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FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Statement Circulated by H.E. Mr Besnik Fetaj
Minister of Economy

(As an Observer)

Revision

First of all allow me to express my regrets for not being able to personally participate and address this significant event for the world economy. The significance is even bigger considering the current situation of political and economic turbulence as a result of the events of September 11, with all the negative repercussions. Therefore, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and on my personal behalf I would like to extend my gratitude to the representatives of Qatar and especially to the city of Doha for the organization of the 4th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization. The role of the organizer of such an important meeting in these times is an affirmation of the role of a stable and secure partner that Qatar enjoys within the international community.

I believe that we all agree on the need for this kind of conference where all positions in regard to areas concerning directly the WTO Member countries would be discussed. However, it is unrealistic to expect an easy reaching consensus considering the different interests as a result of the objective differences in the level of social and economic development of Member countries. In order to bridge this gap, first of all we should agree that the structure of the issues within the round must express the willingness of understanding for the needs of the others. Such an approach reflecting the interests of all participants, would simplify the contentious question NEW ROUND, YES or NO, converting it to the conclusion that EVERYTHING IS A SUCCESS WHEN ALL AGREE. The need to find a common language and understanding for all problematic issues has no alternative. This was reaffirmed by the experience from the last Ministerial Conference two years ago.

In the course of the last decade the Republic of Macedonia was exposed to very negative political and economic influences as a result of a series of military conflicts throughout major part of its traditional markets. The blockades and embargoes that were imposed, additionally burdened the measures necessary to keep up with modern economic trends.

Despite these extremely unfavourable circumstances, the Republic of Macedonia did not hesitate in achieving its goals. The prime objective was and remained the development of an open, fair and transparent trade system as a basis for creation of a global economic environment that guarantees a sustainable economic and social development.

Legislative innovations in the domestic regulation modernized and accelerated the trade relations. The majority of the free trade agreements, the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU and the efforts of the Government for the integration of the Republic of Macedonia in WTO, as priority, reject all possible allegations in the opposite direction.

We all agree that achieving an objective such as accession to the WTO is not an easy task. For that purpose the need of international support for my country in these crucial moments I find more than necessary. So far the understanding shown by all Member countries of this Organization for the circumstances in which the Republic of Macedonia was and is still moving toward its full fledged membership in the WTO gave a very strong impulse to the continuation and realization of this process. I believe that already at the next 5th Ministerial Conference, the Republic of Macedonia will be able in the capacity of an active partner to give its full contribution to the realization of the WTO objectives.

At the end of my address I would like to thank the General Director, Mr Mike Moore, the Chairman of the General Council, Ambassador Harbinson, the WTO Secretariat and all others involved for their utmost efforts in the successful organization of this Ministerial Conference.
