

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Request for a Revised Version of Document G/SCM/W/471 dated 27 October 2001

Communication from the Dominican Republic

The following communication, dated 29 October 2001, has been received by the Chairman of the General Council from the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic.

On behalf of my delegation and at the request of Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Gabon, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Kenya, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, St. Lucia and Zimbabwe, I write to you concerning document G/SCM/W/471, entitled "Proposed Procedures for Extensions Under Article 27.4 for Certain Developing Country Members," which you have issued on 27 October 2001.

Our delegations appreciate the efforts you have made to improve the text reported to you by Mr. Remo Moretta, Chairman of the Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, contained in his report of our last meeting of the Committee, distributed under the signature G/SCM/38 dated 26 October 2001. The proposed procedure, as contained in your document, is more straightforward and in that sense it is acceptable to us. Notwithstanding this, our delegations have grave difficulty in accepting a proposed procedure that leaves our Ministers in Doha with no other option but the year 2005 as the end date for the extension under Article 27.4. As indicated by Mr. Moretta in his report our delegations insisted strongly that two alternative dates be included within brackets in the text.

Our delegations want to continue to support the preparatory process for the 4th Ministerial Conference. Our delegations appreciate how skilfully you have handled the drafting process of all documents to be presented to the consideration of Ministers. In particular, we value greatly your practice of presenting alternative options around controversial issues. That was the case of the work programme on investment and competition in the first draft of the Ministerial Declaration. It is now the case of the draft Ministerial Declaration on Intellectual Property and Access to Medicines/Health Policy, in which not only there are options in the title but also in the crucial paragraph 4.

We firmly request, therefore, that a revised version of document G/SCM/W/471 be issued with the two alternative dates in square brackets, as done by Mr. Moretta in his report. It is our belief that it should be the Ministers to so direct Members concerning the choice of the end date for the additional transition period we have been requesting since March 1999, as one of our major concerns on implementation. None of us should make that choice for them.
