
MINISTER OF TRADE AND EXPORT DEVELOPMENT**

**TUNISIA**

I am honoured to take the floor at the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO). On this occasion, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to **His Excellency Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi**, Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the United Arab Emirates and Chair of MC13, and my sincere thanks to the people and the fellow Government of the United Arab Emirates, for their hospitality and the excellent organization of this Conference.

I also extend my thanks and appreciation to the Director-General, **Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala**, for her dedication to and professionalism in holding and the success of MC13, while assuring her of our support in the performance of her tasks.

First, let me congratulate Comoros and Timor-Leste on their accession to the WTO, which is a sign of the countries' renewed confidence in our Organization and in what it can deliver for its Members.

Let me also underline the fundamental importance of multilateralism in the global trading system. Against a backdrop of increasingly daunting economic, security, social, environmental and geopolitical challenges, it is vital that we work together to promote open, fair, equitable and inclusive trade.

Tunisia firmly believes that the WTO, as the guardian of global trade rules, must play a crucial role in promoting the Sustainable Development Goals in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

Tunisia thus reaffirms its commitment to a rules-based multilateral trading system, while recognizing the need for change and reform to respond to current economic and political realities.

As such, the industrialization policies of developing countries and LDCs must be made a priority topic in the work of the WTO, by enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of special and differential treatment to create the policy space that these countries need to achieve their industrialization objectives.

At the same time, we attach great importance to the reform of the Agreement on Agriculture, while avoiding unfair and inadequate rules that have exacerbated food insecurity in the world. As a net importer of food, Tunisia, like other developing countries and LDCs, faces major challenges related to growing food insecurity which is causing acute vulnerability to recurrent crises.

Furthermore, Tunisia firmly believes that a permanent solution to public stockholding for food security purposes, and fair and equitable outcomes on domestic support and the special safeguard mechanism for developing countries, will enable these countries to tackle the food security threats they face.

In addition, we are resolved to adopt a strong and effective agreement on fisheries subsidies at MC13, thereby enabling the WTO to show that it can contribute to the conservation of fishery resources to ensure their sustainability, in accordance with target 14.6 of the SDGs, while

recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing countries and LDCs is an integral part of any outcome.

Regarding the TRIPS Agreement, we regret that discussions have not led to a consensus on extending the MC12 Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement to cover the production and supply of COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics.

As such, Tunisia highlights the importance of innovation in global trade. We are convinced that the transfer and dissemination of technology is among the aims of the TRIPS Agreement. Therefore, we must ensure that access to technology is not limited to powerful economic actors alone, but that it is accessible to all, thereby helping to reduce inequalities among Members.

Furthermore, we are committed to WTO reform, which should be based on the principles of development, inclusion and the preservation of the core principles of our Organization, such as decision-making by consensus, and the achievement of the outstanding objectives of the Doha Development Agenda.

Tunisia calls for the restoration of a fully functional, two-tier dispute settlement system that is accessible to all Members and addresses the concerns of developing countries, in order to restore confidence, security and predictability to the heart of our Organization.

MC13 should provide clear guidance on our future work and agree on robust programmes of work that take into account the different levels of development of Members by providing the necessary support to developing countries and LDCs to increase their capacity to meet sustainable development needs.

Tunisia remains open to any action and initiatives that would help to pave the way for a compromise on meaningful, balanced outcomes that are acceptable to all Members.

**In conclusion,** I urge all Members to collaborate constructively in a spirit of solidarity during this Conference to overcome the challenges facing the global trading system, which should be the engine of inclusive growth and prosperity for all.

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