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Statement by H.E. Dr. Axel Gerlach
State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology

Let me begin by thanking our hosts, His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, and the organizers of this Conference for their great commitment.

At this time in particular, following the terrorist attacks on the United States, it is right for us to come to Doha to launch a new world trade round. The members of the international community in east and west, north and south are thus giving an important signal of unity and solidarity. The civilized world cannot and must not allow its agenda to be dictated by international terrorism. In the current world economic situation, the continuation of liberalization on the basis of a rule-based multilateral world trading system and of a genuine development dimension is more important than ever, both politically and economically.

The inclusion of China and Taiwan, which we will decide at this Conference, will also help to strengthen the multilateral WTO trading system. This is another way in which the Doha Conference will become a milestone on the way to a genuinely global world trading system.

The coming decision on the start of a new world trade round will set the course for the future:

- In economic terms, we want further liberalization of world trade to stimulate fresh growth and employment. What the world economy needs now is a signal of confidence in the future.
- It is also important that all WTO Members benefit appropriately from future liberalization.

A key objective of the EU for the new round is therefore greater involvement of the developing countries in world trade through market access, improved rules and technical assistance. With its "everything but arms" initiative, the EU has already taken a substantial unilateral measure to benefit the least-developed countries.

- In political terms, it is important to strengthen the WTO and to adapt the world trading system to new challenges. Strong and reliable world trade rules benefit all WTO Members, but especially the small ones, since they then have the possibility to enforce their rights. But we need to develop the rules further and to keep them up to date. Therefore, the EU has always advocated a broad agenda for a new round which opens up the WTO for the so-called "new issues". These are: trade and environment; trade and social development; trade and investment; and trade and competition.

I must once again emphasize one point: we are not pursuing any protectionist goals. Nor do we aim to threaten comparative competition advantages of the developing countries. We have a different objective; globalization offers great opportunities for economic development, but it also involves risks. It is important for us to develop the opportunities of globalization to the benefit of all WTO Members and to minimize the risks by utilizing our scope for policy-making and rule-setting.

This Conference can give a three-fold signal:

- A signal of political continuity, economic stability and an open, rule-based system of world trade;
- a signal of the desire of the international community to work together to shape a framework for the world economy, and thus to help the fight against terrorism;
- and a signal of our readiness to tackle the challenges of globalization and to seek an appropriate balance of interests between industrial and developing countries.

If the Conference is to reach a successful conclusion, it will be important to cover all the major issues in an overall package. All – and I emphasize: all – the participants at this Conference will have to show flexibility and a readiness to compromise. Germany is read to cooperate constructively and openly in the search for a compromise which points towards the future and brings benefits for all the WTO Members.
