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TURKEY

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Minister of State

At the outset, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Qatar for their very kind hospitality and the perfect organization of this Conference. I would also like to express our appreciation to the WTO Secretariat.

Since our last meeting in Seattle, where we left with some questions with regard to implementation and institutional issues, Member countries have spent noteworthy efforts to stress the importance of global collaboration and the role of multilateral trade for economic development.

Some concrete steps have been taken to find a common understanding to remove the obstacles to trade, and to clarify some of the existing trade rules at the WTO.

In our view, the multilateral system should respond to new global challenges and integrate all countries at different levels of development into a trading system where rights and obligations of every country are respected.

Now, we have another chance to go further in strengthening the trade rules and ensuring better market access for everyone and especially for developing countries.

A comprehensive new round of negotiations with a balanced agenda will be the platform to exchange cross-sectoral trade-offs responding to the different interests and aspirations of the WTO Members.

We believe special and differential treatment for the developing countries without creating any sub-category must be a key component of the future negotiations.

Turkey, calling for a comprehensive agenda, considers that investment and competition issues which have been examined by the relevant working groups are at a level of maturity to be negotiated in a framework mandated by this Conference.

It is essential that countries can participate effectively in negotiations and rule-making process in the WTO and thus utilize the outcomes of the trade liberalization. Capacity-building and technical assistance as an integral part of the negotiations will play an important role in this respect.

We are satisfied with the pace attained in the agricultural negotiations. The experience of developing countries gained in the implementation period of the Agreement on Agriculture unfortunately has fallen short of their needs and interests.

Turkey is of the view that elimination of or substantial reductions in all trade distortive domestic supports and export subsidies by developed countries, could give a real impetus for further market-access commitments.

With regard to services, Turkey welcomes a Ministerial Declaration which underlines the economic growth and development aspects of the mandated negotiations, commenced in January 2000, on trade in services and reiterates the objectives of the GATS stated in its Preamble, Article IV and Article XIX.

Turkey is pleased with the progress that has been made in the negotiations so far and hopes satisfactory as well as balanced results for all Member countries.

Since a new round is expected to address the concerns of developing countries, Turkey is also looking for the restrictions on services which are of export interest to developing countries to be removed, as well as impediments on the implementation of the commitments by developed countries in Mode 4 to be lifted.

Trade facilitation has also become another issue of interest for us and Turkey supports to set a framework in this field.

Being one of the most debated issues of a possible new round, environment is still subject to concerns of most of the Members, especially the developing countries. Those concerns have been mainly focused on restrictive trade policy tools which could be implemented via environmental protection arguments.

We believe, proceeding the discussions on the clarification of the relationship between trade and the environment in the WTO Committee, appears to be a necessity for establishing a sound basis for the further steps to be taken in this field.

Turkey became one of the most liberal economies of the world after the customs union with the European Community in 1996 when it went far beyond its Uruguay commitments in terms of market access. By that, Turkey opened its market to the third countries unilaterally in non-agricultural products. At this stage, I would like to state that, we are not very enthusiastic for further tariff reductions in those goods.

Let me also touch upon TRIPS recognizing that protection of intellectual property is one of the most important factors in providing favourable and competitive trading conditions among countries. Turkey is of the view that, the discriminatory treatment between geographical indications for wines and spirits and those for other products creates an unfair trading environment and extending the protection of geographical indications for other products will be to the benefit of all Members.

Before concluding, I would like to welcome China, Chinese Taipei and the others recently acceded to the WTO family. With their presence, the multilateral trading system becomes stronger than before in promoting economic development and welfare.
