

Remarks by H.E. Mohamed Edrees

Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission

Inaugural Meeting of the Trade for Peace Network, 25 March 2021

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H.E. Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, WTO Director-General,

H.E. Ambassador Alan Wolff, WTO Deputy Director-General,

Excellencies, ladies and Gentlemen,

- 1- At the outset, I wish to thank the World Trade Organization for the kind invitation to attend this inaugural meeting of the “Trade for Peace Network”. It gives me a great pleasure to participate in this important event in my capacity as the Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).**
- 2- I welcome the initiative of WTO to create this network as a platform for regular exchange between policymakers and experts from the trade, peace and humanitarian communities to explore areas of collaboration and actions, within their respective mandates, to support conflict affected states associated with WTO accession.**
- 3- It is also heartening to learn about the WTO’s Trade for Peace (T4P) initiative, which aims at promoting the multilateral trading system as a pathway to lasting peace and sustainable development, and create favorable conditions that would assist countries in moving out of conflict into stability and economic well-being.**
- 4- The T4P intersects with the work of the PBC, as the Commission which is an intergovernmental advisory body in the UN system fully dedicated to building and sustaining peace, seeks to bring sustained international attention and support to national peacebuilding priorities, and provide political accompaniment and advocacy to countries affected by conflict, with their consent or upon their request. Hence, national ownership represents an essential pillar of the work of the Commission. The PBC has today multiple demand-driven engagements with countries and regions**

outside the set-up of the current four country configurations as well as engagement on important thematic and cross-cutting issues.

- 5- In doing so, the PBC serves as a unique bridge and connector in advancing the international community's peacebuilding efforts, including through strategic advice and briefings to the Security Council, General Assembly and ECOSOC.. In addition to coordinating coherent UN system support, the PBC continues to expand and strengthen partnerships, including with International Financial Institutions, regional and sub-regional organizations and civil society organizations with a view to ensuring more efficiency and coherence in support of national peacebuilding efforts.
- 6- Expanding and deepening partnerships represents a priority for me as the Chair of the Commission. I believe there are abundant opportunities for both WTO and PBC to collaborate in support of conflict affected countries considered by the PBC and in the meantime members or seeking accession to the WTO.
- 7- The annual report of the previous session of the PBC recommended to strengthen the convening role of the Commission by inviting additional partners to participate in its meetings in accordance with its working methods. Therefore, we can consider inviting the WTO to brief the Commission and participate in relevant meetings to provide a trade perspective to the discussion.
- 8- In conclusion, the PBC stands ready to further engage with the WTO in its T4P initiative and to work together to explore potential ways of collaborations to build lasting peace and sustainable development.

Thank you.