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PERU

Statement by H.E. Mr Jorge Voto-Bernales Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the WTO

I thank the Government of Qatar for its generous hospitality as it plays host to this important meeting and I congratulate it on the excellent organizational arrangements.

We welcome with satisfaction the entry of the People's Republic of China to the WTO, certain that its presence, supported by many years of successful reforms and economic growth, will strengthen the Organization and open up new and promising opportunities for all Members.

We also welcome the economy of Chinese Taipei, which brings its industrial strength, innovative capacity and commercial dynamism.

Peru has come to the WTO Ministerial Conference convinced of the need to send a powerful signal from Doha designed to strengthen the multilateral trading system. We recognize and can attest from our own experience that international trade has been the most important vehicle of growth and world economic integration for many decades, though at the same time we observe that its benefits are still proving elusive to vast swathes of the developing world. The international economic situation calls for a special effort to make this multilateral system more inclusive and participatory.

Developing countries need rapid quantitative and qualitative advances in order to improve their development opportunities and thus diminish the major economic concerns, both internationally and within our countries. Trade can and must play a central role in this endeavour.

For Peru, agriculture is a key source of work and a means of integration into society. As a net food-importing country, Peru advocates the adoption of a special regime for developing countries that takes account of poverty levels, rural development needs and food security in particular. Furthermore, to encourage and realize its export potential, Peru deems it a matter of priority and urgency for developed countries substantially to reduce their domestic support to agriculture and move towards eliminating all forms of agricultural export subsidies, as these distort trade and discourage production in developing countries.

These measures must go hand in hand with improved and unrestricted access to the markets of developed countries through the dismantling of quotas and the reduction of tariff peaks and tariff escalation. These factors are hampering the introduction and use of technologies and production processes that would make it possible to give added value to resources of developing countries.

Fisheries is one of Peru's major production and export activities and we have an interest in further developing fisheries exports on a sustainable basis. We propose the elimination of subsidies accorded by other countries to their fishing industries as they distort trade and lead to overcapacity in their fleets and to overfishing.

Peru wishes to underline that it belongs to the Andean Community, an integration scheme that has also created new scope for cooperation and broader understanding amongst its five member countries.

The WTO's new negotiating agenda must offer ambitious prospects for stimulating development. The developing countries are not at the same starting-point as the developed ones, and those differences must be taken into account. There are huge disparities in the conditions of competition that work to the detriment of developing countries. These are obvious not just from macroeconomic indicators alone, per capita income for instance. Amongst other areas, we face disadvantages in basic services infrastructure, institutional and business management capacities, the level of skills of human resources, technologies, transportation and in access to and terms and conditions of funding for production activities. This is why special and differential treatment for developing countries must be a central component of all agreements and disciplines, with the establishment of more favourable terms and conditions, as well as intensified technical cooperation programmes.

We welcome the recent opening of the Advisory Centre of WTO Law, which is an invaluable means of support to developing countries in their trade disputes in the WTO framework. We value highly the determination and perseverance of its promoters as well as the decisive cooperation of some developed countries that have made this possible.

This Conference is taking place in an international setting in which the world is faced with the greatest of challenges, ranging from the sweeping changes being introduced by the new technologies in communications, methods of production, trade and financial flows amongst many other aspects of human interaction and activity.

We are witnessing an international crisis amidst an economic recession the scale and duration of which we do not yet know. At the same time, however, we have the best mechanisms and tools for successfully dealing with this situation and moving the world again towards recovery and stability. This situation is an opportunity for reflection in order to better understand that just as the world stands as one in times of crisis, it must also be equally unified when it comes to distributing the fruits of progress.

We must not disappoint ourselves at this WTO Conference. The multilateral trading system is the most efficient vehicle for joining in world competition and a proven driver of development. It must be effectively placed at the service of social progress and the welfare of peoples, which after all are the aims of expanded trade. The launch of the development round will depend on the political vision and will be needed if we are to strike out successfully along the right path.
