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YEMEN

Statement Circulated by H.E. Mr Abdulrahman Mohamed Ali Othman
Minister of Industry and Trade

(As an Observer)

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Yemen, I would like to extend my congratulations to the Chairman and the Executive Bureau of the WTO's Fourth Ministerial Conference for their election to lead this important Conference, wishing them all success. I also would like to congratulate the Director-General, his colleagues at the WTO Secretariat, and the Organizing Committee for the precision preparation and continuous communication with participants to hold this Conference on its predetermined date.

We would like to extend our thanks and congratulations to our Qatari brethren for hosting this Conference and for the opportunities, means, and facilities provided, in order to make this Conference possible.

Needless to emphasize that the significance of this Conference is implied - in the first degree - through convergence and consensus on trade issues among different Members. We hope that this Conference will pay due attention to the issue of development, so as to achieve equitable distribution of benefits of the new multilateral trading system for all peoples of the world, based on the principles of balance and justice. This Conference is a suitable forum for profound discussions of the current situation as well as the future expectations of the WTO's works to strengthen the trading system and cooperation on different levels.

The aforementioned are the main principles constituting Yemen's vision of the role of the WTO and its Ministerial Conference, in the context of the general view of cooperation between all countries. In fact, our vision is consistent with the strategic principles of the Economic, Financial, and Administrative Reform Programme adopted by the Republic of Yemen.

In the course of Yemen's reform programme, a number of trade-related reforms were adopted. Customs tariffs and procedures have been streamlined, and legislative and institutional reforms were established. Despite the difficulties we faced in this regard, the reform process is continuous.

We do anticipate that Yemen's accession to the WTO would enable its appropriate integration into the world economy. Therefore, after almost six years of difficult reforms, with international institutions' cooperation, Yemen applied for full membership of the WTO, where its official application was accepted on 17 July 2000. Currently, Yemen enjoys the status of an observer to the WTO, and we are in the process of completing Yemen's MFTR, in order to commence our negotiations to accede to the WTO.

Yemen, as other LDCs, hopes for the establishment of truly clear, simplified and fast track procedures for accession of LDCs, by this Fourth Conference. Accession has become a major issue pertaining to the universality of the WTO and the representation of all countries. We wish that this Conference would come up with proper solutions and remedies to overcome the difficulties confronting the accession process.

We believe that the Fourth Ministerial will actually provide a great opportunity for the realization of the aforementioned objective. We therefore, affirm the adoption, by this esteemed Conference, of the full text of Zanzibar proposal on accession, which was issued at the LDCs Trade Ministers' Meeting in July 2001. No less than a Ministerial Decision would really translate such proposals into practical results.

Finally, I would like to indicate my country's welcome to the conclusion of the People's Republic of China's accession process, and its full participation in the MTS. We are looking forward to the immediate and smooth conclusion of similar accession processes, particularly the LDCs including Yemen, and the four Arab Countries, i.e. Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Lebanon, and Algeria.
