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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Statement by H.E. Mr Maxim Y. Medvedkov
Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade

(Speaking as an Observer)

I would like to join others in thanking the Qatari Government for their hospitality and effective efforts in organizing this Conference.

The sole fact that the Conference takes place as scheduled is another confirmation of the readiness of the civilized world to fight firmly and by joint actions the new challenge of the century - which is called terrorism. Terrorism should not be allowed to prevail.

Delegations of many WTO Members have been asking during these days whether we are not confused by tense and sometimes rather sharp discussions which are now taking place in the Organization. Russia is going to join.

Our answer would be: "No, we are not surprised". We see this as a reflection of the WTO mood in general as a member-driven and consensus-based Organization. We are sure that in a few hours this will result in decisions at Ministerial level which would enable the new round to start. It will mean for us that the world will continue to move towards a more open, transparent and rule-based trading system.

In pursuing its foreign and domestic economic policies, Russia is strictly adhered to the same principles of openness, transparency and the rule of law. The WTO accession is an integral and substantial part of our reform process. The adoption of a package of laws which would complete the formation of a legal framework basically compatible with the WTO rules will be our next step. The steady rise of the Russian economy is clearly visible against the background of some signs of decline in the world economic situation.

The current year would not be an exceptional one. Bearing this in mind we intend to continue intensive accession negotiations with all interested WTO Members with the purpose to reach an acceptable outcome as soon as it may be reasonably possible.

We congratulate new Members on the successful finalization of their accession negotiations. We are sure that their membership in the Organization will also give new dynamics to our economic relations with these trading partners. We have several thousands of kilometers of common border with China, and will have hundreds of opportunities to develop our trade in a predictable manner in the coming years.

We also note that each new accession protocol contains new additional commitments which were never heard about a few years ago. Perhaps this trend reflects the general dynamism of the

WTO, probably it is caused by other factors. However it really is of certain concern to us and other acceding countries.

Russia confirms its readiness and wish to join the Organization on standard conditions. We believe that universality of the multilateral trading system is based, *inter alia*, on equality of the Members, where interests of development should be duly taken into account.

As any other acceding country we will take commitments in the accession protocol. These commitments should foster normal competition and hence contribute to domestic and world economic growth. For us it is obvious that any accession should also improve the terms of a country's participation in the world trade system. We are ready for rapid and fair solutions based on pragmatism, and do hope that our negotiating partners will share this approach.

Underlining the importance of launching the new round of negotiations in Doha, Russia, like other acceding countries, intends to participate in its activities both in formal and informal sessions. It will allow us to follow the logic of the multilateral negotiating process and to be better prepared for the forthcoming membership. Any issue which may be included in the agenda would be of interest to Russia, and we hope to be able to contribute to the negotiations with our intellectual resources.

Russia's customs territory amounts to one seventh of the cumulative land customs territory of the world. The accession of Russia will make the WTO a truly universal trade organization. It will be to the benefit of both the WTO and our country.
