



**Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Federal Republic of Somalia
TFC Meeting with International Partners
June 15, 2020 – Video Conference**

Minister's Statement:

Honorable Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Somalia, Mahdi Mohamed Gulaid, Ministers and Ambassadors, Excellencies, Distinguish Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen – All Protocol Observed.

I would like to thank our international partners for their support to the Government and the People of Somalia in the areas of political, economic, security, social and humanitarian in time of dire need for assistance and development support.

More specifically, I would like to express my gratitude and sincere appreciation for the WTO member states for their overwhelming support to Somalia's WTO accession during the 11th Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017 and subsequent regional dialogue and meetings. Sweden, UK and EU have been consistent with their engagement to the Somali government offering their support to WTO Accession and we are grateful to them. We are also grateful to UNIDO, Italian Cooperation for Development and the World Bank Group for their continued support to Somalia's economic recovery

Membership to the World Trade Organization (WTO) will provide a foundation for establishing rules-based system for Somalia's economic recovery, attract foreign investment, secure business opportunities and create jobs for youth who make more than 75% of the Somali population.

Somalia's WTO Accession Protocol calls for enhanced business environment, trade facilitation and Somalia's investment climate to provide a transparent and predictable business environment.

Somalia's accession to WTO has begun with an application by the Somali government and establishment of Working Party in December 2016, followed by series of regional dialogue and meetings. In each of these dialogues and meetings, Somalia has made commitment and it is determined to business reform, establish predictable tariff rates, ensuring transparency in the publication and enactment of laws, and adherence to an enforceable mechanism for resolving disputes.

Recognizing trade is the backbone of the Somali Economy, the Federal Government of Somalia has prioritized trade reforms in the economic recovery agenda. The Somali Government in collaboration with private sector and Federal Member States has made commitment to ease doing business and trade facilitation with theme to accelerate socioeconomic transformation, strengthen legal and regulatory framework, and improve investment climate through inclusive and wider consultation for economic recovery and sustainable growth. The Government is backing these commitments with the development of the 9th National Development Plan and passage of key legislations such as Company law, Bureau of Standards, investment law, Statistical Act, PFM law, ICT Law, Ant-corruption law, to name but a few. The approval of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), membership to World Customs Organization (WCO), COMESA Treaty, African Continental free Trade Area (AfCTA) and Horn of Africa Initiative are some of the key achievements

National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) led by the Deputy Prime Minister, H. E. Mahdi Mohamed has been nominated by the Prime Minister, H. E. Hassan Ali Kheire, to facilitate international trade, draft and propose trade related regulations and practices, outreach and capacity building, and to lead WTO accession process and other bilateral and multilateral trade facilitation.

The government has also established a taskforce to review and update international trade related reform for WTO accession and provide input to the MFTR in accordance to the current and ongoing developments, identify challenges, establish negotiating team through consultation with relevant stakeholders, and develop structure for the WTO Accession for Somalia. The Taskforce consisting of representatives from the Office of the President, the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, the Office of the State Attorney and open to other institutions as deemed necessary was asked to make recommendations and assist the establishment of national level structure, sensitize the negotiating team and other stakeholders, and mapping out the legal and regulatory framework and remaining tasks for the WTO Accession for Somalia.

Given the importance of the Memorandum on Foreign Trade Regime(MFTR) and the supporting Statistical data and other relevant documents such as harmonized system of tariff nomenclature, laws and regulations relevant to trade and investment, the government is keen to establish national level structure and sensitize the negotiating team and other government agencies, private sector and academies as well as key policy makers including Parliamentarians on GAT and WTO agreements, the accession process as well as obligations and benefits of WTO membership. TFC is also prepared to assist and take the recommendations by the taskforce and move forward with the implementation and other stages of accession negotiation.

In conclusion, Somalia is committed to its accession goal but more importantly, it is committed to building reliable and stable economy for the future generations. The only way to do this is through constant cooperation with stakeholders and support from our strategic partners and other WTO members.

Thank you!