

AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الأفريقي



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ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION
Second Ordinary Session
10 - 12 July 2003
Maputo, MOZAMBIQUE

Assembly/AU/Decl. 4

AU DECLARATIONS

**DECLARATION ON THE FIFTH
WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

We, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union meeting in our Second Ordinary Session in Maputo, Mozambique,

Having considered the Report of the Conference of Ministers of Trade of AU Member States held in Mauritius, in June 2003, the Mauritius Ministerial Declaration on the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the WTO and its Annex, the “African Common Position” on the Fifth WTO Ministerial Conference, Cancun, Mexico, 10 to 14 September 2003; as well as the Report of the Third Ordinary Session of the Executive Council on this issue,

Recalling the high expectations raised by the adoption of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) and its subsequent work programme,

Recognizing the efforts deployed by the Negotiators from our Member States in the various bodies of the WTO,

Noting that the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the WTO is scheduled to take place in Cancun, Mexico, from 10 to 14 September 2003,

Deeply concerned about the general lack of progress in the on-going Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, as evidenced by the missed deadlines in respect of key issues of importance to African countries in the negotiations:

1. **ENDORSE** the Mauritius Declaration on the Fifth Ministerial Conference of WTO and its annex: the African Common Position on the WTO issues;
2. **DEPLORE** the lack of substantial progress registered in the negotiations on Agriculture, TRIPS and Public Health, Special and Differential Treatment, and Implementation-Related issues;
3. **STRONGLY URGE** WTO members to fulfil the commitments undertaken in Doha, as contained in the mandate for the agricultural negotiations, including through less than full reciprocity in tariff reduction commitments, having due regard to the principle of special and differential treatment;
4. **EXPRESS** our full solidarity with our Member States that are affected by subsidies on cotton provided by developed countries and strongly support actions initiated by some of them in the WTO to urgently remedy the negative consequences of those subsidies that affect millions of Africa’s farmers;
5. **STRONGLY WELCOME** proposals on preferences as contained in the Harbinson text and **CALL UPON** the WTO Members to address the issue of erosion of preferences;
6. **AFFIRM** that the objectives of the negotiations on non-agricultural market access are to facilitate the development and industrialization processes in our countries; to that end, the modalities for the actual negotiations must reflect these goals appropriately by addressing tariff peaks and tariff escalation, taking fully into account the special needs and interests of developing and least-developed countries;
7. **REITERATE** that our sub-regional and regional integration organizations are pillars of the African Economic Community (AEC), and are essential for the promotion of Africa’s socio-economic development and serve as the dynamic building blocks of our effective integration into the Multilateral Trading System (MTS);

- 8. CALL** for development-friendly WTO disciplines, arising from the Doha work programme pertaining to the clarification and improvement of the WTO disciplines applied to regional trade agreements;
- 9. EXPRESS GRAVE CONCERN** about the lack of transparency and inclusiveness in the WTO negotiations and decision-making processes. To that end, **CALL** for measures to ensure the effective participation of our countries in the processes leading to the Fifth WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun and beyond;
- 10. REGRET** the deadlock over the issue of granting observer status to the African Union in the WTO and, in this regard, **CALL UPON** all other WTO Member States to support us in effort to secure Observer Status for the African Union.
- 11. MANDATE** the Chairperson of the Assembly in consultation with the Commission to set up a negotiating team, having due regard to regional representation and headed by an experienced person; to negotiate on behalf of all Member States the fundamental issues that are being negotiated in the WTO;
- 12. CALL ON** the relevant International Civil Society Organizations to provide all necessary support to advocate and promote Africa's concerns to ensure a just and fair global trading system.