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TANZANIA

Statement by the Honourable Iddi Mohamed Simba Minister for Industry and Trade

The least-developed countries are the most vulnerable Members of the World Trade Organization. Tanzania is one of them and I feel honoured to have been given the opportunity to speak on their behalf. We salute the Government and the Qatari people for their warm reception and hospitality.

This Conference is taking place at a crucial time in the history of global economy which seems to be heading for a massive decline with grave consequences for the least-developed countries. For us to survive this economic turbulence, it is absolutely essential that the long outstanding problems as well as the emerging ones are addressed adequately. It is our hope that the international community at large, and the developed countries in particular, will demonstrate a full political commitment to the fundamentals of WTO and address the issues which have led to the marginalization of the least-developed countries.

With the ever increasing effects of globalization and the role that the current unfair trade practices have played in ruining our economies, a stronger and more effective WTO is our only visible salvation. It is therefore in our interest that this Conference comes out with a Ministerial Declaration which will clearly describe a tangible commitment to development, and a commitment to redressing the existing imbalances in the multilateral trading system.

The Uruguay Round Agreements which are the bedrock of the WTO are embedded with imbalances and asymmetries which have led to the problems of implementation-related issues. Over the past four months, we have listened carefully to the arguments for launching a new round of negotiations which would embrace all issues in a single undertaking. We have understood the arguments, and we respect the positions that our developed partners have been taking in preparation for the Conference. It is my hope that we have also been understood, and our delicate position in respect of the new issues has been appreciated. Our consultations with African Members of WTO and Asian developing countries are all pointing to the need for a Work Programme which has a link with development and capacity building.

We are fundamentally proposing a Development Agenda which will prioritize the needs of LDCs and other developing countries in a framework of sequencing which will also accommodate the preoccupations of developed countries. We are not opposed to new issues, but it is totally unrealistic to expect us to negotiate them now. We need time to understand them and build up a capability to deal with them. We must also prepare for the necessary adjustments.

To operationalize the Development Agenda we need to have adequate capacity building which will go beyond addressing the normal WTO obligations. Adequate resources in the form of financial and technology transfer need to be in place to address the supply-side constraints which have

proved to be a major obstacle which hinder the effective integration process of LDCs into the global system.

The TRIPS Agreement is of great concern to LDCs and we support the proposal for the Ministerial Conference to approve a special Ministerial Declaration with regard to the flexibility of the Agreement to ensure easy accessibility to medicine to combat communicable diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and Malaria. To reflect the need for the Declaration to be of a wide scope the LDCs would prefer the title of the Ministerial Declaration to be Declaration on TRIPS and public health.

With regard to the proposed extension of transition period for ten years made with respect to pharmaceutical products in favour of LDCs, we think it would be more meaningful and effective if such extension is also made with respect to the implementation of the entire TRIPS Agreement. All the same, the LDCs propose that this partial exemption should in no way prejudice their right in future to request for transition extension of the implementation of the entire Agreement.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, LDC Group reiterates its position with regard to the Work Programme; and we pray for increasing financial and technical capacity of WTO to enable it to carry out the programme in the form of a Development Agenda for the immediate future.
