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**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR RUI MIGUÊNS DE OLIVEIRA  
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE**

ANGOLA

On behalf of the government of Angola, allow me, in warmly greeting all the distinguished Ministers, other heads of delegations and participants, **to express special gratitude for the extraordinary organization and welcome provided by the United Arab Emirates and this beautiful city of Abu Dhabi in the person of the chairperson of this 13th Ministerial Conference of the WTO, His Excellency Minister of State for Foreign Trade, Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi.**

Angola is particularly grateful for the exceptional commitment with which the Director-General of the WTO, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, has advanced the organization, promoting key proposals, coordinating important negotiations, and preparing fundamental decisions to preserve and develop global multilateral trade. Furthermore, the General Director brought to the WTO the remarkable ability to patiently listen to all opinions, dialogue with fraternity, and make committed decisions in favor of those who suffer most, which is a profound characteristic of traditional African values. The Director-General also placed the many challenges and problems of developing and least-developed countries at the center of the WTO's attention. Our thanks also extend to all the presidents of the WTO general council, other councils, committees, and working groups, to its diligent Secretariat, and to all the staff, collaborators, and workers who, in Geneva and Abu Dhabi, created the best conditions for the MC13 to become a success.

Angola is also thrilled to approve and solemnly receive two new Member states in this MC13: our African oceanic friends from the Comoros and a fraternal companion of the long struggles for national liberation, who is our brother Timor-Leste. Be welcome!

The government and the people of Angola are deeply concerned about the deterioration of the global geopolitical and economic situation, which has profound negative impacts on world trade, seriously affecting developing and least-developed countries. Unfortunately, in the last decade, we have witnessed a mounting tide of practices and ideas turning against economic interdependence and multilateral international trade. The trade restrictions and subsidies that started shyly being used after the global financial crisis of 2007-2008 seriously increased in the last four years as governments responded to the global pandemic turmoil, dramatic ongoing war in Ukraine, and, most recently, the huge violent conflict in the Gaza strip or the unacceptable attacks to trading ships in the Red Sea. Many developed countries and emergent economies produced countless protectionist measures to secure strategic supply chains and rush into trade-distorting policies. Taken too far, these measures may open the door to alliance-oriented policies that can irretrievably fragment, if not destroy, the global trading system. Then, they might critically backfire if short supply chains become more fragmented and vulnerable, thus facing ineffectively localized, regional, or retrieving global economic shocks. Other than rampant inflation, including food supplies to sum up to food security challenges, developing and least-developed countries are facing nowadays sharpening reduced Foreign Direct Investments that are already increasingly concentrated among geopolitical aligned countries. It is unnecessary to add to all these severe problems the existential gravity of climate change and environmental sustainability that become dramatic realities, especially catastrophic among many developing countries.

Despite all these grievous challenges, Angola, as Member of the WTO since 1996, still believes that thriving international multilateral trade goes hand in hand with global prosperity and stability. Indeed, trade has continued to deliver even during recent crises, showing that it has great potential

to contribute to higher living standards and more significant economic opportunities. In recent decades, world trade has done much to reduce poverty and inequality between countries. Yet we must all frankly acknowledge that it has left too many people behind in least-developed countries that cannot avail into global value chains and are often the firsts to suffer from environmental degradation and resource conflict.

Angola believes that many of today's most pressing global problems will not be solved without fair international multilateral trade and increasing support to the only international organization representing the past, present, and future of multilateral global trade, the WTO. We cannot overcome the climate crisis and get to net zero greenhouse gas emissions without multilateral trade. We need international trade to get low-carbon technology and the respective services to everywhere they are required. We need fair international multilateral trade to overcome the digital divide that marginalizes developing and least-developed countries from the benefits of digital trade and e-commerce.

We know that navigating trade policies through the current turbulent period is challenging. But keeping world trade open and looking for new opportunities for closer cooperation will be essential to build on existing gains and to help deliver solutions to climate change and other pressuring global and future challenges. Therefore, the WTO is critical in charting a way forward that benefits world populations, especially from developing and least-developed countries. WTO state Members must cooperate tirelessly to strengthen the multilateral trading system and demonstrate that our own common organization can adapt to a fast-changing world. For Angola, the WTO remains the only forum that brings all economies together to advance trade reform, growth, and development. We cannot afford to stand still, and this MC13 must deliver.

To open, we must start with our own common house by firmly delivering a serious ministerial declaration committed to an institutional, functional, and deliberative reform of the WTO, reinforcing its leading role to implement through fair rules and agreements multilateral world trade favorable to all their Members and new sustainable development. Other than the promising "reform by doing" already implemented in several WTO councils and committees, it is crucial to end the Appellate Body paralysis crisis that comes from the end of 2019, a demand mandated already by MC12. While we have been working to take full advantage and to update the 27 articles of the Rules of Procedures for the Settlement of Disputes (DSU), we trust that this Conference will agree on an agenda to revitalize during this year the Appellate Body, but taking into account that WTO arbitration and dispute processes must always consider the singular needs of LDCs and other developing countries in technical assistance and capacity building.

Angola and many Members positively engaged in consensually approving some of the most urgent decisions that are drafted for the final Conference declarations under debate. It is the case of the second phase of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies targeting illegal subsidies contributing to overcapacity and overfishing. Notwithstanding, we recall again that LDCs and other developing countries are not the contributors to overfishing and overcapacity and, therefore, should be exempted from some of the agreement disciplines on certain subsidies with relevant social impact, thus using the congruent special and differential treatment clauses, including the complete exclusion of artisanal and small-scale fishing that are the main traditional livelihood of some of our coastal communities in Angola and certainly in most LDCs with maritime borders.

Among the other Conference decisions that seem far from controversial and congruently consensual, Angola emphasizes the urgent extension up to the next MC14 of the moratorium on the imposition of customs duties on electronic transmissions, and the renewal of the MC12 Paragraph 8 Mandate of the TRIPS waiver Decision on COVID-19 vaccines and its enlargement to diagnostics and therapeutics. We also hope that this Conference is going to approve the development of the declaration in response to Public StockHolding (PSH) for Food security emergencies already adopted at the MC12 by deciding on the implementation of a serious work program and concrete agenda on substantive food security and livelihoods package able to help the LDCs and net food-importing developing countries (NFIDCs) increase their resilience to food security crisis. **So, we must comply with what is established on the three pillars of decisions in the agricultural sector, namely regarding the minimis on Domestic Support, Market Access and Export Competition.** This Declaration must also include the critical exemption of customs duties and other taxes on international food aid received by developing and LDCs in emergent situations.

For the government and the people of Angola, this is the time and the place to address the considerable development imbalances in WTO Agreements definitively and to complete the Doha "Development Round" mandate to finally support continuously the fair integration of developing countries and LDCs in global multilateral trade. It seems widely recognized by most state Members that several key WTO agreements, from Agriculture to TRIPS, lack the promised provisions to fully integrate developing and LDCs in multilateral trade through Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT), regulation of subsidies, and **allowing supported space to promote our own industrialization nowadays an intrinsic part of sustainable and green development**. Angola is sure that this MC13 will reaffirm and revitalize S&DT exemptions and flexibilities provided to developing countries, particularly least-developed countries, including in the growing divided field of digital trade and e-commerce. **Angola reiterates the leading importance in these dividing matters of the G90 Ten Agreement-Specific Proposals on Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT)**, and we hope that this Conference will undoubtedly approve a serious declaration supporting the document, thus recognizing the provisions of special and differential treatment for developing and LDC Members as an integral permanent part of WTO Agreements.

Angola was scheduled to graduate from the LDC category in 2021 after rescheduled for this year of 2024, a timeline already recently postponed by the UN due to the huge evident negative impacts of the global pandemic crisis, and other current economic turmoil in our economy, finances, and social fabric. As a consequence of our experience, **we would like to reiterate the need to mobilize the WTO and its Agreements to facilitate a smooth and supported transition for Members after graduation from the LDC category. Thus, building from the recent Decision adopted by the WTO General Council in WT/L/1172 on Duty Free and Quota Free preferences in favour of countries graduated from the LDC's category**, this Conference should consistently adopt a firm Declaration to enable future graduated countries to continue to benefit from the flexibilities currently enjoyed by LDCs, thus concretizing a sustainable exit from the category.

Finally, the government of Angola solemnly reaffirms the importance of the multilateral trading system under the WTO agreements and rules to successfully address the global challenges, from the environment to poverty eradication, fully materializing the UN 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a novel re-globalization in which multilateral trade will definitively become fair, inclusive, and engaged to the causes of developing and least-developed countries.

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