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GREECE

Statement by H.E. Mr Yannis Zafeiropoulos
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On behalf of the Greek Government I would like to express my gratitude to the people and the Government of Qatar for the warm hospitality and the excellent organization of the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization.

Let me also extend the same feelings to the Secretariat of the WTO, its Director-General and the Chairman of the General Council for their many efforts and their outstanding work towards a successful outcome.

Let me first welcome the accession of China and Chinese Taipei to the WTO. With the accession of China our Organization adds not only one fifth of the world's population but also an enormous and dynamic economy open to trade and foreign investment. Henceforth this economy will be subject to our rules-based system, something that will, without any doubt, enhance global economic cooperation, as Director-General Mike Moore has already stressed.

The tragic events of 11th September caused a further weakening of global economic prospects threatening economic flows and growth in our highly interconnected world. Under the present difficult circumstances, WTO has to move forward with courage and conviction and overcome this difficult moment in order to pave the way for a better future.

The present Ministerial Conference constitutes a great opportunity to reconfirm our political will to work together to strengthen the multilateral trade system with a view to promote sustainable development and growth. To achieve this objective launching a broad-based round of multilateral trade negotiations is an imperative condition.

Fighting poverty and building an inclusive world is the main challenge the international community faces today. We have to join our forces in order to help the poor and the marginalized. The integration of developing and least-developed countries in a globalized economic system as well as their full participation in a strengthened international trade architecture, destined to better support development is linked to the struggle against inequality, social injustice and poverty as well as against fanaticism which constitutes one of the main causes of terrorism.

We have to live up to the challenge and deepen our concern for those who today remain excluded so that we can impart the benefits of integration and inclusion to many millions of people around the world. Let us seize this opportunity to succeed. For this endeavor we need a strengthened system of internationally accepted rules and principles prompted by rules and principles inspired by social solidarity.

We are ready to favorably consider the legitimate interests of developing and least developed countries. In this respect, the European Union's initiative for the LDCs "Everything but Arms" can serve as a successful example, while technical assistance can also play a decisive role.

We are fully committed to finding solutions to the problem of access to affordable medicines. However, we must keep in mind that it is essential to provide the necessary incentive for innovation while securing the TRIPS Agreement.

Agriculture is a very important and sensitive sector for all countries, developed and developing. Although it is an issue of top priority for my country, I am not going to enter into details. Yet, I would like to stress the significant contribution agriculture has to make through its multifunctional role, to food security, food safety, sustainable rural development, and protection of the environment. It is, therefore, extremely important, to remain within the spirit of Article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture and proceed in a balanced, equitable and progressive way, taking fully into account both trade and non-trade concerns.

The issue of food quality and food specificity is integral to Agriculture. Extending the additional protection of geographical indications for wines and spirits to other products is not only a question of equity and equal treatment but also a way of ensuring fair competition and of creating the adequate instruments to promote integrated rural development objectives.

Market access is a necessary element of the negotiations but not sufficient on its own. A market access round would face strong resistance from our civil society, which rightly wants WTO to take measures to support sustainable development and the environment. We must strengthen WTO rules to ensure the compatibility between trade and environment. Unless we do, we will risk conflict. In this respect there is an obvious need for clarification. We think that WTO should respond in a positive way to challenges such as environmental protection and consumer health and safety.

Social Development is another issue to which Greece attaches great importance. We hope that the ILO Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the role of the working party will take more concrete form soon, so as to establish a forum for a wide-ranging permanent dialogue between all interested parties in the ILO and all relevant organizations, including the WTO.

Competition issues have become international. So it is logical for WTO to establish a multilateral framework in this field. The WTO must demonstrate that it can help to ensure that the benefits of trade liberalization are more equitably shared.

Investment serves both the interests of capital importers as well as those of capital exporters. Developing countries need foreign investment to help their growth, employment, and transfer of capital and technology. On the other hand, we all need transparency and clear rules, which reinforce predictability. It is therefore important to lay down, some multilateral rules to establish common approaches within carefully circumscribed parameters for the benefit of all.

On implementation issues, Greece is aware of the developing countries interests and is ready to give due consideration to a significant number of their requests. However, in reference to the textile sector, an extremely sensitive sector for us, I would like to underline that the European Union has fully complied with its commitment under the Marrakech Agreement. We expect our partners will make mutual efforts to open their own markets.

Mutual understanding is one of the keys of our success. Working together we can succeed, and we must succeed, for our own sake and for the sake of future generations who are not among us and so cannot defend themselves.
