

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Statement Circulated by the Hon. Daniel Enele Kwainairara,
Minister for Commerce and Trade

I would like to speak briefly on the question of implementation of our WTO obligations. As delegates are no doubt aware Solomon Islands is currently undergoing a Trade Policy Review. We wish to congratulate the WTO Secretariat on the highly professional work done by the TPR Division thus far. However the Solomon Islands Government feels that the Trade Policy Review Division is inadequately resourced to undertake the type of analysis required in developing and least-developed countries. We are hopeful that in the coming years more resources will be devoted to this important task.

Following our Trade Policy Review in September the Solomon Islands will accelerate its current programme of implementation of our WTO obligations. Solomon Islands will be seeking bilateral as well as multilateral technical assistance to implement its obligations.

Last October at the High-Level Meeting for LDCs held here in Geneva we were assured that an integrated programme of assistance would be available for LDCs. The Solomon Islands with the assistance of UNCTAD undertook a thorough needs assessment survey. Regrettably this programme has yet to be implemented in the Solomon Islands.

I would like to make several comments regarding the accession of least-developed countries. As Members are no doubt aware three Pacific Island countries Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu are in the process of accession to the WTO. The latter two are least-developed countries. We are concerned that in the process of accession some of the larger WTO Members are requiring terms of accession that do not reflect existing WTO provisions on special and differential treatments for LDCs. We ask that the Director-General of the WTO seek the concurrence of the General Council that all existing WTO rights regarding special and differential treatment for LDCs be extended automatically and without negotiation to all least-developed countries acceding to the WTO.

I would like to speak very briefly on the new issues. Solomon Islands, as a least-developed country, has yet to implement fully all of its obligations that stem from the Uruguay Round Agreements. As a result the Government of the Solomon Islands would not encourage new issues to be introduced until such time as all WTO Members, and this especially includes the least-developed countries have implemented the covered multilateral agreements of the Uruguay Round.

As delegates are no doubt aware there has been considerable discussion on the question of a multilateral agreement on investment both at the OECD and now at the WTO. Over the last 50 years

we have liberalized the trade in goods and services. We have created rules on intellectual property. Now developed countries seek rules that would liberalize and facilitate international movement of capital. In the past developing and in particular least-developed countries have not been heavily involved in multilateral trade negotiations. In future this will not and cannot be the case.

If developed countries seek the liberalization of rules on the movement of capital then it seems only obvious that developing countries that export labour such as the Pacific Island countries, among others, would seek a similar and equivalent obligation from developed countries in the labour market.

If the developed countries want an MAI then we will agree when it is done in tandem with an MAL - a Multilateral Agreement on Labour.
