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## CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by H.E. Mr Miroslav Somol  
Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade

First I wish to join the preceeding speakers and thank the Government and the people of Qatar for their hospitality and the excellent arrangements ensuring the necessary conditions for holding this important Ministerial Conference.

The Conference is taking place at the important crossroads of international relations. The world economic environment has become increasingly integrated. Globalization is a reality and the challenge we face "is to find not only a political dimension to globalization but also its human and moral dimension", as the Czech President Vaclav Havel has stressed in his public call for a new round of WTO trade negotiations.

We have gathered in Doha to get globalization right and ensure better integration of developing countries, and in particular least-developed ones among them, into the world economy. Despite unprecedented opportunities offered by new market openings, so many developing countries have not been able to reap full benefits of free and rules-based trade. This must be changed and we are here to bring about improvements to the trading system that are required to put all countries on the path of development and for better distribution of fruits of globalization.

The growing relevance of the multilateral trading system is being enhanced by the accession of two important Members, i.e. China and Chinese Taipei. The Czech Republic would like to seize this opportunity to welcome these two trading partners into the WTO family and is looking forward to working closely with them as with full Members. At the same time, we are confident that other countries seeking accession will follow soon.

A renewed urgency of this Conference has been sensed by 11 September. On that date, it was not only the United States that had been attacked by unprecedented act of terrorism and violence, but also the world of the trade and its values. The recent tragic events remind us of the importance of trade, which goes far beyond mere economic dealings. More than ever, trade is also about peace, freedom and settlement of problems. By giving a new impetus to multilateralism, we create the conditions for greater political stability worldwide.

The importance of making this meeting a success has also to be seen in the context of the present global economic situation. Most of the major trading partners are at the edge of the prospect of a slowdown. Under these circumstances, we have to send a sufficiently convincing message to businesses, which will testify to our determination to boost the world economy through a series of ambitious trade negotiations aimed at further opening of markets and strengthening and developing the rules and disciplines of the WTO.

Concerns of various sectors of civil society regarding proper functioning of the trading system represent yet another challenge we have to face. Increased responsiveness of the WTO to these concerns is necessary to gain public support for new agenda. It is our responsibility to explain to respective constituencies the benefits of open trade, costs of protectionism and contribution of the WTO to growth, job creation and freedom of choice. By concrete actions in Doha we can put beyond all misconceptions that the WTO is a club of rich nations.

The best way to address all the challenges and opportunities I just referred to and others in a bold and credible manner is a comprehensive and time-bound Round of trade negotiations of a single undertaking type, the launch of which belongs to the Czech Republic's highest priorities. A Round is necessary to embrace various concerns, to preserve the WTO relevance to the rapidly changing economic environment, to allow for necessary trade-offs among various sectors and issues and to ensure greater coherence in managing interdependence and global policy-making. It is also needed to deal with those implementation problems that require changes in the existing legal texts and thus an appropriate negotiating forum.

The groundwork for a successful launch of a Round has been done by our Geneva-based Ambassadors under the leadership of the Chairman of the General Council Mr. Stuart Harbinson who has been cooperating with the Director-General Mr Mike Moore. Although some issues remain to be settled in a revised draft Ministerial Declaration we have reached a stage where we can achieve a generally acceptable approach towards a new Round. As President Havel has said, "we all need a Round in which every participant gains something for himself and at the same time shows understanding for the interest and concerns of others."

The text in front of us has the aspiration to be up to the requirements for such a balanced approach. There are some divergencies of views on a number of topics. No doubt each of us has its own agenda, its own priorities, interests and concerns. At the same time, however, we all have to cope with common problems that require common solutions. Therefore, we should be able to move from our individual list to a commonly shared list. And it is in this positive spirit in which I would like to comment briefly on a few issues which, according to our view, require further substantive work in the days ahead of us.

In the area of agriculture, we believe that the text has to be tuned to strike a better balance between trade and non-trade concerns. In this respect, let me just mention the role of farming in taking care of environment in terms of conservation of biological diversity, maintenance of landscapes and prevention of natural resources. We are also concerned at the way in which the objectives of further reductions in support and protection have been reflected.

Our disappointment has been particularly acute with the level of ambition that has so far been achieved in the areas of investment and competition.

Similarly, we must express our deep concern over the lack of progress on an upfront commitment to carry out negotiations to clarify the interface between trade and environment. In the pursuit of this goal, we are ready to provide all necessary guarantees to ensure that the environment in the WTO does not stand in the way of development.

Concurrently, the text dealing with labour standards falls also short of our expectations and should, therefore, be changed to promote the objectives of deepening international dialogue on social dimension of globalization and to positively assess what has been done in the ILO.

In the field of Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, I wish to restate that we in the Czech Republic are not insensitive to sentiments of serious concerns of developing countries regarding their rights to pursue legitimate goals to protect public health. As to the issue related to the

extension of the protection of geographical indications to products other than wines and spirits, I have to repeat that for us the only way to proceed is the negotiating option with a clear time-frame.

Turning now to implementation issues, I should like to reaffirm the importance my country is attaching to problems encountered by developing countries in efforts to comply with their Uruguay Round commitments and participate more fully in the multilateral trading system.

On our part, the Czech Republic has continued to provide improved access for imports coming from developing countries. Products from all least-developed countries enjoy duty and quota free access. I am pleased to announce that the Czech authorities have recently decided to promote the least-developed countries' integration into the trading system also through financial assistance to enable representatives of these countries to take part in ministerial deliberations.

To conclude, let me refer again to the reflection of President Havel according to whom we live in a remarkable age when even responsibility of representatives of sovereign States is being globalized. Mr Havel has called to "grasp this joint responsibility for a better future for coming generations and to contribute, throughout a new Round of trade talks, to the search for global solutions to the global problems of today's world."

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