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FRANCE

Statement by H.E. Mr Laurent Fabius
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Three observations, to begin with:

- Firstly, I would like to thank Qatar, our hosts, who have done their utmost to provide us a warm welcome, as well as the Chairman, Mr Harbinson, and the Director-General, Mr Mike Moore.
- Secondly, I would like to highlight the fact that with the accession of China, the World Trade Organization will at long last have become a true world organization.
- Thirdly, I wish to make the point that trade and terrorism are not good bedfellows. Our presence here in Doha shows that we will not be intimidated. After the failure of Seattle, we want the success of Doha.

Making a success of Doha means fully understanding the framework: that of a necessarily efficient, rules-based organization with a dispute settlement mechanism that substitutes law for force and multilateralism for unilateralism.

Making a success of Doha means setting a course: the opening up of trade coupled with a strengthening of rules, with the ultimate aim – and I stress this point – of contributing to full employment, to improvement of living standards and to sustainable development.

In this context, France favours a strong, legitimate and democratic WTO serving two priority objectives:

1. The WTO must first contribute to the opening up and regulation of world trade

Markets, whether national or global, will only work for the benefit of all if they are governed by rules. And while we have, in the past, created global market rules in the traditional areas of goods and services, if we wish to pursue our course and further open up our economies on a progressive and mutual basis, we need to enhance those rules. We need to improve them, where necessary, as a proper response to the process of integration of world markets.

I have drawn at least two lessons from our experience in the European Union:

- The opening up of borders does not suffice to ensure a fair and harmonious development of trade. Common rules governing competition and investment must progressively be introduced to consolidate what has already been achieved and thus contribute to the development of investment flows between WTO Members and, in

particular, towards the developing countries. This would ensure equal opportunities for the different economic actors, the SMEs and the large groups.

- Secondly, the economic preferences of consumers often reflect choices by our citizens. These choices may differ from one country to another, for example, in the food safety area. The WTO has the responsibility of avoiding conflicts that could result from these differences by specifying or clarifying existing multilateral rules wherever necessary.

Moreover, negotiations should pave the way for progress on the dispute settlement chapter, to the benefit of all Members.

2. The WTO must also be an instrument at the service of sustainable development

The objective of sustainable development has been recognized and incorporated into the WTO ever since the Organization was created. The role of the State and of public policy is important in ensuring greater security and solidarity.

Development, promotion of core labour standards and environmental protection are key areas in which States and public opinion alike expect tangible results.

The question of development will be at the heart of the new round. Above and beyond the progress achieved in the discussions on implementation of the Marrakesh Agreements, access by the disadvantaged countries to developed country and emerging country markets is a priority. Europe has already taken steps to that end on behalf of the least-developed countries.

And we are faced with two other tasks: to give full meaning to the concept of "special and differential treatment" without creating a two-speed WTO; and to develop technical assistance in areas where it is crucial.

The WTO must contribute to social development by ensuring permanent dialogue with other international organizations, under the auspices of the ILO.

The WTO must contribute decisively to the regulation of international trade by clarifying the relationship between trade and environmental rules.

I would like to place particular emphasis on a matter of considerable importance, indeed a moral obligation: that of enabling populations that have been struck by epidemics such as AIDS to have access to essential medicines. France was behind the Global Health Fund launched by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Let us add access to essential medicines. On behalf of the French Government, I call upon you to give all human beings the means to exercise, concretely, their basic right to life.

3. To fulfil these missions, the WTO must respect the principles of equity and transparency

Equity means participation by all. It requires transparency of procedures and negotiation methods. The WTO has achieved some progress since Seattle, and it must continue to do so.

Equity also means a comprehensive negotiating agenda: only through a broad approach can the priorities of each and every one of us be taken into consideration and a balanced result ensured.

Finally, equity means refraining from all pre-negotiation of results in certain areas. I am thinking, in particular, of the negotiation of the built-in agenda on agriculture and services, which

must be pursued on the basis laid down in Marrakesh, with due regard for the collective preferences of all Members.

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, distinguished colleagues, when we created the WTO in 1994, we broadened the scope of the GATT to include contemporary problems. We now have to broaden the scope of the WTO in pursuit of controlled liberalization, of development and of world governance.

In the framework of our negotiations, we must meet the expectations of all Members of the Organization, of the economic actors and of public opinion. It is in that spirit that France intends to contribute to this meeting in Doha.
