

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(01)/ST/111
12 November 2001

(01-5707)

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
Fourth Session
Doha, 9 - 13 November 2001

Original: English

UGANDA

Statement by the Honourable Edward B. Rugumayo
Minister of Tourism, Trade and Industry

1. On behalf of the Uganda delegation, please allow me to congratulate you on being appointed to preside over the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, and through you to thank the Government and the people of Qatar for organizing and hosting this Conference. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the People's Republic of China for having successfully acceded to the WTO.

Since the inception of the World Trade Organization, world trade has continued to expand, creating new trade opportunities. However, Africa's share of world trade has diminished over the same period, a situation that is by no means acceptable, and should be addressed. Uganda strongly believes that the current asymmetries in international trade pose a great challenge to the least-developed countries (LDCs). It is in view of these challenges that Uganda calls for a reassessment and review of some aspects of the multilateral trading system, as follows:

Implementation

2. Implementation and related issues remain important and crucial to the integration of the LDCs into the multilateral trading system. Uganda, therefore calls for meaningful and faithful implementation of the commitments made in the Marrakesh Declaration and other Ministerial decisions in favour of the LDCs.

Agriculture

3. Agriculture is the backbone of Uganda's economy, as well as of most African countries. It is, therefore, important that the ongoing trade negotiations on the Agreement on Agriculture do not undermine the viability of the agricultural sector in the multilateral trading system. To that extent, Uganda supports the views of many developing countries and least-developed countries; more especially those expressed by Africa. While emphasis still remains on reviewing implementation issues before undertaking new commitments, Uganda's major concerns are on improved market access through elimination of tariff peaks and tariff escalations; expansion and reform of tariff rate quotas; reduction of domestic support measures; the total elimination of export subsidies; and the continuation of initiatives like the EBA and AGOA, while ensuring that special and differential treatment continues to be an integral part of the Agreement on Agriculture, but structured in such a way as to respond to our development needs other than just "best endeavour".

Services

4. Trade in Services is absolutely important to Uganda's economy because the services sector has continued to grow while facilitating numerous other areas of the economic activity. Furthermore,

the services sector is contributing significantly to our foreign exchange earnings. It is imperative therefore that the focus of the ongoing GATS negotiations should be towards further development of the services sector in developing countries.

5. In light of the above, Uganda therefore advocates for a revisit to the provisions relating to Mode 4 Supply, the maintenance of GATS architecture, especially the provisions of the most-favoured-nation, and the flexibility for LDCs to liberalize in selected sectors.

Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)

6. Certainly, there continues to remain a huge technological gap between developed countries and LDCs. Therefore, Uganda is of the view that Article 66.2 which is mandatory, should be made operational.

7. Uganda would also like to propose a substantive review of Article 27.3(b) in order to ensure that life forms that are "naturally occurring" should not be patented. It is the view of the Uganda delegation that the patenting of life forms is tantamount to the transfer of community rights and property into private hands, with likely adverse effects on small rural farmers and on food security in general. Furthermore, it is the belief of the Uganda delegation that access to genetic resources should only be on mutually agreed terms. In addition, the *sui generis* system envisaged therein should be nationally determined, but consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

8. In respect of public health, Uganda strongly believes that the TRIPS Agreement should provide the widest flexibility to Member countries in order to address emergency public health crises and concerns such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, meningitis, tuberculosis, and other diseases that may commonly afflict peoples of the tropics.

Special and differential treatment

9. LDCs have continued to face tremendous difficulties in spite of the special and differential treatment (S&D) provisions as embodied in the Final Act. Uganda therefore wishes to call for the binding and full implementation of the provisions of S&D, including the adoption of new S&D measures to take into account implementation problems that may have been encountered by the LDCs over the last six years.

New issues and the new round

10. Uganda is of the view that the "new issues" should be subject to further study, and that if these are determined to be of a non-trade nature, they should not be included in the trade rules. It is our strong view that any future work in the WTO must contain a development component.

The positive agenda

11. Uganda recognizes that trade and technology transfer, trade and debt, and trade and finance all have a strong bearing on our development concerns, and therefore these should be included in future negotiations.
