

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. DARLINGTON MWAPE TO THE GENERAL
COUNCIL ON BEHALF OF THE LDC GROUP**

22 FEBRUARY 2010

AGENDA ITEM 1

Mr. Chairman, Colleagues,

Allow me from the outset to thank the Director General in his capacity as TNC Chair for a comprehensive report on the state of play of the DDA and the process for the March stock-taking exercise.

As we set our eyes to the stock-taking exercise next month, we as members should realise that this is a time of reckoning and deep reflection as to whether we are in a position to conclude the DDA by 2010. This should not be business as usual. Our group expects that this exercise will provide an added opportunity for positive engagement among all Members. This engagement should, we hope, be candid enough to address the gaps in more specific terms with a view to finding workable solutions. Unless there is a genuine shift in positions for more flexibility, the exercise will be business as usual.

The LDC group shall continue to engage constructively in the DDA process in ensuring that issues of interest to the LDC's are in all respects, taken into account.

Permit me, Mr. Chairman, to highlight some of the aspects of interest to LDC's which shall pre-occupy our focus in the course of this year.

1. AG/NAMA

While appreciating and recognising the general support from the entire membership in regard to DFQF market access, there is need to progress work in areas that will make DFQF effective. Here we have in mind issues such as the rules of origin, product coverage and the details of the monitoring procedure envisaged in the modalities. These issues are important for LDCs to progress from obtaining market access to accessing the markets.

2. COTTON

It is regrettable that despite the clear mandate of 1st August 2004 on cotton, discussions in this area have not been on the active agenda list of the Committee on Agriculture in Special Session. We are left to wonder if there is any other meaning to the words ambitiously, expeditiously and specifically. This delay does not give hope to the cotton dependent LDCs who continue to be adversely exposed to the negative effects of trade distorting domestic support measures maintained by some member countries.

3. **SERVICES**

The work on the LDC waiver has progressed positively and it is the intention of the group to engage members in clarifying some of the issues that have been raised during the last formal meeting of the Special Session of the Council for Trade in Services. The group considers that the successful conclusion of discussions on the waiver will be a positive input into the stock-taking exercise.

4. **TF**

Our focus in Trade facilitation work will be to ensure that the S & D text is sufficient and effective in addressing the issues of capacity and technical assistance by having full regard to the limitations of LDC's and to the provisions of Annex D.

Mr. Chairman, may I conclude that the common thread of focus for LDC shall continue to be development with an over-arching demand for early harvest in all aspects were there is convergence.

I thank you.