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*Department of Structural Economic
Transformation and Trade (SETT)*

OACPS Statement on uncertainty in multilateral trading system

The Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) expresses its deep concern at the recent disruptions in the multilateral trading system caused by unpredictability and uncertainty around the imposition of tariffs and the fear of an escalation of a tariff war. These measures are likely to have serious economic consequences for OACPS Members, which are composed of Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States, small vulnerable economies and Landlocked Developing Countries.

Over the past 30 years since the foundation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), WTO Members have worked together to promote transparency and an open multilateral trading system that has enabled decades of global growth and stability, allowed trade to flourish and lifted millions of people out of poverty. Unilateral tariff measures raise concerns about the erosion of predictability in global trade and business.

The OACPS reaffirms its support for a stronger rules-based multilateral trading system, which is a cornerstone of global growth and stability. A tariff war will undermine confidence in global business and have a disproportionate impact on OACPS members and other vulnerable economies, especially their micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMES), undermining development and economic gains and hampering efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this context, the OACPS calls on the global community to work together to uphold the core values of the multilateral trading system, including prioritising the resolution of all trade issues through constructive dialogue and negotiations within the existing WTO framework. It is vital that all WTO members seize the urgency of the moment and work together to protect the open, rules-based trading system at this critical time.

The OACPS remains ready to work with all partners to ensure that global trade is open, transparent, predictable and equitable for all.

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Brussels, 2 May 2025



All OACPS Embassies and Missions in Brussels