

# WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Statement by the Honourable Tukape Masani, MP  
Minister for Trade and Industry

On behalf of the Government and People of Papua New Guinea, I extend greetings to the Government and People of Qatar for the courtesies accorded to me and my delegation on arrival and for the excellent arrangements for this Ministerial Conference.

I also extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to Director-General, Mr Mike Moore, and staff of the WTO Secretariat for all the preparatory work put in to hold the 2001 Ministerial Conference.

It gives me great honour and privilege to make this statement on behalf of Papua New Guinea to express our views and share experiences and concerns on the implementation and administering of the Uruguay Round commitments.

Papua New Guinea is a small economy in the international trading arena and is extremely vulnerable to the changes that are taking place in the multilateral trading system.

Being a Member of the WTO, Papua New Guinea is committed to the multilateral trading system and the whole process of trade liberalization as enshrined in the WTO Agreements and pursued by all WTO Member countries.

Whilst implementing the rights and obligations of WTO membership, in the past six years, we have experienced both challenges and opportunities in the process. PNG is faced with the challenges of implementation as a result of lack of technical expertise on WTO issues, financial resources and non-representation in Geneva, Switzerland, which has contributed to lack of effective execution of PNG's rights and obligations.

As a country, PNG has not been able to fully implement the results of the Uruguay Round because the process of adjusting to the new rules is such that it needs a lot more time for developing countries to set in place the mechanism for implementation. Therefore, we have only started to adjust and it will take us a good while to effectively implement our rights and obligations internally.

On the other hand, the complexities of the WTO Agreements need to be understood well before the implementation can be effectively undertaken, to date, we are still grappling with the implementation of the Uruguay Round commitments and therefore, PNG maintains the stand that the implementation aspect of all WTO agreements must be given priority and should be resolved before any fresh commitments can be made on new issues.

In order for the multilateral trading system to be effective and beneficial for all Members, PNG believes that the needs and aspirations of the small and vulnerable countries must be adequately taken into consideration.

The effective networking with the WTO Secretariat has enabled PNG to undertake and implement the requirements of some of the WTO Agreements. PNG sees the need to comply with the requirements of the WTO Agreements as necessary, not only for its interest and benefit but also for its trading partners.

In light of the results of the work that was pursued by Member states in Geneva on the various issues, it is pleasing and encouraging to note the amount of effort that was put into the deliberations of these issues. I must at this juncture thank all representatives of Member countries, who have put in time and effort on the issues to achieve the progress that we are aware of today.

Papua New Guinea is committed to the process of global trade liberalization and therefore, the Government is pursuing appropriate policy options to ensure that it benefits from this process.

Under the structural adjustment programme, the country is undergoing reforms in the various sectors of the economy to make these sectors sustainable and profitable. These reforms are aimed at achieving economic progress and growth.

As we all gather here to mark the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference, I believe many of you present here have come with expectations on the outcome of this meeting, particularly in light of the collapse of the last ministerial talks in Seattle. There is a need for us to consult and agree on our next move so that the multilateral trading system is workable for all of us and that we can all harvest from the fruits that it is able to bear.

In that context, Papua New Guinea would support the move for the launch of a new developmental round of multilateral trade negotiations, which should be a round of negotiation, focused on the progress or failures of the Uruguay Round commitments. We strongly believe that the implementation of the results of the Uruguay round must be analysed and deficiencies must be considered and corrected before we move to consider new and emerging issues that have implications on international trade.

I now wish to briefly discuss some specific issues arising from the Uruguay Round and the Singapore Ministerial. In discussing them, I must stress the importance of focusing on implementation issues as a prerequisite to addressing emerging ones. Now I turn to those issues.

On agriculture, PNG supports the call to improve market access and to phase out subsidies. On services, the interest of developing countries must be taken into account carefully and that they are provided with opportunities to benefit from the provision of these services.

On trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights, the rights and ownership of indigenous properties, cultures and knowledge must be respected and they should benefit from them.

PNG acknowledges that investments is the key to economic growth and prosperity. Appropriate measures have been taken to remove obstacles to investment through adopting transparent administrative and legal processes, provision of adequate infrastructure, removal of strict labour and migration regulations etc. PNG supports the position to call for the discussions on these issues to be delayed for the time being.

Trade facilitation measures can promote trade. We agree that transparent rules must be in place to promote trade, however, it poses a threat for small developing countries and therefore it must be recognized and assistance provided to safeguard developing countries interest.

On trade and environment, PNG notes that trade liberalization can result in development. Balance however, must be achieved where resources are exploited sustainably and that benefits are secured for its owners.

The biggest area of concern to developing countries like PNG is the capacity to implement WTO commitments and obligations, which I had touched earlier. Sufficient resource should be provided by WTO to build institutional capacity and to enhance the representation to WTO.

On organizational matters, negotiations must be opened to all WTO Members. This means that all decisions taken in WTO are transparent, these are important principles, which all Members must agree to and respect.

On accession issues, PNG welcomes the admission of the People's Republic of China to this august body. We also welcome the accession of Separate Customs Territories of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu.

PNG hopes that outstanding issues relating to Vanuatu's accession can be resolved expeditiously and Vanuatu is admitted to this body. I should note here that in consideration of this issue, I urge Member countries to be mindful of Vanuatu's stage of development but more importantly that Vanuatu is the first least-developed country to undergo such vigorous accession process. Therefore, special and differential treatment should be accorded to Vanuatu. The issues of concern to Vanuatu are real and they must be understood in that context and an understanding reached soon as we believe that these issues would be of interest to other aspiring countries in our region.

Finally, PNG supports the statements of Mauritius, spokesperson of small developing economies and the declaration of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific group of countries recently adopted at its meeting in Brussels.

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