

26 February 2024

(24-1565)

Page: 1/2

**Ministerial Conference
Thirteenth Session
Abu Dhabi, 26-29 February 2024**

Original: French

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR ABDOU KARIM FOFANA
MINISTER OF TRADE, CONSUMPTION AND SMES****SENEGAL**

From the outset, I should like to thank the United Arab Emirates and the WTO Secretariat for the outstanding organization of the Thirteenth WTO Ministerial Conference.

I should also like to congratulate Comoros and Timor-Leste on their accession to the WTO, after many years of negotiations.

This Ministerial Conference is taking place against the backdrop of the multilateral trade system grappling with the continuing effects of the health crisis, climate change and trade inequalities that are widening disparities between countries.

To address these multifaceted challenges, it is imperative that the WTO tackle existing imbalances in the various trade agreements among its Members.

It is for this reason that Senegal supports a reform of the Agreement on Agriculture to reduce existing asymmetries, by prioritizing issues related to food security and resilience. Such issues include trade-distorting domestic support for *inter alia* cotton, the special safeguard mechanism, public stockholding for food security purposes, and export prohibitions and restrictions.

With respect to the second wave of negotiations on subsidies contributing to overcapacity and overfishing, Senegal recalls that the disciplines must be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

In this connection, it is important to exclude small-scale and artisanal fishing from the scope of the Agreement, so that developing countries have sufficient policy space to support this sector which is vital to their economies.

Furthermore, the Agreement should not challenge the sovereignty of Members in their own exclusive economic zones (EEZ).

Lastly, in line with target 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals, special and differential treatment must be an integral part of the disciplines.

With respect to the negotiations to obtain a set of measures for the smooth transition of graduated LDCs, my delegation welcomes the General Council's adoption of Annex 1 containing the draft decision from the LDC Group on the extension, by preference-granting Members, of unilateral preferential measures to LDCs for an appropriate period of time after graduation from the LDC category.

The adoption of the Annex 2¹ draft decision would also allow graduated LDCs to continue to benefit from the international support measures provided for in various WTO legal instruments after graduation and to consolidate their economic performance.

In addition to LDCs, developing countries need sufficient room for manoeuvre to promote their industrial development. That is why all special and differential treatment provisions adopted in their favour must not only be applied effectively but also be strengthened.

In this context, I urge Members to engage constructively to find pragmatic solutions to the 10 G90 agreement-specific proposals on special and differential treatment.

On the matter of WTO reform, this must follow an inclusive and transparent process, and take into account the capacity constraints of developing countries and LDCs.

Moreover, Appellate Body judges must be appointed as soon as possible so that the WTO will, once again, have a fully functioning dispute settlement body.

Similarly, environmental sustainability must be a key concern in all our trade transactions. By encouraging environmentally sound practices, promoting renewable energy and integrating ecological criteria into our trade agreements, we can build a future where trade does not compromise the health of our planet.

However, the fight against climate change must not be used as a pretext to prevent developing countries from using their fossil energy sources to promote their industrial development. Not must it be used to erect non-tariff barriers against developing countries' exports.

With respect to the moratorium on electronic transmissions, Senegal considers customs duties to be an important trade policy instrument for a State, and that customs revenues account for a significant share of the budget of developing countries.

It is for this reason that, even though my delegation is in favour of extending the moratorium, we are of the view that, after 26 years of its implementation and in view of the continuing growth of e-commerce, it is important to assess the impact of the moratorium on customs revenues, and to clarify the definition and scope of electronic transmissions.

To conclude, Senegal supports the statements made on behalf of the African Group, the ACP Group, the LDC Group, the G33 and the G90, as well as WAEMU member States, and wishes the Conference every success in its work.

¹ This Annex covers smooth transition support measures in favour of countries graduated from the LDC category, in the form of technical assistance and special and differential treatment.