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I would like to start by thanking our hosts, Minister Derbez and the organizers of this Conference, for their hard work.

This Conference is scheduled to take key decisions about the future direction of the world trade round.

Nothing has changed in the two basic assumptions which resulted in our joint success in Doha nearly two years ago.

- The world economy needs a clear signal for growth and employment.
- International cooperation and economic development are the basic pillars of global security policy and conflict prevention.

I therefore call on all of the participants at this Conference to display the same desire for success here in Cancún.

In my view, there are three main priorities at this Conference.

- Substantial market opening is and remains the core of the multilateral trade round.

In order to be able to conclude the negotiations on industrial tariffs and agriculture within a foreseeable timespan, we will need to agree on sufficiently specific parameters in the coming days.

With their most recent proposals, the EU and the US have shouldered responsibility for this and provided a significant stimulus.

We accept our obligations deriving from the Doha Mandate, especially to cut export subsidies and to improve market access for agricultural products.

We are ready to agree on the framework for these issues here in Cancún. Concrete stipulations should be adopted in Spring 2004 at the latest.

- The time has come to take important decisions on the new issues.

After years of preparation, it is now time to move ahead and begin serious negotiations on the four Singapore issues.

Multilateral rules on investment, competition and transparency in government procurement show our desire to actively shape the process of globalization. These issues cannot be separated from trade.

The issue of trade facilitation demonstrates that there are many shared interests between industrial and developing countries.

Reformed, improved customs procedures benefit all sides: both the exporters as their exports are processed better, and the importers as they save money via efficient customs procedures. I stress that the developing countries and especially the land-locked countries will particularly benefit from this.

We should continue to make progress in the field of trade and environment.

We want to clarify the relationship between trade rules and international environmental standards in this Round. Progress should come in the form of decisions on observer status for multilateral environmental agreements and on labelling for environmental purposes.

- Not least, we need to live up to the intention of Doha to make these negotiations a development round.

Here, I would like to stress that we must chiefly do this by making progress on the core areas of agriculture and industrial tariffs.

Here in Cancún, we must continue to work on formalizing the compromise on TRIPS and public health - a compromise which is within reach.

I am confident that we will succeed.

And I am optimistic that we will achieve initial results on the reform of special standards for developing countries.

Last December's new guidelines on the accession of LDCs show that progress is possible on development issues.

The accession of Cambodia and Nepal, which we intend to implement in Cancún, demonstrates our willingness not only to talk about this, but to act.

Two years ago, we adopted the "Doha Development Agenda".

In view of a difficult economic environment and new challenges in the field of security policy, we need to demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to compromise in order to move this process forward. An early conclusion to the Round can benefit all the WTO Members; a failure will damage everyone - and especially the smaller trading partners.

Germany is ready to cooperate constructively and openly on the search for a compromise which points towards the future and contains something for all WTO Members.

Let us be bold enough to get things moving in the right direction here and now.
