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THE SENATE

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Outcome document

Adopted on 25 March 2026

We, legislators gathered in Yaoundé for the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (PCWTO), within the framework of the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14),

1. *Reaffirm* the fundamental importance of rules-based international trade as an engine for inclusive growth, job creation, poverty reduction and global economic stability, and *emphasize* the WTO's central role in this regard;
2. *Recognize* that the global economic, geopolitical and technological environment has changed the multilateral trading system profoundly; *regret* the increase in protectionist trade policies across the globe, including China's non-market policies and practices, which are creating overcapacity and market distortions in the system, and the decision of the United States of America to impose additional tariffs on imports from trading partners; *emphasize* that the current turmoil in global trade is creating enormous uncertainty and economic costs across the globe, which demonstrates clearly that predictable, stable and fair rules are vital for trade to thrive; and, in this context, *highlight* the urgent need to restore the relevance, credibility and effectiveness of the WTO; and *recognize* that small island and geographically constrained economies face particular structural vulnerabilities within the global trading system and require proportionate flexibility in the implementation of trade rules;
3. *Recognize also* the strategic importance of maritime transport and global shipping for the stability of international trade and *encourage* policies that maintain open, secure and efficient maritime trade routes;
4. *Recognize further* that currently 72% of global trade is still conducted under rules relating to the most-favoured-nation principle, and thereby *reaffirm* that this principle constitutes a cornerstone of the trading system; and *underline* that predictability remains the cornerstone of the multilateral trading system, that core WTO disciplines continue to provide essential legal certainty for governments and businesses worldwide and that safeguarding these core disciplines remains crucial;
5. *Emphasize* that MC14 is first and foremost a strategic and systemic orientation conference called upon to provide clear political leadership and structural mandates for future WTO action in a context where inaction would further erode confidence in the multilateral trading system;
6. *Affirm* that comprehensive reform of the WTO must be the central priority of MC14 and the post-MC14 work programme, to enable the Organization to restore trust in the system, ensure its continued relevance and respond effectively to the challenges of the twenty-first century; and *call for* the approval of a clear road map for reform during MC14, in order to ensure that modernization can be agreed at the 15th Ministerial Conference;

7. *Support* balanced and inclusive reform covering all WTO functions, including:

- governance, transparency and decision-making processes,
- development and special and differential treatment (SDT),
- issues related to fairness and to ensuring a level playing field,
- the WTO's capacity to address contemporary trade challenges;

8. *Appreciate* that the WTO has become a truly global organization with 166 Members; *underscore* that the WTO is a unique multilateral organization in the sense that each Member participates on an equal footing, that it creates and governs binding rules of trade between its Members and is underpinned by a legally binding dispute settlement system; *call upon* its members to reflect on a decision-making process that would not block the WTO's work; and *insist* that the WTO needs to learn from other international organizations and introduce different approaches in decision-making, and that it needs to have a constructive conversation on the practice of consensus and distinguish it from unanimity;

9. *Recognize* the need to reflect on conditions that would render easier the integration of plurilateral agreements in the multilateral architecture of the WTO, and *encourage* the continuation of inclusive, transparent and open-ended dialogue on plurilateral initiatives, in accordance with the multilateral framework of the WTO; and *call upon* WTO Members to reflect on a way to develop a new system whereby a single Member or a group of non-participating members cannot block closer cooperation in a plurilateral initiative, especially when it is based on the most-favoured-nation principle and benefits thus apply to the membership as a whole, and on that basis to establish a straightforward mechanism that would allow the resulting agreements to be incorporated into the WTO structure;

10. *Recognize also* that the subsidy rules have not been able to constrain distortive State interventions, resulting in trade tensions among WTO Members, the weakening of the rules-based order and in costly subsidy races, in particular for developing countries, and *encourage* the WTO Members to have an open and constructive dialogue to find lasting solutions;

11. *Reaffirm* that a fully functional, independent, binding and two-tier dispute settlement system is essential to the credibility and effectiveness of the WTO; and *welcome* the fact that 58 WTO Members (covering close to 60% of world trade) have joined the Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA), as a temporary measure until a fully functioning WTO dispute settlement system is up and running again;

12. Therefore, *call upon* Ministers to:

- engage in a targeted ministerial dialogue on the systemic challenges facing the multilateral trading system,
- approve a clear, credible and forward-looking work programme for post-MC14 reform,
- define milestones, deadlines and modalities for assessing progress,
- join the MPIA to demonstrate their commitment to a fair and functioning dispute settlement system, continue and intensify negotiations on dispute settlement reform after MC14, and to establish a road map with an indicative deadline for reaching a permanent solution;

13. *Reaffirm* that Aid for Trade is an essential enabling tool for developing countries to integrate more effectively into the multilateral trading system, diversify their economies and strengthen their resilience to global economic shocks;

14. *Recognize* the critical role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in global trade and *call for* WTO initiatives that reduce administrative burdens, simplify customs procedures and improve access of SMEs to global markets;

15. *Emphasize*, in this regard, the need to strengthen development issues among the priorities of the WTO, ensuring that SDT is more effective, operational and tailored to the real needs of developing countries and Least Developed Countries (LDCs); *take note* of China's decision to renounce WTO special and differential treatment benefits in future WTO deals, as other large developing Members have already done; and *call upon* China to ensure that this commitment is also reflected retroactively in the implementation of current WTO agreements;

16. *Welcome* the conclusion of the negotiations on the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement aimed at creating a fairer, more transparent, more efficient and more predictable environment to facilitate cross-border investment and the participation of developing countries in global investment flows; and *welcomes also* the support to that effect of 128 WTO Members (out of 166), including 91 developing economies (27 of which are LDCs);

17. *Support*, to this end, efforts to:

- improve the implementation of SDT provisions, among others by looking at the Agreements on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT),
- strengthen technical assistance, capacity-building and Aid for Trade,
- incorporate the IFD Agreement into the WTO rulebook under Annex 4: “Plurilateral Trade Agreements”,
- enhance coordination between the WTO and international organizations in support of development objectives;

18. *Call for* concrete support by the WTO Members for the integration of African regional initiatives, especially the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), into formal WTO capacity-building frameworks to ensure structural transformation and industrialization, export diversification, increased participation in regional and global value chains, trade facilitation, infrastructure connectivity and skills development;

19. *Call for* concrete outcomes at MC14 on transition measures for countries graduating from LDC status, to ensure a smooth, predictable and sustainable transition;

20. *Underline* the importance of multilateral and plurilateral rules on digital trade and the role of parliamentarians and the WTO in improving regulations to maintain free, inclusive, non-discriminatory, transparent, resilient, open and fair digital trade, while ensuring appropriate safeguards for data protection, cybersecurity, consumer protection and national regulatory autonomy;

21. *Call upon* the WTO Members to support and implement the Agreement on Electronic Commerce as a matter of priority; *stress* that the agreement sets the first global rules for digital trade, creating a fair, predictable and transparent framework that benefits consumers and businesses by facilitating cross-border transactions, reducing barriers, and promoting innovation and trust; *emphasize* that the agreement is designed to benefit developing countries and the LDCs as much as advanced economies; *welcome* the agreement’s capacity-building initiatives and programmes to support the efforts of developing countries and the LDCs to harness the opportunities offered by digital trade;

22. *Encourage* the WTO Members to:

- revitalize the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce,
- seek a sustainable, balanced and evidence-based, permanent solution to the question of the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions while taking into account development considerations,
- acknowledge the importance of developing countries of raising public revenue from e-commerce transactions, including through VAT or similar consumer taxes;

23. *Emphasize* the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to improve trade facilitation, enhance business productivity and competitiveness, and support innovation, economic inclusion and sustainable development, provided that its use is responsible, ethical, transparent and respectful of human rights, and that it should create equal opportunities for employment and support democratic institutions and fair competition;

24. *Call for* the establishment of a dedicated WTO Working Group on Artificial Intelligence to facilitate dialogue, knowledge-sharing and cooperation among WTO Members on AI regulations and policies, while respecting the right of WTO Members to regulate;

25. *Regret* the delay in agricultural outcomes and emphasize the need for the establishment of a permanent solution for developing nations to manage stockholding as soon as possible while promoting a legislative framework to improve global food security by ensuring resilient and secure food supply chains, encouraging sustainable agricultural practices and reducing food waste; and *calls upon* ministers to work towards agreeing an outcome on agriculture by MC15;

26. *Welcome* the entry into force of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies in September 2025; *urge* all WTO Members that have not yet ratified the agreement – namely, the developing countries, to do so swiftly, as it offers them access to the related Fisheries Funding Mechanism; *stress* the crucial importance of also reaching an agreement on disciplines on fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing to avoid depleting marine biological resources and allow for their sustainable management, while respecting the need for SDT in line with Sustainable Development Goal 14.6;

27. *Call upon* the WTO Members to ensure that MC14 will provide political guidance on the other topics currently under discussion, that substantive negotiations will continue and that outcomes will be achieved after the Conference;

28. *Reiterate* the importance of parliamentary engagement and the inclusion of a parliamentary dimension in future multilateral cooperation on trade issues, considering the determining contribution of trade to the global economy;

29. *Reiterate also* our shared sense of responsibility to establish mechanisms for parliamentary oversight and involvement in trade negotiations and agreements, both upstream and downstream of the process, ensuring transparency and democratic accountability through monitoring and evaluation of the impact of such agreements on local communities;

30. *Call for* the parliamentary dimension of the WTO to be strengthened, in particular through:

- increased participation of legislators in processes related to the Ministerial Conferences and the WTO reform,
- institutional and political support for the PCWTO;

31. *Express* our conviction that MC14 must mark a decisive step towards the revitalization of the multilateral trading system, based on dialogue, cooperation and multilateralism;

32. *Call upon* the WTO Members to enhance the exchange with all stakeholders, including civil society, trade unions and business organizations, and to step up cooperation with other international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and more broadly the United Nations system; *appeal* to national and world leaders to strengthen their communication at every level about the benefits of rules-based trade;

33. *Commit* to continuing our active contribution, as parliamentarians, to supporting and promoting a reformed, credible and inclusive WTO that meets citizen's expectations;

34. *Extend* our warm thanks to the Cameroonian authorities, particularly the Parliament of Cameroon, for facilitating and ensuring the success of the 2026 PCWTO.