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LIECHTENSTEIN

Statement by H.E. Mr Hansjörg Frick
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Let me first express my gratitude to you and the Government of Qatar for hosting this Ministerial Conference and for the excellent organization of this important event. I would also like to thank the Chairman of the General Council and the Director-General for the preparatory work done in Geneva. Their tireless efforts over the past months laid the groundwork for a successful meeting here in Doha.

The draft Ministerial Declaration in front of us is the result of an open, inclusive and transparent process conducted in Geneva. In my view, it is a constructive middle ground text that reflects in a fair and well-judged manner the various opinions expressed in the preparatory process. The draft has the potential to form the basis for the necessary consensus agreement. We have undoubtedly come much closer to an agreement but we are not there yet. During our meeting some hard work remains to be done to eliminate the remaining differences and some difficult decisions remain to be taken. All participants will still have to show a great deal of flexibility.

The strategic objective of our meeting is to launch a new global round of multilateral trade negotiations. The Liechtenstein Government firmly stands behind this objective. It has always stressed the need for further strengthening the multilateral trading systems and progressive liberalization of trade to guarantee fair, sustainable and better market access. I am also of the opinion that a predictable and rules-based multilateral trading system is in the interest of all countries, especially small or developing countries. This is more true than ever. A new trade round would help to restore confidence in the world economy and in multilateral cooperation in general. The case that trade liberalization and the integration of economies have forcefully contributed to raised living standards around the world is well documented. Therefore, let us work hard towards possible consensus solutions and not lose sight of the fact that we are only talking about the launch of a new round of trade negotiations, not about its conclusion. In this sense our decisions here in Doha should not prejudice the results of the negotiations.

Liechtenstein favours a broad work programme and therefore welcomes the incorporation of both, an expanded negotiating agenda and other important decisions and activities necessary to address the challenges facing the multilateral trading system. A narrow programme would neither catch the interest of all parties in the negotiations nor would it provide the necessary political space to negotiate trade-offs. The work programme which we will hopefully be able to adopt here in Doha has to offer the necessary balance of benefits to all WTO Members.

In this respect I would like to express my satisfaction at the fact that development issues have been given a prominent place in our considerations and throughout the draft Ministerial Declaration, thus making sure that the interests and concerns of the developing countries are taken care of.

Before closing, I would like to emphasize once more that this meeting has to be a success. The alternative, a renewed failure to reach consensus on a work programme for multilateral trade liberalization negotiations, would be the wrong signal to the economic community and could have serious consequences for the world economy, for our organization and for the multilateral trading system. Let's keep this alternative in mind. Our objective must be the opposite, namely keep our system relevant to the realities and needs of this century's economy.
