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NORWAY

Statement by H.E. Mr Jan Petersen
Minister of Foreign Affairs

I would like to join other delegations in congratulating you upon your election as Chairman of the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference. You can count on Norway's full support.

I would also like to extend our warmest thanks to the Government and the people of Qatar for hosting the Conference, and for their warm and hospitable reception.

The terrorist attacks on 11 September were not only directed at innocent people, but also at fundamental democratic values and our open economies.

But the terrorists must not be allowed to prevail.

We must join forces to secure economic growth and development in all nations – not least in the developing countries. A strong and fair multilateral trading system has a crucial role to play in our efforts towards this goal.

Ambitious negotiations aimed at further liberalization, strengthening and development of the multilateral trading system are of paramount importance. This is why we need to launch a new round here in Doha.

Norway has a number of priorities and goals for our future negotiations.

The round should have a clear development profile. The concerns and demands of the developing countries, and in particular the least developed, should be at the heart of our work. The proposed package on implementation issues must be adopted, and outstanding implementation proposals must be part of the future negotiations.

Trade liberalization is the core activity of the multilateral trading system. We must accelerate tariff cuts in all areas. Norway has decided to give the least-developed countries tariff and quota free access for all products. In dealing with non-agricultural products particular attention must be paid to tariff peaks and tariff escalation.

The Uruguay Round expanded vastly the rules governing international trade. We now need to review and improve some of these rules, in particular the Anti-Dumping and Subsidies Agreements.

Norway remains committed to the long-term reform process as set out in the Agreement on Agriculture. Due account must be paid to non-trade concerns. The agricultural trading system must allow every Member, irrespective of climatic conditions, to maintain a viable agricultural sector.

The negotiations in services must secure further liberalization. Our priorities are maritime transport, telecommunications, energy and financial services. The right of Members to regulate the supply of services should be confirmed.

Sustainable development is an important objective of the WTO Agreement. This should be reflected in all relevant areas of ongoing and future negotiations. Specific environmental issues should be included in our work programme.

Disciplines regulating trade and investment and trade and competition policies are needed to further improve the trading system.

The Ministerial Declaration must include a reference to the international efforts to secure core labour standards. The work in the International Labour Organization (ILO) would benefit from cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations, including the WTO.

We must adopt a strong declaration on intellectual property and public health, including access to affordable medicines for all, and the need for flexible interpretation of the TRIPS Agreement. This will be an important contribution to the wider national and international action in this area, in particular the fight against public health crises such as HIV/AIDS and other pandemics.

We plan to increase further our contributions to technical assistance activities in a new round of negotiations. The work programme calls for substantial growth in technical assistance. This does not only require additional funding on a voluntary basis, but also greater predictability, which can only be achieved by channeling a substantial part of the funding through the regular budget.

The completion of the accession process for the People's Republic of China and Chinese Taipei represents a major achievement which we warmly welcome. We trust that the negotiations on the 28 applications still outstanding will be brought to a successful end as soon as possible.

Much is at stake. If we fail to reach agreement at this Conference, we risk undermining the entire multilateral trading system. That would benefit no one. We must all be willing to demonstrate the necessary political will and flexibility to make this Conference a success.
