

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HER EXCELLENCY ROSALYN HAZELLE,  
VICE-MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE, INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND  
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, ST. KITTS AND NEVIS**

**AT THE SEVENTH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE WORLD TRADE  
ORGANISATION,**

**2 DECEMBER 2009, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND.**

Mr Chairman

Honourable Ministers

Delegates

I wish on behalf of the Government and people of St. Kitts and Nevis, to express my appreciation to the Government and people of Switzerland for hosting the Seventh Ministerial Conference of the WTO.

Mr. Chairman, St. Kitts and Nevis is among the smallest and most vulnerable members of the WTO. As such we cannot overemphasise the need to maintain development at the centre of the Doha Round of negotiations. A development outcome in the context of this round is more critical now than ever as we grapple with the problems exacerbated by the current global economic and financial crisis.

It is my country's belief that the WTO should play a leadership role in addressing the disparities created by the global crisis, particularly where there is evidence that policy measures taken at national levels have a direct economic and social impact on other Members of the WTO.

In essence, Mr. Chairman, the WTO's role should be enhanced to help small economies withstand the adverse effects of the crisis and promote their development. This can be achieved by infusing development in all aspects of the negotiations and by ensuring that there are sufficient programmes geared towards the strengthening of capacity at the human resource and institutional levels.

I wish to commend Director General Lamy and the WTO Secretariat for the current thrust to closely monitor trade policies implemented as a response to the global crisis with a view to

ensuring that we do not revert to the protectionist measures of the 1930's when we experienced a similar crisis which had a global impact.

Mr Chairman, the actions of our larger trading partners can also be detrimental to small economies. One case in point is the new Air Passenger Duty which will significantly increase the cost of travel to the Caribbean in the first year of implementation and lead to a larger increase by 2011. This additional cost comes at a time when our economies are struggling to maintain demand and exacerbates the already dire situation faced by our region.

Our concern is that such a measure, while it may seeks to address the issue of harmful emissions by aircrafts in the environment, may lead some to believe that protectionist interests are at play since it adversely impacts our competitiveness vis a vis other less-distant providers of tourism services.

We recognise the work undertaken thus far in the work programme on Small Economies, in accordance with paragraph 35 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration. A number of Small and Vulnerable Economies (SVE) proposals have been incorporated into the current draft modalities and it is our expressed desire that these modalities be preserved as we move to the conclusion of the round. There should be no back-tracking of the progress made thus far. Such could only serve to undermine the prospects for development as we move towards the conclusion of the Doha Round.

Mr. Chair, when we examine the global financial and economic crisis we need to ensure that due consideration is given to the impact of the fall out on vulnerable constituents, including women and children. We must seek to ensure that the gains from trade benefit the poor and often forgotten vulnerable; largely constituted by women and children.

Chair, you will note that I have highlighted the importance of taking into account the impact of the current crisis on women. We believe that the Doha negotiations as well as the broader multilateral trading system should take account of gender issues.

We must be cognizant of the fact that a functioning multilateral system, invested with the tools required for social justice can contribute significantly to the empowerment of women; not only on the factory floor but also at all levels

For St. Kitts and Nevis, Mr. Chairman, Aid for Trade is a key pillar of a development outcome. Aid for Trade should be additional, sufficient, and predictable. Aid for Trade should not however replace a genuine development – friendly outcome in the core modalities demanded by our people. We note that Aid for Trade flows have increased by 10 per cent between 2002 and 2007 and welcome this positive trend. We are however concerned that there may be insufficient appreciation of the needs of many in the Caribbean Community and that on both parts, the relationship and focus must be sharpened.

Aid for Trade flows should be needs based and shaped by the level of economic vulnerability of the recipient. The acute vulnerabilities of small economies with tiny populations are masked by relatively high per capita GDP and HDI figures that are only reflective of a transient prosperity that can quickly disappear. For example, natural disasters can, in a matter of minutes or hours, undo the achievements realised over many decades of development. A holistic approach therefore needs to be taken where the modalities for disbursing Aid for Trade resources is concerned.

In closing Mr. Chairman, I wish to reiterate the commitment of St. Kitts and Nevis to the strengthening of the multilateral trading system. We also express our commitment to the successful conclusion of the Doha Round.

I thank you