Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Allow me at the outset to convey to all delegates here the warm greetings of my minister; Minister Kebede Chane, Minister of Trade of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, who wished to be here but unable to do so due to unforeseen circumstances happened in the country due to the unexpected loss of the beloved Prime Minister, the beloved son of Ethiopia and that of Africa.

Mr. Chairman,
I would like also to thank the Government of Kazakhstan for so generously hosting this 4th Ministerial Conference, for the wonderful arrangements made for our work, and for the warm hospitality extended to us since our arrival in this beautiful city of Almaty.

Mr. Chairman,
A special feature of the Almaty Programme of Action is its focus on action-oriented specific measures to be undertaken by both landlocked and transit developing countries with the support of their development partners. These specific actions will be implemented in five priority areas, namely Fundamental Transit Policy Issues, Infrastructure Development and Maintenance, International Trade and Trade Facilitation, International Support Measures, and Implementation and Review. Thus, the Almaty Programme of Action provided a win-win opportunity for landlocked and transit developing countries in establishing efficient transit systems.

Mr. Chairman,
At this juncture let me share the experiences and some the efforts made by the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to implement the objectives of the Almaty Program of Action.

The Government of Ethiopia with the agreement of the Government of Djibouti, the coastal neighbouring state based on the bilateral Agreement on the Utilization of the Port of Djibouti, Maritime and Related Services; introduced a new structural adjustment strategy to the entire logistics chain in import-export activities and Ethiopia’s international cargo movement through the cost. The structural adjustment strategy aimed primarily at facilitating institutional procedural and logistic bottlenecks contributing to high transport cost affecting the import export on Ethiopian cargo.

Under this bilateral agreement signed between Ethiopia and Djibouti, Ethiopia’s national ocean carrier, the Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Services Enterprise is designated as the Multimodal Transport Operator in respect with Ethiopia’s import cargoes. The Enterprise can also be protected under a cargo reservation policy scheme in accordance with international accepted freight share rules and practices.

The Government of Ethiopia also introduced, a more transparent and simplified procedures in transshipment of load centers, multimodal transport facilities, a dry port scheme and logistic services to encourage and improve goods handling
capacities and to provide economies of scale with handling and transit costs, infrastructure capital costs, and running expenses.

Mr. Chairman,

Ethiopia is one of the eight Landlocked developing countries in the process of accession to the WTO. At this juncture we would like to thank all member countries of the WTO who are supporting our accession process specially of our Landlocked members. We would like to recognize and thank the priority concern given by this conference on the issue of challenges faced by the countries in the process of accession specially of the challenges related to Landlockedness.

We also would like to recognize the recently approved recommendation to further strengthen, streamline and operationalise the 2002 LDC accession Guideline.

However Mr. Chairman, the challenges of accession specially demands for WTO plus commitments by member states above and beyond the individual level of development faced specially by Landlocked countries like Ethiopia is a real challenge that practically would affect their development endeavors to get out of poverty and meet the Millennium Development Program.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, I am confident that this Ministerial Meeting will send clear political message beyond mere declaration to all members of the WTO for the effective implementation of the recommendation to further strengthen, streamline and operationalise the 2002 LDC accession Guideline.
I thank you very much for your attention.