

## Check Against Delivery

### COMMONWEALTH TRADE MINISTERS MEETING

#### SECRETARY GENERAL'S CLOSING REMARKS

20 June 2025

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Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Colleagues,

As I reflect over our discussions these past two days, I am greatly encouraged by the strong commitment I heard across the room for a more resilient Commonwealth.

I am grateful to you all for your contribution to the success of the theme of our meeting “*Fostering Resilience: Harnessing the Intra-Commonwealth Trade and Investment Advantage*”.

I am convinced that your work has laid the groundwork for effectively realising the call of Commonwealth Leaders for a more resilient Commonwealth for our People, Planet and collective Prosperity.

*Dear Friends,*

It is impossible to overstate the critical importance of the extensive discussions and consensus on trade and investment policy issues, over the past two days, for shifting from potential to shared prosperity.

The Commonwealth Statement on the multilateral trading system, which was drafted by senior trade officials earlier this week, through many hours of constructive engagement and frank discussion, and which you have concluded and endorsed today, is a crucial reflection of our shared commitment to safeguarding the sanctity of the rules-based international trading system. I thank you for your commendable leadership on this issue.

It must rank among our highest priorities in the face of mounting threats to the stability of the multilateral trading system. We must stand firm and united in resisting any efforts that risk undermining our progress and prosperity.

Honourable Ministers,

Delegates,

Colleagues,

It is clear from the urgency of our discussions over the last two days that you are fully seized of the enormity of the challenges that lie ahead. The actions and concrete outcomes which you have endorsed leave me with no doubt that you stand united in your commitment to tackle them.

Together, we have explored new pathways for deepening intra-Commonwealth trade, enhancing investment, leveraging digital

trade, accelerating the sustainable energy transition and building resilient economies to advance growth and prosperity, especially for our small and vulnerable states.

The Outcome Statement that you have agreed and endorsed today reflects a strong commitment to deepen cooperation in these areas.

The outcomes of the Windhoek trade ministers' meeting represent another shining example of the enduring value of Commonwealth collaboration.

United by our shared values, we have shown how we can work together as a family of nations to ensure that all our people benefit fully from international trade. For the Commonwealth trade must always be a means to an even larger goal - delivering the democratic dividend for every citizen of the Commonwealth.

I look forward to working with all of you in the months ahead to deliver on these commitments. Together, we shall build a stronger Commonwealth that reflects our vision of the future.

Now, as we bid farewell, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Chair, my dear sister, Honourable Selma Ashipala-Musavyi, Minister of International Relations and Trade of Namibia, for guiding us through this meeting in expert fashion.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Namibia for graciously hosting this Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting. Your warm hospitality, generosity, and meticulous arrangements are deeply appreciated. By bringing this meeting beyond its traditional setting in London, you have set a valuable precedent and exemplified the spirit of Commonwealth inclusivity and innovation. You have been outstanding hosts. Thank you.

Let me also express deep gratitude to our co-chair and Chair-in-Office, Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mata'afa of the Independent State of Samoa. We benefited from her deep wisdom, which she delivered virtually, and through her capable delegation.

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

I wish on behalf of the Commonwealth Secretariat, to thank you all once again for your dedication, your vision, and your leadership in ensuring the huge success of this meeting.

As we conclude proceedings here today, I urge you all to translate the spirit of this meeting into action.

Let us continue to champion fair, equitable and inclusive trade.

Let us remain focused on solutions that are sustainable and transformative, and which advance our shared prosperity.

And let us do so in the true Commonwealth way - through partnerships, collective self-interest, and a shared determination to leave no one behind.

Travel well and let's all stay in touch until we meet again.

I thank you.

Dange Unene.