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Statement by H.E. Mrs Aichatou Agne Pouye
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First of all I should like, on behalf of His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, the Senegalese Government, my delegation, and on my own behalf, to express our sincere thanks for the warm welcome we have received since our arrival in the beautiful city of Doha.

It is a great cause of satisfaction for us Senegalese that the present meeting of the World Trade Organization is being held in Qatar, a country that is a friend and, like Senegal, belongs to the Islamic Umma, and with which we have had relations of cooperation to promote trade, particularly between the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

The beginning of this millennium is still marked by violence and terror, as we can see from the tragic events in the United States on 11 September 2001, which will unquestionably have an adverse impact on world trade.

This is the place for me to express my firm belief that peace is a requirement for development. At the same time, I should like to welcome the recent initiative taken by the President of the Republic of Senegal, His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade, to hold a meeting in Dakar of his African peers to conclude the African Pact against Terrorism, which is designed to combat all forms of violence and to ensure that the continent develops in peace and harmony.

The Fourth Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference being held now at the beginning of the new millennium should, in our opinion, be the symbol of a new era in international trade relations, one marked by an end to the marginalization of the international community's weakest links in world trade.

Despite immense efforts at environmental rehabilitation undertaken in many countries, Africa is still on the fringe of international trade, for its share of international trade has now fallen from 3.1 per cent in 1990 to 2 per cent at the present time.

Generally speaking, the developing countries' share in world trade has tended to decline since 1998. Yet, by ratifying the Marrakesh Agreement in 1995, our country has sought to affirm its faith in the multilateral trading system as a factor for growth and stability.

However, although the WTO has functioned for seven years, we are compelled to note that the gains have been markedly less than our expectations.

The developing countries in general, particularly the LDCs, have borne the heavy burden of implementation of the WTO Agreements, which, in fact, has led to an increase in their imports, while

their exports have run into a number of obstacles (tariff peaks, tariff escalation, technical standards, and so on).

I would also point out that, since March 2001, Senegal has now been placed in the LDC category by the United Nations.

Again, the implementation of some WTO Agreements still poses many difficulties for our countries. They should be examined in order to limit the distortions and asymmetries.

From this standpoint, it seems to us an urgent matter to take account of our priorities which, without being exhaustive, involve the following issues:

- Immediate discussion of implementation-related concerns; and
- better market access.

On this major question, we welcome the European Union's "Everything But Arms" initiative for the LDCs and also the AGOA that the United States of America has recently enacted for the countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

In this connection, we would like to see increased opportunities for access to the markets of our major partners, for both goods and services, particularly by easing rules of origin.

More especially, we emphasize the elimination of export subsidies and export credits on products from developed countries that signify unfair competition on our own markets for agricultural and/or industrial production.

With reference to the Customs Valuation Agreement, we would like to see the opportunity to apply minimum values to a number of exhaustively listed products of strategic importance to our economies, as advocated by the member countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU).

Similarly, our country should be granted special and differential treatment in the agricultural sector in order to meet food security needs. In this respect, it is high time for the Marrakesh Decision on Net Food-Importing Developing Countries to be made operational.

With regard to trade in services, there is a great need for the liberalization of market access for sectors and modes of supply of interest to our countries, such as tourism and related services, health and related services, professional services, construction and public works.

So far as intellectual property rights are concerned, we endorse the draft Ministerial Decision whereby Members will take appropriate measures to facilitate low-cost access by our populations to essential medicines.

In the field of technical cooperation and capacity building, my delegation welcomes the Programme of the Integrated Framework to establish a capacity-building model that is consistent with and fully integrated in the strategy to combat the poverty of the LDCs. Expanding it to a larger number of countries and implementing it immediately are, at the present time, a basic priority.

Furthermore, we emphasize the need for better functioning of WTO technical assistance, with a marked increase in the regular budget to fund it.

Moreover, it is gratifying to emphasize that some of our countries have embarked on the work of regional and sub-regional construction.

In this context, Senegal supports the development of integration organizations that constitute an essential link in the chain that can foster entrepreneurship and individual ability.

Since achieving these organizations' activities helps to consolidate the multilateral trading system, it is desirable for the WTO to extend to them the attention it pays to the constituent States.

At this stage, it is important to urge the international community to pay all the requisite attention to the LDCs, for 34 out of the 49 are African.

They should be accorded the treatment that is in keeping with their situation, by endeavouring to open up the way for them to genuine and positive change.

We cannot fail to conclude this statement without mentioning the question of debt, which on average, accounts for four to five times the value of the export earnings of some of our countries.

If the liberalization of trade and the strengthening of the multilateral framework are to contribute to better incorporation of developing countries in the world economy, trade and development should therefore be released from the debt burden.

Moreover, it is in this context that the New Partnership for Africa's Development was recently adopted in Abuja (Nigeria) by our Heads of State as an alternative to the development policies hitherto advocated for our continent.

I should like finally, and once again, to emphasize the need to take full account of the concerns of the public in our countries; already affected by the consequences of the Uruguay Round Agreement, they follow with apprehension the developments in the multilateral trade negotiations.

Only in this way will we manage to arrive at a better image for the WTO with our populations and institute a fruitful dialogue between our Organization and civil society.
