

Excellency, Honourable Professor Sam Onger, Minister for Foreign Affairs,

Excellency, Honourable Moses Wetangula, Minister for Trade,

Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Community,

Senior Government Officials, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is no greater privilege than to be acknowledged by one's Government and country. I am honoured and humbled to have been nominated by The President and Government of Kenya to vie for the position of the Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

I am grateful and thank all of you that have accepted the invitation of the Kenyan Government to be here today, as I start my bid for the position of WTO Director-General. With the firm support of the Government of Kenya and the strong support by several Governments, I am confident as I embark on this campaign. I draw energy and inspiration from the many messages that I have received. Upfront, I would like to be clear that my candidature is not on the basis of a Regional Turn, or a Buggins Turn". I challenge and I am basing my bid for the position of WTO Director-General on the platform of open competition, rational debate, fairness and a fair hearing for all candidates. I ask for nothing else.

The Multilateral Trading System, anchored in the World Trade Organization is fundamentally sound and in good shape. It remains the sole and undisputed guardian of the rules-based trading system. It is an indispensable Organization for rule-setting and adjudication of disputes. If it did not exist, we would have to create it. Work in the regular bodies of the Organization is proceeding efficiently. The Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU) is the most effective in Public International Law.

As Director-General, I will work to ensure the consolidation and preservation of the current acquis of the rules-based Multilateral Trading System. It is of high value. We must work to protect it from the constant assault and contagion of protectionism.

However, all institutions, periodically, need to re-set and adjust to the challenges of an ever-changing global environment. One of the greatest lessons from the Scottish Naturalist (Darwin) is that it is not the strongest of the species that survive, but those that are able to adapt to their environment. The lesson from the failure of the League of Nations is within human recall. Institutions that are not relevant, cannot solve problems, they are behind the curve and are superseded. Adaptations, adjustments and technical improvements are required even in an Organization like the WTO that is fundamentally in good health.

Although the Organization continues to score highly as the guardian of the rules, through regular work, and has provided stability in global trade, including through its accumulating solid jurisprudence, yet weaknesses are self-evident in the two areas of: negotiating new trade rules to update the rule book; and, in providing new market access opportunities. While there have been new market access opportunities created from the exceptionally successful results of a well-functioning WTO accession process, most recently with the Russian Federation in 2011 and a host of other accessions, yet, there is scope for more to be achieved through multilateral negotiations to further improve market access opportunities.

The weaknesses of leadership in new rule-making and multilaterally-driven market opening are far from fatal and the responsibilities are collective. However, in these areas, the WTO needs to adapt and upgrade to overcome these weaknesses and to ensure relevance and capacity to respond to contemporary challenges.

On 1 January 1995 the WTO came into existence. Since then, the world has changed. There are the mega-global challenges of climate change, a monstrous economic and financial crisis, accompanied by the "terror of unemployment", food insecurity and a crippling global angst of what the future holds. We are in a race against time. Although some regions of the world have done better than others, and emerging developing countries are the engines, powering global recovery and growth, these efforts should be on the platform of multilateralism. The world is not de-coupled. We have a global economy, of which one consequence is that economic and trade pain, in one part, is almost immediately transferred to other parts. We must banish the illusion of a de-coupled global economy.

As Director-General, in a Member-Driven Organization, I plan to dedicate my energies to addressing these challenges in partnership with the WTO Membership and the Heads of other Multilateral Institutions.

Although signaled this evening, over the next few weeks, I shall set out a clear and focused vision of my priorities for the WTO, if Members decide to elect me as WTO Director-General. My vision of the Organization shall revolve around the imperative of an updated agenda for trade negotiations which is relevant to contemporary challenges in the global economy; the desperate necessity for commensurate and shared responsibilities in a rules-based system; and, the expansion of stakeholders to ensure the relevance of WTO.

I shall shortly begin programmed visits to the capitals of WTO Members. My travels will lead me to Geneva, where on the 30th of January, together with the other 8 candidates, I shall describe the state-of-health of the Organization, lay out an agenda, and present a clear set of priorities, if elected Director-General.

Since 1948, Executive Directors of the GATT, later re-named Directors General ex officio have evolved to be guardians of the rules-based system. This is an institutional responsibility whose primary focus in a rules-based system is to consolidate and preserve the acquis of the Organization; monitor and report on trade policy trends of relevance for the global economy; facilitate stable negotiating consensus; and, operate in coordination with key multilateral institutions so that the Organization remains nimble and relevant in global problem-solving.

Current negotiations have to be made more responsive to the current global trading environment and realities. The challenges of economic crises, the proliferation of RTAs, food security must be addressed, while moving rapidly to conclude trade facilitation negotiations. I would give my support to the conclusion of a new Services Agreement. We need to better engage the private sector and global business.

I am a trained lawyer and a professional diplomatist. I have had the privilege of working on the major issues on the agenda of global governance and diplomacy. I believe that I am uniquely qualified by training, experience and a track record of delivery, especially at the WTO. A lifetime of

exposure in professional diplomacy and negotiations on a wide range of global issues, place me on a sound technical footing, to lead the World Trade Organization, if members decide to give me the job.

There are eight other candidates. They also are uniquely and, eminently, qualified. Many of them are dear friends of mine, friendships made in the period when I was Ambassador in Geneva and chaired the Trade Policy Review Body, the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) and, finally, the WTO General Council. As a former Chairman of the Council, I am proud to claim that the WTO has the best process of selecting its Head, amongst all Inter-Governmental Multilateral Institutions.

In closing, I am confident that the choice of WTO Members shall rationally result from competition, merit and fairness. On this January evening in Nairobi, these are platforms on which I launch my campaign, and the basis on which I ask for the support of your Governments to serve the international community and contribute to the global public good of the World Trade Organization.