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## URUGUAY

Statement by H.E. Mr Gonzalo Enrique Gonzalez Fernandez  
Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries

The growth and development of a small country like Uruguay is intimately linked to the expansion, diversification and modernization of its exports. We are convinced that the adoption, at this Ministerial Conference in Doha, of a work programme that will promote and accelerate the process of liberalization and reform of international trade, particularly in sectors of interest to developing countries, can be an adequate response and contribute in a significant manner to the recovery of the world economy currently threatened by recession and protectionist trends. Such an outcome will also favour growth, development, employment and poverty alleviation. Therefore my country has come to this meeting with a constructive spirit and with the firm intention to contribute to its success.

The World Trade Organization, created as a result of the Uruguay Round, with the principles of most-favoured-nation, non-discrimination and national treatment as its core pillars, embodies the system of multilateral rules and disciplines that protects the weakest Members and prevents the imposition of restrictive or unilateral measures by the strongest Members. This is why we support and defend it. Nevertheless, not all countries, especially developing countries, have benefited from the increase in opportunities and welfare improvements that the multilateral trading system offers. Sectors of vital importance to our economies, such as agriculture and textiles, have been discriminated and relegated during previous rounds. We have also seen asymmetries and imbalances that have been very unfavourable to our interests during the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements and the development dimension, so forcefully promoted by developed countries, has been absent or at best marginally present in the trade agreements. The time has come to correct these severe deficiencies and limitations; it is time to put the needs and interests of developing countries at the core of our work and to allow them to improve significantly their effective participation in the multilateral trading system. The strength and credibility of the WTO depend, to a great degree, on the attainment of these objectives.

My country favours the launching of a new round of multilateral trade negotiations in Doha with a scope and coverage that is broader than the mandated negotiations agreed in the Marrakesh agreements. We believe it is the best way to achieve ambitious results on all fronts that will satisfy the interests of all. And this is particularly relevant at a time when the international community is seeking to tackle in a constructive manner the grave challenges it faces since the tragic events of 11 September.

The main objective for Uruguay is to achieve the final and definitive integration of agriculture into the rules and disciplines of the WTO. This implies a programme of fundamental reform in agriculture that will include strengthened rules and specific commitments on the three pillars that are to be negotiated: market access, domestic support and export competition. To do so it is indispensable that the mandate we are to agree reflects with precision the ambition that the future

negotiations will aim for. Though we recognize that the text submitted by the Chairman of the General Council provides some guidance on the negotiating process that go in the good direction, these are notoriously insufficient and lacking in ambition. To take just one example, reductions in all forms of export subsidies with the aim of phasing them out, does not adequately reflect the position of the great majority of WTO Members who wish their elimination in the shortest term. We shall have to improve this text during these days of negotiation.

I wish to highlight the flexibility displayed by my country during the preparatory process in addressing the objectives and needs of other Members. We modestly believe that the contribution we promoted together with another six countries in the area of implementation which is an issue of fundamental importance to many developing countries, was very useful and helped to unblock a conflictive situation that had been dragging on for several years. We have also shown flexibility towards the incorporation of a number of issues supported by developed countries such as: trade and investment, trade and competition, transparency in government procurement, trade facilitation, electronic commerce and WTO rules, among others.

We reaffirm that we can be flexible on those issues that aim at greater market liberalization and where the WTO is clearly competent. At the same time, we must make it clear that we take a far more prudent approach to those proposals the goal of which is to provide greater discretion in restricting trade unilaterally and without an appropriate objective reason, or to those issues where the role of the WTO is at least questionable.

This Ministerial Conference must produce the text for a Declaration that each delegation can evaluate as a whole in order to decide if the balance between what it obtains in terms of its own interests and what it concedes in terms of the interests of others is appropriate to join in a consensus. This is the only way we can succeed. Thus the essence is to seek for an overall balance and not a balance within each issue. This is my main message.

I cannot conclude without thanking very sincerely the authorities of Qatar and the WTO Secretariat for the excellent organization and the warm and generous hospitality we have been offered.

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