

**CLOSING REMERKS BY AMBASSADOR DR. AMINA MOHAMED, EGH,
CABINET SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT THE REGIONAL
CONFERENCE ON WTO FOR ACCEDING COUNTRIES FROM THE
GREATER HORN OF AFRICA: 30 AUGUST 2017**

Colleague honorable Ministers

Permanent Secretaries

Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi

Representatives of the WTO

Ambassadors/High Commissioners

Representatives of International Organizations

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I am once again delighted to join you this afternoon for the closing session of this important Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa. I have been receiving regular briefs since you begun your deliberations after our thought provoking opening ceremony on Monday morning.

2. I have been informed that you had very fruitful discussions which have contributed in meeting the objectives of this Regional Dialogue. I must sincerely thank you for your active participation. I must also extend my

sincere thanks to my colleagues Ministers who managed find time from their extremely busy schedule to come and participate in this important event. This is a clear demonstration of your commitment to the course of development of your respective countries.

3. I have noted from the programme that among other issues, you discussed the importance of accession process in promoting domestic structural reforms. As you have realized structural reforms promotes deeper economic integration which is an important component of development strategies. For us in Africa, regional integration offers huge potential to drive a sustainable economic growth, employment creation, peace and security.

4. You may be aware, 8 African countries that are currently in accession together with potential candidates for WTO accession, the majority of them are from the Greater Horn of Africa. There is no doubt that WTO accession process can help accelerating regional and continental integration. This will promote increased intra-Africa trade which currently stands at only 16% compared to Europe at over 60%, Asia is 40% and North America is also 40%.

4. Let me thank the representatives of the recently acceded countries who kindly accepted to participate and share their accession experiences. Kenya as host for this Dialogue was also able to share its experience from the perspective of an original Member of the WTO. Let me also thank experts from the WTO as well as well other international institutions and development partners for sharing their perspectives on WTO accession process and regional integration in Africa. I am sure the experiences that

were shared in the course of your discussions have provided valuable insights and lessons that will be very helpful for acceding countries that present in their respective paths to the full membership of the WTO. Further, I believe that the lessons learned during discussions have given South Sudan the impetus to actualize its intention to formally apply to join the WTO.

5. I am glad to note that my colleagues were also able to take you through what their respective countries have done and what needs to be done in order to complete their action process. As we all know the accession process to the WTO is often complex and demanding. It requires substantive commitment by acceding countries both in financial and technical resources as well as political commitment at the highest level. Therefore, it is important that acceding countries are supported and encouraged to finalize the negotiations and ultimately join the WTO. Of critical important, is to ensure that the accession commitments undertaken are not only promotes trade and investment but also consistent with your individual developments needs and aspirations.

5. I will not say much as most of the issues were shared during the opening ceremony and also in your discussions for the last two and half days of your programme for this Dialogue. However, allow me to mention two important issues:

6. FIRST: Kenya's collaboration with countries in the Greater Horn of Africa and beyond is the priority of the Kenya Government. The Horn of Africa is a region that has faced diverse challenges for several decades. We are aware of the severe droughts and at times floods, as well as political instability, which have ravaged this region.

It is also one of the regions that have attracted international focus, particularly in humanitarian interventions due to these challenges. Kenya is determined, at the highest political level, to work closely with countries in the region in order to forestall these challenges. Some of the key areas of priority is to politically stabilize the region, increase investment in infrastructure and ultimately expand our trade and investment.

I therefore wish to personally congratulate the four acceding countries and South Sudan, which has shown interest to join the WTO.

7. SECOND: I would like to highlight that in as much as accession process requires internal political goodwill and support, it also calls for the support of other WTO members. Let me therefore take this opportunity to assure you that the Government of Kenya will not only continue to play its role but will also lobby other WTO members to extend their support to acceding countries.

8. Finally, let me once again thank representatives of the recently acceded countries who kindly accepted to participate and share their accession experiences. We are also honored to have had the participation of the Peoples' Republic of China, who have consistently extended support to acceding countries, in addition to financing infrastructure in most African countries. I am sure most of the countries in the region, and Africa as a whole, have benefited from this support. Further, the presence of development partners in this conference is a demonstration of their commitment to support not only the acceding countries but also other aspects of social-economic and sustainable development of our region.

9. I also thank the WTO Secretariat for the valuable support which made possible for us to successfully host this important event. Let me also take this opportunity to recognize the important role played by our partner, the University of Nairobi in organizing and participating in this Dialogue. We very much appreciate the support of the Vice Chancellor Prof. Peter Mbith and his team led by Prof. Tabitha Kiriti-Ngang'a. I wish also to pay tribute to the team from our Mission in Geneva led by Ambassador Dr. Stephen Karua, as well as my team from the Ministry headquarters led by Ambassador Nelson Ndirangu who have played a tremendous role in the planning and execution of this Dialogue.

Last but not least, I thank the management of Intercontinental Hotel for providing excellence facilities which have facilitated the smooth running of the programme for the Dialogue.

In conclusion, I thank you all for coming and for your active participation. I wish you all safe journeys to your respective countries and destinations. I therefore declare this Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa closed.

I thank you for your attention.