

Statement by HE Ambassador Luiz Alberto Figueiredo

Minister of External Relations

Mr. Chairman,

Let me start by thanking Indonesia for its hospitality and for the excellent arrangements for this Ministerial Conference.

We also thank the Director-General, Ambassador Roberto Azevêdo, for his efforts to bring us together in paving the way for a successful conclusion of our negotiations in Bali.

Brazil is pleased that this Ministerial Conference will welcome Yemen as its 160th Member. We hope that the pending accession processes will move swiftly, thereby taking us closer to the objective of universal membership.

Mr. Chairman,

We have seen, in the past few months, a welcome reinvigoration of the WTO's negotiating pillar. Members have endeavored to find common ground in spite of their different interests and priorities. We still have some sensitive issues to cover, but a positive outcome is not out of reach. Brazil is confident that we will be able to arrive at a satisfactory agreement this week.

We have worked constructively to shape the agreement on trade facilitation. This common endeavor coincides with efforts underway in Brazil to reduce costs and streamline customs procedures. These objectives are shared by all Members. This agreement will entail, however, implementation costs that may be burdensome, especially for LDCs. Therefore, the implementation of this agreement will require political commitment to fulfill its obligations as well as to provide developing countries and LDCs with the technical assistance and capacity building required.

We are also pleased that Members fully recognize that reaching agreement on some agricultural proposals, including a declaration on export subsidies and an understanding on TRQ administration, is a necessary part of any early harvest to be agreed upon. Food security is also

an important element of our discussions. Actually, we had hoped for more than what has proved possible at this time, since agriculture remains the area where we find the most glaring distortions in international trade, and where liberalization can be the most beneficial for developing countries.

Nevertheless, we believe that the agreements to be approved by this Ministerial Conference stand as a firm recognition of the need to advance further in agricultural reform, within the framework of the WTO. As we look ahead, we must always emphasize the central importance of Agriculture and issues of interest to the LDCs.

We think it is essential to reach agreement on a Bali package that is conducive to the resumption of a broader agenda of negotiations.

We have devoted considerable effort to advance in the Doha Development Agenda. After Bali we cannot fail to address the core issues related to the elimination of export subsidies and reduction of domestic support in agriculture, as well as to market access in agriculture, NAMA and services.

Our constituencies cannot afford that the WTO continue to nibble at the edges of this central agenda. Taking on this agenda and trying to find solutions that have eluded us for so long will not be easy, but it must be done.

Much as we value what has already been achieved in the preparations for this conference, we must also be realistic and learn the lessons from this experience.

First of all, I think that the early harvest model has already run its course and should not be repeated. We should now revert to a more ambitious goal: leave the piecemeal approach behind and restore the integrity of our negotiating agenda. In other words, we must go for a full harvest. The WTO can do it.

We are certainly prepared to make adjustments to our agenda and look at new issues of interest. Any move, however, must be done with a clear sense of priorities. And the first priority remains the removal of the most distorting trade measures, particularly in agriculture, that hamper full integration of developing countries in world trade. As some Members point to the so-called 21st century issues, we must always remind ourselves that the unfinished business of the WTO is also a 21st century issue.

Mr. Chairman,

In the next three days, the world's attention will be drawn to this Conference. Let us take this opportunity to adopt a balanced Bali package and to mandate a post-Bali work programme to advance the implementation of the Doha Development Agenda.

Thank you.