



**STATEMENT BY H.E. MRS DELINA IBRAHIMAJ
MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMY**

ALBANIA

I want to start by thanking the Swiss government for hosting the Albanian delegation and the government of Kazakhstan for co-hosting this twelfth session of the WTO Ministerial Conference.

Albania fully supports an open, non-discriminatory and rule-based global multilateral trading system.

The WTO plays a vital role, central and irreplaceable one in the effective and transparent functioning of this system, in maintaining open and predictable markets and unhindered global trade, including the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are fully convinced that the Geneva Ministerial will serve to further and strongly affirm the essential contribution of WTO by delivering significant results on some key issues that are of crucial importance and will send a strong message and a clear one on the importance of our organization.

Despite the serious difficulties faced during the pandemic situation, we are once again challenged in a more serious situation, Russian aggression against Ukraine.

In this context, when a member state has attacked another member state, bringing along with it terrible destruction, loss of innocent lives, a great humanitarian crisis, cruelty and terrible war crimes, Albania condemns in the harshest terms of possible aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine which is an unprovoked, premeditated attack against a sovereign democratic state.

While Albania stands in full solidarity with the people of Ukraine, we call on the Russian Federation to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

The WTO has played and is playing its essential role in successfully tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing to keeping trade flows open, thus supporting the livelihoods of peoples across the globe.

Covid-19 situation testified to the necessity of a stable and predictable trading environment, as well as the role of the multilateral trading system in ensuring timely and safe access to quality, safe, effective and affordable vaccines and medicines for all.

Furthermore, in this context, I am pleased to state that Albania has co-sponsored the Trade and Health Communication: Covid-19 and beyond, considering it essential in the context of the WTO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On issues of intellectual property rights for the prevention and treatment of Covid-19, waiving TRIPS, it is of the utmost importance to find a functioning middle ground and to remain committed to the TRIPS Agreement.

Reaching an agreement on fishery subsidies is of paramount importance as the livelihoods of millions of people around the world depend heavily on the fisheries sector.

Albania fully supports the efforts made so far to advance the negotiations for a consensual agreement to fulfil both mandates from the SDG 14.6 target which is an integral part of the UN

Agenda 2030, as well as from the previous WTO Ministerial Conference. Thus creating a clear ban on subsidies that impair the sustainability of fisheries.

The special and differential treatment should be an integral part of this agreement, including the renewal and modernization of the fishing fleet and in this regard, the granting of subsidies should be assessed in correlation with the sustainability of the fishery.

It remains of an urgent matter to be able to ensure the continuous flow of food, as well as products, services and essential inputs for agricultural and food production and supply as the devastating war in Ukraine has caused barriers to exports, as one of the world's leading exporters of major agricultural products.

Therefore, it is important to keep our food and agricultural markets open, predictable and transparent by not imposing unjustified trade restrictions on agricultural and agri-food products or key inputs of agricultural production.

In the meantime, any emergency measures taken to mitigate the impacts on food safety should be as distorting, targeted, proportionate and temporary as possible, as well as to provide transparency and predictability.

It is of the utmost importance that no export bans or restrictions be imposed on food products purchased for non-commercial humanitarian purposes by the World Food Program.

Therefore, issues related to food security and the World Food Program in the context of the current global crisis deserve special attention and call for our determined joint action.

As the WTO continues to be an essential tool for achieving inclusive and sustainable global growth and development, we support efforts to reform the WTO to more effectively address the current and future challenges facing the organization and to ensure its sound operation. At the moment, the two-tier WTO dispute settlement system is a central element for the security and predictability of the multilateral trading system and effective functioning needs to be restored.

The WTO Joint Plurilateral Initiatives cover a wide range of important issues and are giving real dynamism to our organization while effectively delivering tangible results.

Albania being part in all of them, it is truly encouraging that these open and fully transparent initiatives are complementary to multilateralism.

Regarding e-commerce, let me emphasize that Albania fully supports the extension of the e-commerce moratorium on non-imposition of customs duties on electronic broadcasting until the next MC13 Conference.
