

CYPRUS

Statement by Mrs Egli Pantelaki

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment

It is a pleasure and an honour for me today to have the opportunity to address the plenary of the ninth session of the World Trade Organization's ministerial conference, on behalf of my country, Cyprus.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to the host of the conference, the Government of Indonesia, for the impeccable organisation of the conference here in Bali. I would also like to congratulate Yemen for its accession to the WTO. On this occasion, I would like to reiterate our commitment towards facilitating LDC accessions to the World Trade Organization.

Past experience in my country and I am sure in other countries of the world, has shown that trade could indeed be used to achieve higher living standards, higher or even full employment and sustainable development. It has also been proven that a non-restrictive trade environment could help a country recover relatively easier and faster from an adverse economic situation. Trade can also help to increase productivity and to cut costs, the result being a reduction in the costs of production, reduced prices of finished goods and services, more choice and ultimately a lower cost of living. Trade can also play a significant factor in the quest of developing countries to raise economic growth and graduate, eventually, to the developed world.

It is for this reason that we need, here in Bali, to consider the cost of failure in agreeing on the package that we have in front of us. I firmly concur with those Members who believe that a failure in Bali will have grave consequences, not only for the Doha Round, but also for the multilateral trading system as a whole, which has not delivered any new multilateral agreement since the Uruguay Round and the establishment of the World Trade Organisation. The failure will also be felt by the constituencies in each and every one of our countries, by the business community all over the world and, above all, by the most vulnerable among us, the developing Membership.

We have worked with other Members intensively during the last two years and particularly over the last few weeks and a tremendous amount of work was achieved collectively, covering a lot of ground in the negotiations towards the conclusion of a successful Bali package. The strengthening of the multilateral trading system and the long-awaited conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda is paramount for us and remains amongst our trade priorities. An agreement on the Bali package would greatly enhance these objectives.

Cyprus supports a political understanding on the text of an ambitious and legally binding Trade Facilitation Agreement which will bring substantial benefits to all WTO members and will be a driver for world trade and growth. Expert calculations indicate that benefits accruing from this Agreement would go beyond a trillion of US dollars and allow for the creation of over 21 million new jobs around the world. The Agreement would be of particular benefit to developing countries, by better integrating them into international trade and global value chains. We remain committed to assisting the developing countries most in need, especially LDCs, in the implementation of this Agreement and we expect that the more advanced developing countries should apply it in full.

Although it is our belief that Agriculture can only be properly addressed within a final outcome of the DDA mandate, we can accept that the Bali package contains a limited number of issues as part of the outcome of this Conference. Food security should be addressed through a time-limited due restraint clause, with specific conditions and safeguards agreed by WTO members to ensure transparency and avoid trade distortions. We are also looking forward to the improvement of the administration of Tariff Rate Quotas, stressing at the same time that it would be more beneficial if applied by all WTO members. In the area of export competition, we are willing to support a political

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declaration which takes note of the progress achieved, underlines the importance of transparency and reaffirms the need to address all export competition issues in a balanced way in the context of the DDA negotiations.

I am glad that the Development and LDC-related issues of the Bali package have been agreed among us, even though they are not considered as approved since they constitute one of the three pillars of the overall Bali package which still remains to be concluded. The Monitoring Mechanism on special and differential treatment, the draft decisions on the operationalization of the services waiver, on preferential rules of origin, on duty free quota free market access and on cotton, all constitute valuable components of the development package we have in front of us.

I am sure that with the proper engagement and political will we should be able to rise to the challenge, compromise on the specific and localised issues of divergence in order to reach an agreement and leave Bali with the proper tools in our luggage that will be used to allow prosperity and economic growth to our countries. At the same time, we will be able to maintain and secure the relevance of the WTO and strengthen the multilateral trading system. Time, though, is running out. Let us all work together to achieve this goal.
