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POLAND

Statement by H.E. Mr Janusz Kaczurba
Under-Secretary of State
Ministry of Economy

The delegation of Poland wishes to extend its deepest gratitude to the Emir, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and to the people of Qatar for the generous hospitality in hosting this Conference.

Poland, a founding and active Member of the World Trade Organization, fully supports further liberalization and strengthening of the multilateral trading system through the commencement of a new round.

We are of the opinion that a successful conclusion of the Ministerial Conference at Doha is particularly needed at the present time in order to alleviate recessionary trends and enhance global political confidence.

For my country, an open and WTO-based trade regime has been in recent years an essential engine of growth. It provided also major systemic support for economic and structural policies.

True, such wide exposure to external competition may cause, as it did, economic dislocations and difficulties experienced by many local businesses. However, for as long as such competition respects multilaterally agreed rules, we recognize its intrinsic value for greater efficiency of the national economy as a whole.

External trade and investment have played a major role in making Poland better prepared for the advanced stage of negotiations for accession to the European Union, which will hopefully coincide with WTO negotiations.

The membership in the European Communities will undoubtedly encourage our further economic and trade interaction with WTO partners.

Poland supports discussion on development aspects of world trade including in particular the difficult situation of the least-developed countries, which must be properly addressed within the framework of a comprehensive round.

We are aware that there is a basis for frustration of a large number of WTO Members over the implementation of the Marrakesh commitments. Such frustrations, however, shall not be properly alleviated through reluctance or outright opposition to new trade initiatives, but rather through a dialogue and compromise implied in the initiative of the next negotiating exercise and in the action plan proposed by Council Chairman and Director-General.

Further liberalization of agricultural trade has to take into consideration various non-trade concerns mentioned in official positions taken by many WTO Members. Consequently we would expect that the final negotiating mandate will be balanced so as to take both trade and non-trade aspects on board.

Poland supports further liberalization of trade in services constituting the most dynamic part of the world economy. It is important to continue the work on uniformization and better transparency of the system of concessions of WTO Members under GATS.

We support actions aimed at facilitation of access of developing and the least-developed countries to pharmaceuticals for treatment of HIV/AIDS and other pandemic diseases.

Provisions of the TRIPS Agreement contain flexibilities which could facilitate reaching this objective. However, it is also necessary to safeguard fundamental principles of patent protection in order to maintain the necessary incentives for further research activities related to pharmaceuticals.

Poland supports negotiations on a multilateral agreement on transparency in public procurement. We intend to undertake preparations for accession of Poland to the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement next year.

Poland supports the idea to clarify and improve the WTO Agreements. This will permit a better functioning of procedures and improve their transparency.

My delegation supports clarification of procedures concerning implementation of DSB decisions and speaks out in favour of removing inconsistencies between Articles 21 and 22 of the Understanding.

In our opinion, trade and environmental policies should be mutually supportive in achieving sustainable and balanced development. This objective would be well served by a better clarification of interrelationships between trading principles of the WTO and trade policy provisions contained in multilateral agreements on environment. However, we are against using environmental regulations for trade protectionism.

In the possible future negotiations on trade aspects of international investment we shall support initiatives aimed at working out a WTO agreement in this field. Poland will opt for a narrow definition of investments, which would not cover portfolio investments and investments in the sphere of intellectual property rights. We shall be against provisions which might encourage monopolistic position, tax evasion or competition distorting practices by investors in the host markets.

We are in favour of elaborating a uniform legal framework for protecting competition. WTO will be the best forum for commencing negotiations in this sphere.

A future global agreement regulating competition principles should be based on adherence to rules of transparency, non-discrimination and national treatment.

Poland welcomes continuous enlargement of the WTO as a testimony to the vitality of multilateral trading system. The accession of the People's Republic of China yesterday has been a spectacularly momentous step. We shall be pleased to welcome the Russian Federation, Ukraine and other candidates as soon as they complete their accession negotiations. We hope that this will happen before long.
