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LITHUANIA

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Our negotiators left Geneva concerned about the divergences in our positions, however, being certain that we all share the same, uniform set of values which gathered us together in Bali, and that these values will be the basis to get the deal done here, this week.

We strongly believe that trade is a vehicle to bolster our economies, create jobs, increase competitiveness and gain prosperity. Trade is a core element in achieving development goals. This is why during these uncertain times we were fighting to keep protectionism at bay and our markets open.

Today we can do even more. We are extremely close to the deal which would bring enormous benefits to every member of this organization. Several pages of trade facilitation disciplines added to the WTO rulebook could stimulate world economy by billions of euros, especially if implemented by everyone. Streamlining customs procedures and cutting red tape would benefit all traders, in particular those from the poorest countries as well as small and medium enterprises, adding an extra impetus to the regional integration and easing access to the global value chains. Trade facilitation agreement is exactly what business around the globe is expecting from the World Trade Organization and it is important to get it right.

We have agreed to provide enormous comfort for developing and least-developed countries to implement trade facilitation commitments and all we have to do now is to conclude negotiations on very limited number of remaining open issues in Section I of the Agreement.

I trust we can deliver that. I do hope we will be able to bring back home this deal as a proof that the WTO is back to business. Getting this deal done will also mean that the multilateral trading system would be able to develop and improve further. We will have to look back at our negotiating agenda and evaluate the changes which occurred ever since the mandate was crafted. We will have to acknowledge the rise (of the new economic powers and seek for a way to reflect their growing responsibilities in the WTO rulebook. Their readiness to contribute to the welfare of all, especially the poorest WTO members, could bring the DDA agenda back to life and issues such as agriculture, market access and services back on the negotiating table. Development should remain among the top priorities of this organization. However it is important to acknowledge that the best instrument to promote development and growth is not exceptions from WTO disciplines and protectionism, but creation of open and predictable trade environment.

With our negotiating pillar functional again, new items will have to appear on our negotiating agenda, as well as new approaches to the negotiations. The needs of our business and the well-being of our citizens should guide us further in the post-Bali road.