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MEXICO

Statement by H.E. Mr Luis Ernesto Derbez Bautista
Secretary of Economy

International trade is one of the main catalysts for the global economy. It will play a key role in the rapid return to economic growth so it is important to pursue the process of trade liberalization within the World Trade Organization, ensuring that its benefits are enjoyed by all countries, all regions and all peoples. Enhancing integration among the world's nations, as promoted by the WTO, will also result in a more secure world for all.

The opening up of trade and Mexico's participation in the multilateral trading system have made an important contribution to growth in our exports. From 1986, the year in which Mexico acceded to the GATT, to 2000, Mexico's exports have increased sevenfold, rising from US\$22 billion to US\$170 billion. The trend in Mexico's exports is also the result of the 11 free trade agreements that give us privileged access to 32 countries. These agreements complement the multilateral liberalization agreements and are consistent with the rules of the WTO.

The growth in Mexico's economy in recent years would not have been possible without the increasingly important role played by exports in Mexico's gross domestic product, which now account for around 30 per cent of GDP. This has led to more and better jobs for Mexicans.

The commercial policy of President Fox's new Government gives priority to incorporating new production units in the export effort, small and medium enterprises and small field production units. The aim is to extend the benefits of trade to new actors and thus assist Mexico's economic development.

Likewise, the future of the WTO depends on incorporating developing countries in the multilateral trading system. In order to achieve this, the WTO's future agenda should pay sufficient attention to the interests of developing countries, facing up to protectionist pressure and refusing to go back on the opening that has been achieved so far.

Mexico reaffirms its commitment to greater liberalization of trade through the launching of a new round of multilateral negotiations. The new round's agenda should be sufficiently broad to cover the interests of all those participating. This is the only way in which equitable results that are beneficial to all the Members of the WTO can be achieved. The WTO's future agenda should promote greater market access and the strengthening of trade rules.

For Mexico, the most important issue is to regulate and reduce export subsidies and support that distort trade in agricultural products within the framework of the WTO. Such subsidies cause significant distortions in global markets and have a negative impact on developing countries. Mexico has therefore proposed in the WTO that the granting of market access concessions should depend on significant commitments on subsidies for agricultural products.

It is also important for Mexico that the outcome of the WTO's Fourth Ministerial Conference should be a strengthened multilateral trading system, not only as a negotiating mechanism to achieve greater market access but also as a forum that continues to defend the rules of international trade and to settle any disputes that arise. In particular, for Mexico it is essential that the new round should lead to a more rational Anti-Dumping Agreement that is less susceptible to abuse, for example, by incorporating economic competition criteria in the application of anti-dumping measures.

Other matters relating to trade rules concern the possible negotiation of investment and competition agreements, which would lead to enhanced flows of investment and fairer competition in international markets. In turn, this would allow countries to obtain more substantial resources to finance their development and counter the anti-competitive practices of third countries. Although the negotiation of disciplines in these sectors is desirable, the concerns of developing countries must be taken into account, including their capacity to negotiate and implement such agreements.

The multilateral trading system has played a vital role in the liberalization of global trade, economic growth and social well-being. Today, in a difficult global economic situation, we have a historic opportunity to give the process a new impetus. President Fox's Government is committed to this. We support the launching of a new round of negotiations as beneficial for all countries, regions and peoples.
