

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(01)/ST/94
11 November 2001

(01-5680)

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
Fourth Session
Doha, 9 - 13 November 2001

Original: French

BURKINA FASO

Statement by H.E. Mr Bédouma Alain Yoda
Minister of Trade, Business Promotion and Handicrafts

1. On behalf of the Government of Burkina Faso and my delegation, I should like to thank His Highness the Emir of Qatar and his Government for hosting this Ministerial Conference in the beautiful city of Doha. I wish to express my gratitude for your hospitality, which has been greatly appreciated by my delegation.
2. Mr Chairman, on behalf of the Government of Burkina Faso and in my own name, I should like to extend to you my congratulations on your appointment and wish the Conference every success in its work. I also offer my congratulations to the bureau.
3. Allow me also to convey my sincerest thanks to Director-General, Mr Mike Moore, and his team of collaborators from the Secretariat for the great efforts they have put into organizing our Conference.
4. This, the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference, is being held six months after the Third United Nations Conference on Least-Developed Countries (LDCs), which took place in Brussels earlier this year. May I remind you that Burkina Faso is one of the least-developed countries and that it keeps a very close eye on measures advocated in their favour. If we take a look at the statements from the Ministerial Conferences of Singapore (1996) and Geneva (1998), as well as at those of the above-mentioned UN Conference in Brussels in May 2001, the LDC Trade Ministers' Meeting in Zanzibar in July 2001 and the OAU/AEC Conference of Ministers of Trade in Abuja in September 2001, we see that policies and measures related to the integration of least-developed countries into the multilateral trading system are still matters of current concern. The multilateral trading system still faces daunting challenges. These include the effective integration and participation of small, weak and, at times, vulnerable economies in such a way as to maximize the development dividend and potential benefits to be gained from the WTO Agreements.
5. As for my country, Burkina Faso, multilateral trading system should work towards providing meaningful access to markets for products of export interest to our countries. It should also ensure that the benefits are equitably distributed. As stated in the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO, the objectives of the multilateral trading system include, *inter alia*, making "positive efforts designed to ensure that developing countries, and especially the least developed among them, secure a share in the growth in international trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development".
6. After six years spent implementing the Uruguay Round Agreements, a great many of our countries still face numerous economic challenges, including the exacerbation of socio-economic problems, meagre financial and investment flows, the debt burden, increased poverty, the HIV-AIDS pandemic, food insecurity, a small share in world trade and limited diversification of our commodity-dependent economies. Our countries are still marginalized by the global economy, notwithstanding

far-reaching economic reforms undertaken both autonomously and under programmes with the assistance of the Bretton Woods Institutions.

7. We call for our unilateral liberalization efforts to be taken into consideration in these negotiations with a view to securing financial compensation measures in poverty alleviation programmes.

8. Globalization places a mark on the history of mankind and our peoples have now been drawn together thanks to the new communication and information technologies. Extreme wealth and extreme poverty exist side by side and still watch each other every day on television screens in a world in which image and information know no frontiers. We must therefore take the full measure of this reality and these continuing imbalances, for although the growing integration of the global economy has been the overall engine of mutual enrichment, a large sector of the population is nevertheless still excluded from the benefits of this new-found prosperity and the progress achieved.

9. We stress that action must be taken to ensure that the implementation of the WTO Agreements achieves a balance of interests and benefits for one and all, including during the reviews of the Agreements on Agriculture, Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs), Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) and Services. We call for the development dimension and its control at sectoral level to be made an integral element of all such reviews and the ensuing negotiations.

10. My country is in the Sahelian climate zone and is characterized by a major and recurring shortage in annual rainfall which makes its agricultural production particularly vulnerable and means that it is a net food importer. The WTO must establish concrete and operational provisions to guarantee the food security of the countries concerned, in particular by attaching appropriate importance to non-trade concerns in the negotiations on agriculture.

11. This Conference should establish immediate WTO technical assistance measures to address the implementation difficulties encountered by most of our countries in a number of fields. We call for technical assistance to be stepped up and extended to include country studies on the impact of the implementation of the WTO Agreements and to remedy the lack of skills and resources to meet the requirements regarding notification and adaptation of legislation. In this regard, I wish to convey our appreciation of the technical assistance that the WTO, UNCTAD, ITC and donor countries have given to Burkina Faso within the framework of the Joint Implemented Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP). This assistance has gone a long way towards helping us understand the WTO legal framework, which is crucial to our participation in the multilateral trading system.

12. My country is attending this Conference in the hope that the WTO and the international community will make considerable headway with regard to the effective implementation of special and differential treatment provisions furthering the development of the smaller, weaker and more vulnerable trading partners that find themselves, right from the outset, marginalized in world trade. In the context of special and differential treatment, Burkina Faso calls for the Conference to accept the Cotonou Agreement waiver.

These are the terms for maintaining the credibility of our Organization.
