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HONOURABLE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY,
TRADE, AND INVESTMENT**

NIGERIA

I bring you warm greetings from His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR and the entire people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. At the outset, let me heartily congratulate you, on your election, as the Chairman of the Thirteenth World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference (MC13).

Let me also seize this opportunity to congratulate our host, the Government and People of the United Arab Emirate and the WTO Secretariat for the excellent arrangements made to ensure a seamless Conference.

In a little over a month's time, it will be 30 years since we signed the historic Marrakesh Agreement that established the WTO. Despite the current polycrisis, no one can rightly question the WTO's role in fostering the expansion of global trade and production as well as its contribution towards global sustainable development. Trade has been a key driver of economic growth and prosperity. However, what is evident is that while some countries have managed to harness the full benefits of technological advancements and of trade to boost their share of global economic growth, the reality is that most Developing Countries, are only capturing an insignificant fraction of that growth due to development challenges.

Let me be clear, the WTO cannot proffer solutions to all our economic difficulties. We believe Countries must themselves decide on requisite reforms to drive growth. On our part, under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, we are intensifying reforms needed to improve institutional and regulatory frameworks, business environment, and competitiveness with the aim of attracting sustainable investments, increase productive capacity, generate employment, and alleviate poverty. In our view, these reforms are key, if we are to reap economies of scale or other market efficiencies under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), as well as from our participation in the Multilateral Trading System.

However, we believe for our ongoing reforms to yield the desired results in the context of the Multilateral Trading System, the WTO rules ought to be adapted to avail developing Countries the policy space to support sustainable industrialization, economic diversification, and structural transformations, including through enhancing domestic production and value addition. The rules should also be adapted to the evolving nature of the global economic landscape. We therefore call on Members to prioritize reforms that would address simultaneously the longstanding development issues on the negotiating agenda of the WTO, together with issues of commercial significance that foster inclusive growth, create jobs, and widen the circle of prosperity. In this regard, we welcome the conclusion of the negotiations of the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement and call for its adoption in this Conference as an Annex 4 agreement.

On process, Nigeria welcomes the structured "Modalities of Sessions", as contained in document [WT/MIN\(24\)/INF/9](#). We believe that this provides Members with a constructive way of engagement on the identified priority areas. We commend the Director-General of the WTO, our big sister Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (GCON), for her commitment towards ensuring a productive and successful MC13.

On substance, Nigeria wishes to, first, reiterate its well-known positions on **agriculture trade reform** which we believe should be approached from a food security and livelihood perspective. We call for continued review of the trading rules for agriculture with a view to achieving equitable rules that enhance food security, by providing the necessary policy space for augmenting production and productivity and protecting livelihoods in developing countries, along with diversifying and stabilizing the global supply of food products by achieving reductions in inequitable trade distorting support and protection. In this regard, the MC13 work programme must pave the way for the adoption of decisions on critical food security instruments of Public stockholding for Food Security Purposes (PSH), and Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) for Developing Countries as well as Cotton. In addition, it must foster negotiations on modalities to address trade distorting domestic support especially with regards to levelling of the playing field.

Regarding **Development**, for Nigeria the aims of reforming the WTO and our development objectives are intricately interwoven. We continue to call for the provision of policy space for Developing Countries to build resilience and capacity to respond to compounded economic crises and pursue economic development through industrialization, economic diversification, and structural transformation. We believe, MC13 should mandate Members to work towards the delivery of MC14 outcomes that would address issues adduced in the African Group submission on Policy Space for Industrial Development which identifies three core agreements and areas that necessary policy space must be created to pave way for the deployment of industrial policy tools by Developing Countries to drive development.

On **Fisheries Subsidies**, we welcome the increasing number of ratifications of the MC12 Fisheries Subsidies Agreement (FSA) and encourage Members who are yet conclude this process to expedite action. We also welcome the WTO Fisheries Funding Mechanism and call for it to be made easily accessible for Developing Countries to invest in their fisheries management systems. We are optimistic that MC13 would deliver a SDG14.6 consistent agreement on the outstanding issues, including overcapacity and overfishing (OCOF) that focuses on the most harmful subsidies with effective special and differential treatment for developing countries that are not responsible for OCOF and exemption for small players whose share of global marine captures is below 0.8%. In addition, artisanal and small-scale fishing should be excluded from the scope of application of the discipline.

Regarding the **E-Commerce Work Programme and Moratorium** Nigeria continue to call for the Work Programme to be approached from a development perspective. This will enable us to explore the appropriate policy instruments within the WTO toolbox that could be deployed to foster the development of ecommerce ecosystem in Developing Countries. On the Moratorium, we believe that issues regarding the scope and the definition of the moratorium should be taken up post MC13 and clarified so Members can understand the scope of their commitment. Regarding the moratorium on Imposing Customs Duties on Electronic Transmissions, Nigeria is of the view that it should be extended temporarily. Nigeria holds this view for two important reasons. First, the non-renewal of the moratorium would undermine the predictability of global e-commerce environment, and this would negatively affect businesses and consumers. Next, it will undermine the competitiveness and growth of our MSMEs who would be unable to access intermediate content at cheaper price.

I believe Members have a shared responsibility to work collectively to strengthen the WTO. We must therefore ensure that MC13 builds on the success of MC12 and deliver outcomes that proffer solutions to the food, livelihood and development challenges of WTO Members as well as respond to the challenges of the ever-changing global economic landscape. Consequently, all hands must be on deck in our collective efforts to revitalise the WTO and enhance its role in global economic policymaking.
