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ZAMBIA

Statement Circulated by the Hon. Syamukayumbu Syamujaye,
Minister of Mines and Minerals Development

This Second Ministerial Conference comes at an appropriate moment. Fifty years ago, a challenge was taken to promote international trade.

Considerable progress has been made on trade liberalization, but there is still much more to be done in such areas such as agriculture and textiles. Continued trade liberalization and strengthening of the open rule-based non-discriminatory multilateral trading system remain very important. But we should remind ourselves that only the actions that individual countries undertake willingly and not under structural or institutional coercion could lead to lasting and fair liberalization. Zambia remains fully committed to the process of trade liberalization.

Implementation of the Uruguay Round commitments should be pursued since the credibility of WTO depends on it. The WTO Agreements are very specific about the timing of the implementation of various obligations. However, countries like mine have faced constraints and difficulties in complying with all obligations. These constraints are in the area of the lack of technical capacity and resources. This unfortunately has led to our forfeiting certain rights that would otherwise be very important to us. To ensure effective participation and integration into the multilateral trading system, we should come up with a mechanism that will allow countries such as Zambia with such difficulties to have restored those lost rights and obligations.

In addition, there is great need for the international community to recognize and acknowledge that the external debt has become and continues to be a serious burden for least-developed countries, yet these countries are expected to integrate themselves into the international trading system. This situation poses a major constraint to any economic growth and government's ability to respond to the challenges of poverty reduction.

Commitments have been made by some of the more developed countries to assist countries like mine in certain areas of difficulties. We commend all those countries and especially those that have pledged to provide some technical assistance to equip us with the necessary skills to effectively participate in the multilateral trading system. The integrated initiative for least-developed countries' trade development illustrates commitment of the WTO Members to find a solution to the problems of the least-developed countries. We welcome the indications of intentions to improve market access in favour of exports from least-developed countries and that these will soon be notified to the WTO Secretariat. While doing so there is need to eliminate all forms of barriers to trade in favour of least-developed countries. Consideration should be given to finding ways of enforcing these intentions of improving market access.

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Zambia would also like to see a situation that ensures that the benefits of the multilateral trading system are extended as widely as possible. Further the WTO needs to constantly recognize the diversity in levels of development and trade interests among Members. The WTO needs to establish itself as a credible institution capable of meeting the aspirations of all its Members - not only of some of the Members.
