

# WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(01)/ST/78/Rev.1  
12 November 2001

(01-5728)

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**MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**  
**Fourth Session**  
**Doha, 9 - 13 November 2001**

Original: English

## FINLAND

Statement by H.E. Mr Kimmo K.I. Sasi  
Minister for Foreign Trade

### Revision

Let me begin by thanking His Highness the Emir Hamad Al Khalifa Al Thani for the excellent arrangements, as well as Director-General Mike Moore and his staff for the preparative work.

Economic slowdown and a need to work for enhanced security around the world set requirements for this meeting. Positive trade prospects reinforce confidence in the economy. Trade negotiations offer an opportunity to avoid a vicious circle of protectionism, negotiate necessary changes to the rules to update them and resist the marginalization of the developing countries. We should seize this opportunity.

We need commonly agreed rules for the management of globalization. The WTO provides the forum to negotiate and agree these rules. A vibrant multilateral trading system reinforces the very basis of global economic security.

Alternative to mutually agreed rules and principles would be the rule of the strongest. If we were not able to agree to launch a new round the world does not stop there, but changes are needed and they would take place outside WTO. This would most probably lead to the strengthening of regional trading arrangements. But these can only complement, but never replace the multilateral trading system.

The launching of negotiations would not only send a positive signal to the markets but also potentially provide significant economic benefits for most participants. Agreement in Doha would send a strong signal to the upcoming meetings in Monterrey and Johannesburg and hence improve possibilities to achieve a positive outcome. Therefore active, positive and equal participation of developing countries for the success of the whole process is of utmost importance.

I firmly believe that it is possible to reach an outcome in Doha that is both acceptable, and at the same time benefits all Members.

I would at the outset like to thank Ambassador Harbinson and Director-General Moore of their hard work. The outline for the Ministerial Declaration and the Decision on Implementation offer a good basis for the compromise and final outcome of the Conference. In my view the Declaration covers most of the essential elements in a balanced manner. While it is not an ideal outcome for any one single delegation, it nevertheless, together with the Decision on Implementation, provides an agenda that is broad enough to accommodate various interests and possible trade-offs, in Doha and afterwards. This is exactly what a good compromise should be. The Doha Ministerial is about the launching of the negotiations, not about negotiating the outcome.

Improving market access both in industrial goods and services is important. If we were to agree to reduce also tariff peaks and tariff escalation, this would benefit not only developed countries but especially developing countries. However, it is essential at the same time to keep the trading system abreast with new developments.

On the important issue of agriculture, we need a work programme acceptable to all participants.

The objective of sustainable development is incorporated in the WTO Agreements and the Committee on Trade and Environment was established already in Marrakesh to study related issues. However, I feel that we would gain in seeking greater clarity and a common perception on how environmental considerations should be taken into account in the WTO. A well-functioning multilateral trading system relies on wide public support and so a better understanding on environmental issues – like how environmental agreements and multilateral trade rules interact and rules on labelling – should enhance confidence towards the WTO. Greater clarity, based on a common agreement would also alleviate the risk of overloading the dispute settlement system. Let us also remember that sustainable development will not be possible without social justice, and respect for human rights.

Improvement of basic health care systems and access to affordable medicines in developing countries are key elements in the fight against the public health crisis. In conjunction, and to complement the above-mentioned objectives, we should be ready to implement the TRIPS Agreement in a manner that supports the eradication of the diseases. At the same time we should bear in mind the importance of the protection that the TRIPS Agreement provides for the innovative work and development of new medicines.

It is important that the needs of the developing countries are duly reflected in the negotiations.

I believe that while economic turmoil has decreased private investments in developing countries, commonly agreed basic rules on trade and investment should enhance investors' confidence and hence potentially contribute to increased investments to developing countries. Basic rules on trade and competition would in turn complement investment principles, like rules aimed at facilitating trade would contribute to greater transparency, clarity and efficiency at the borders.

Capital investments should be complemented by investments to human resources. Institution-building and human resources development should be key elements in the technical assistance schemes and financing while reinforcing developing countries' capacity building. However, we should be ready to use trade policy instruments in parallel to increase developing countries' market access opportunities in the products of export interest to them.

Today, the information society is a major engine of economic growth and job creation. In the WTO, Finland would like to boost the liberalization of information technology products and continue to develop a conducive environment for electronic commerce, moratorium on new custom duties on electronic transmissions included. Information society has a great potential to increase economic well-being of both developed and developing countries.

In the end better functioning institutions are not enough to make the relationship flourish. In the WTO we should do our utmost to enhance exchange, transparency, true dialogue and understanding. Liberalization should not be seen as a zero-sum game. In most instances all parties are to gain.

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