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## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

### Statement by H.E. Mr. Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan Al Qassimi, Minister of Economy and Commerce

The United Arab Emirates, although being a relatively new Member to the WTO, yet it takes its obligations and commitments seriously. We are fully committed to the system and we will participate actively and positively in the discussions and the coming negotiations.

The United Arab Emirates takes pride in the fact that its economy is one of the most liberal economies in the world.

We have followed and will continue to follow such policies in the future because for us, such a policy is a matter of conviction.

Our economy depends largely on foreign trade whether it is goods or services. That is why we believe in the WTO system and we will work with other countries in maintaining and formulating its rules and safeguarding its basic principles.

The United Arab Emirates, like other developing countries has its problems and aspirations. We are trying hard to develop our economy. We are sparing no effort to diversify its sources from an economy based on oil to an economy based on sound and sustained sources of agriculture, industry and services. I would like to underline the fact that almost 75 per cent of the GDP comes from non-oil resources.

However, we are under no illusion that we have moved to the ranks of the developed countries. We are by all standards a developing country. We are far from having the necessary basic structures to reach nearer to a developed economy. We have difficulties like all developing countries, which we are trying to overcome, and we are always hopeful for a better future.

Approaching the third millennium, we believe that this conference should send a clear message that the WTO is not a club for developed countries only, but is a system that ensures benefits to all countries big or small, developed and less developed, strong and weak, and that it has a place for developing countries to reap the benefits of free trade. Developing countries and small countries should be assured that they have their fair share in world trade, and that the WTO system will help them achieve the sustainable development needed for a better future for their people.

We are quite confident that this conference will arrive at the appropriate decisions and recommendations that meet the aspirations of the developed world. However, the development dimension should be an essential component whether in the negotiating process or the results of the coming negotiations.

Let me point out that despite the fact that we opened our markets for increased imports from all over the world and to competition from foreign service suppliers, and despite the facts that we basically have no barriers to trade yet, our exports are facing varied sorts of trade barriers especially in developed markets.

Let me also underline a number of points of great importance to the United Arab Emirates:

1. The process of accession for a number of new countries especially Saudi Arabia and Oman who are members of Gulf Cooperation Council should be completed in the very near future. A fixed time-limit should be drawn now for the finalization of this process.

They should not be asked for matters or conditions that are beyond their capabilities.

We believe that both the system and these countries will benefit from their accession.

2. Negotiations on services and market access for agricultural and non-agricultural industrial products should not result in imposing obligations on developing countries, which they cannot afford or run contrary to their development needs.

3. We sincerely hope that the provisions of the Agreements of Anti-Dumping, Countervailing Measures or Technical Barriers should not be abused or used as disguised barriers against our exports in the developed markets.

4. We do also hope that the ongoing discussions on trade and the environment should not disturb the balance between environment requirements and sustainable development or the use of environment as a pretext to limit our exports, especially oil.

5. We believe that hasty pressures to put new issues on the negotiating agenda before they are mature enough, or lacking consensus are unnecessary. Countries have to fully grasp the benefits and costs to each one of them before they can agree to them.

And lastly, implementation of existing agreements is a genuine concern for many countries, and we believe every effort should be given to these concerns in order to give credibility to the WTO system and allay fears and suspicions about it.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates strongly supports the generous offer of the government of Qatar to host the 4<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in Doha in the year 2001.

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