

**WTO 9th Ministerial conference, 3 – 6 December, 2013**

**Address by Mr Andrejs PILDEGOVIČS, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs of LATVIA**

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all let me express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Director General Roberto Azevêdo and to the Chairman of the General Council Ambassador Shahid Bashir for their enormous efforts and hard work in steering the ongoing negotiations and preparing this conference. I also thank the Republic of Indonesia, and in particular President, Hon. Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Minister Gita Wirjawan for their kind welcome and warm hospitality.

We are here at a decisive moment for our collective capability to agree on global trade provisions. We have not gone this far for some time. Following the last Ministerial conference two years ago, we agreed to have time to reflect on the ways forward in our work. We found matters of convergent importance that we agreed should be solved by the whole Membership and we saw it as a meaningful and reenergizing step in the process of multilateral trade negotiations. We devoted a lot of time and effort, and tried to do our best to prepare the decisions that we all anticipated and still anticipate in adopting here.

We all know that our collective ability to conclude the Bali Ministerial at the level of our expectations would set the tone for our future deliberations on the negotiations and potential agreements on the long-standing DDA and non-DDA issues. We very much hope that the agreement in Bali will set the stage for further discussions on

pressing issues such as ITA, environmental goods and climate change, as well as global value chains. The failure to do so will set back the multilateral trading system for an indefinite period of time.

The expected Bali package is indeed no small package, it contains significant gains for, and here I stress, the whole WTO community. The Trade Facilitation agreement should be an innovative and efficient instrument to eliminate the unnecessary red tape burden in the cross-border transactions. Extensive studies suggest that trade facilitation measures would increase global trade flows and enable global supply chains and the reduction of regulatory barriers would increase global GDP close up to 5%, rather than only reducing the tariffs. The Trade Facilitation agreement will serve us all providing benefits for our business operators.

Also, the decisions in agriculture will provide specific solutions and will stimulate us to engage in a long-term, comprehensive task according to our mandate. Similarly, our work addressing the concerns of the Least Developed Countries and the systemic issues vis-a-vis the Special and Differential provisions in the WTO rules has been encouraging. Adoption of the development related decisions would place us on the track to continue the work on agreement specific proposals and other issues of development interest.

The importance of our organization is well proven by continual accessions. In this regard let me warmly congratulate the Republic of Yemen upon the successful conclusion of its work to join the WTO. We also encourage Afghanistan and other countries of Central Asia to continue with their efforts in becoming full fledged members of the Organisation.

Dear Members,

We will be able to increase the wellbeing of all our peoples only through genuine cooperation. We should be collectively responsible and bold in our decisions. We can't afford to fail. We should think in the long-term and reward our efforts with expected results. We should embrace the unique role of the WTO offering the most accessible and inclusive framework for us to find and develop multilateral and respected solutions. The WTO is our strong asset and should be employed by us, Members, in its full capacity and for the purposes that we originally created it.

Here in Bali is the opportunity for us to make a pattern changing step towards the revival of the multilateral trade negotiations. It is an imperative for us to assess the role of the WTO in addressing the current global challenges, and which of those the WTO is best fit to undertake.

Thank you.