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BURUNDI

Statement by H.E. Mr. Adolphe Nahayo
Ambassador, Permanent Representative in Geneva

The delegation of Burundi associates itself with previous delegations in thanking the authorities of Qatar for hosting the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the WTO. Thanks are also due to the WTO Secretariat, in the person of the Director-General, Mike Moore, his colleagues and his staff, for their contribution to the organization and conduct of the Conference. We wish also to express our support for the Director-General's efforts to promote the integrated framework and the reform of technical cooperation in the WTO.

The delegation of Burundi would now like to present to the Conference the compliments and apologies of the new Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Charles Karikurubu, who was unable to join us because of his heavy schedule of work. He has asked me to transmit his best wishes for the success of the Conference. Indeed, the transitional Government formed on the basis of the Peace and National Reconciliation Agreement signed at Arusha, Tanzania, under the auspices of the Facilitator, Nelson Mandela, was established on 30 October last. The other institutions will follow by the end of this month and we take advantage of this meeting to request the international community to support the peace process in Burundi, because peace is necessary to trade.

Before I continue I must congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on being elected to direct the work of the Fourth Ministerial Conference.

Taking the floor after the accession of the People's Republic of China to the WTO, as well as that of the territory of Chinese Taipei, allow me to address my warm congratulations to our Chinese friends. We particularly welcome the accession of the People's Republic of China because it will contribute to the equitable balance of the institution.

Returning to the Ministerial Conference, the Burundi delegation appreciates the inclusive approach adopted by the Chairman of the Conference in the consultations and the negotiations on a number of issues, in order to harmonize positions and thus ultimately produce a Ministerial Declaration and a work programme which take account of the interests of all WTO Members.

However, the Burundi delegation is concerned by the fact that the agenda which has been the subject of consultations or negotiations has not explicitly taken into account the proposals of most of the developing countries, a group to which Burundi belongs.

In terms of form and procedure, it is surprising that the position of the trade ministers of the least-developed countries, adopted in July 2001 in Zanzibar, that of the African trade ministers, adopted in Abuja, Nigeria, in September of this year, and that of the ACP trade ministers meeting in Brussels on 5 and 6 August of this month, have not been taken into consideration. The content of the various declarations was transmitted to Geneva by the delegations concerned, as well as by the Group

of 77 and China, and by the supporters of the Development Agenda. Unfortunately, it has to be noted that the proposed draft texts do not reflect the concerns of the above-mentioned conferences.

This approach is reflected substantively in the indifference or confusion informing the Draft Declaration and draft work programme in relation to issues of particular interest to the developing countries, such as the need to simplify the procedures and regulations governing market access, special and differential treatment, technical assistance, technology transfer and the strengthening of capacities, as well as implementation issues.

The long period of silence during the consultations on the WTO waiver for the Cotonou Agreement, the fleeting reference to the importance of non-trade concerns in the paragraphs relating to agriculture, the silence on the request by the Director-General of the WTO to increase the regular budget for technical assistance, all illustrate the lack of willingness to integrate uncompetitive economies into the multilateral trading system.

Burundi properly appreciates the benefits of multilateral trade and wishes to see them extended to all WTO Members.

It is our hope that the negotiations under way will serve to iron out the differences between delegations, in the interests of each WTO Member, in order to make this Conference a success.
