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Statement by the Honourable Jesaya Nyamu Minister of Trade and Industry

May I take this opportunity to thank the people and the Government of Mexico for the excellent facilities that they have put at our disposal while conducting our business in the beautiful City of Cancún. It is our hope that the positive atmosphere will contribute and foster a positive outcome of our Conference deliberations. I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Chairman of the General Council and the Director-General for all the energy and efforts that they put into the processes in Geneva to ensure that the Draft Ministerial Text is availed to us for consideration and political guidance.

We do appreciate that this text by no means reflects consensus by the Membership but that it serves as a basis upon which we will construct an outcome which is balanced and takes account of the particular developmental and trade interests of our Membership. It is true that we believe in a rule-based multilateral trading system but it is equally true that the legitimacy of the multilateral trading system will be and should be measured by the degree to which it takes aboard and responds to the needs and interests of its entire Membership, in particular the weakest amongst us all. This is a solid test that we must pass with flying colours during this Ministerial Conference.

Behind "numbers", "constructs" and "formulae" we must see people first. Because the system is a "vehicle" through which our people's legitimate expectations, aspirations and interests should be serviced. Thus, our hope is that the process in Cancún will entirely be transparent and all-inclusive if a balanced and acceptable outcome for the Development Round that we launched in Doha two years ago is to become a reality. To this process we commit and pledge our unwavering support. We must at all cost discourage a situation whereby a select powerful few countries will dominate the process at the exclusion of the majority of our Members through the so-called "green" and perhaps "yellow" room consultations.

As one of the highly affected and afflicted country by the HIV/Aids pandemic we welcome the positive decision that we recently agreed to in Geneva that would allow for poor countries without the capacity to produce life-saving drugs to import them on an affordable basis. This is a positive step that I hope we will emulate during our deliberations on other issues while in Cancún, because practical challenges should always invite practical solutions.

May I also emphasize that during our deliberations here, we would not lose sight of the fact that development should be at the centre of this Round. This means that any political guidance we will provide towards addressing issues such as agriculture, which is the mainstay of most developing countries' economics and special and differential treatment for developing countries, should reflect the letter and spirit of paragraphs 13, 14 and 44 of our Doha Declaration.

We would therefore like to see a clear, specific and unambiguous framework on agriculture that is aimed at the removal of all trade distortions that unfairly and negatively impact on the ability of the least-developing countries in particular and of the developing countries in general, to trade competitively. The three pillars in agriculture must be addressed in a way that will take due account of the developmental imperatives, requirements and specificities of developing countries' economics. I would also like to underline the need to ensure that all the negotiating "baskets of issues" must have balance within them and across them. My delegation cannot envision a situation whereby the non-agricultural market access negotiations for instances can favourably be negotiated without balancing this set of negotiations against the negotiations in agricultural and special and differential treatment, just to mention but a few issues.

In our efforts to move the whole negotiating process forward we should recognize the need for flexibilities from all sides. This is important if the uneven trade playing field is to be rebalanced. It should then logically follow that greater efforts to introduce and imbibe flexibility in the negotiation process for the successful conclusion of the Round will need to greatly come from those who have benefited and continue to benefit most from the distortions caused by the current trade rules, which have in main contributed to the obtaining global skewed levels of development.

In as far as the Singapore Issues are concerned, my delegation is of the view that further clarification and study must be continued. This is taking into account the fact that we have not been able to garner "explicit consensus" to take up the issues as called for by the Declaration. May I also take this opportunity to extend a Namibian welcome to the Kingdoms of Cambodia and Nepal to the WTO.

In conclusion, I trust that we will display sufficient political will and maturity to move the negotiation process forward so as to allow for sufficient "economic space" to address the problems of poverty, and the need for economic security of our peoples and countries.
