

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(03)/ST/113
13 September 2003

(03-4900)

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
Fifth Session
Cancún, 10 - 14 September 2003

Original: English

GHANA

Statement by the Honourable Alan John Kwadwo Kyerematen Minister of Trade, Industry and President's Special Initiatives

Let me join my colleagues in congratulating you on your election as the Chairman of this very important Meeting. My delegation has no doubt that you bring to the Chairmanship a deep appreciation of the issues and the tasks that confront us.

We would also like to express our deep appreciation to the Government and people of Mexico for their hospitality and the excellent facilities that have been placed at our disposal.

Permit me in the same vein to convey through you, to the Chairman of the General Council and the Director-General the appreciation of my delegation, of their tireless efforts in the last two years, and in particular, in the last two months to pave a clear road to our Cancún Meeting. The difficulties encountered and the less than desired results obtained in some areas cannot detract from their commendable efforts, and the efforts of the Chairpersons of the various negotiating Groups and Bodies.

Two years ago in Doha, we delivered a mandate to the General Council to discharge a work programme, that would enable us collectively address the challenges facing the multilateral trading system. The most fundamental of the challenges, Mr Chairman, is that the vast majority of the membership of our body, the WTO, are developing and least-developed countries that stand marginalized in the multilateral trading system and are at the real risk of further marginalization. We, therefore, undertook in Doha, to address this imbalance, this inequity and this fundamental weakness of the multilateral trading system.

For two years, the institutional arrangements in Geneva have grappled with the mechanics and the processes through which we can fulfil our commitments made in Doha. However, the outcomes of the Geneva processes have so far been disappointing. This untenable situation places on all of us enormous challenges to make a success of this meeting which provides an opportunity to engender the necessary confidence and consensus amongst all Members of this Organization.

The Doha Development Agenda holds so much promise for all of us, especially for those of us in Africa. Its outcome by way of commitments and the multilateral rules resulting from the negotiations should contribute to the promotion of Africa's development.

The current impasse in the negotiations therefore raises widespread anxiety, I believe, not only for my delegation but for the entire membership of this Organization.

Agriculture remains the most important sub-sector of Ghana's economy accounting for about 40 per cent of GDP. Developments in that area of negotiations are of the utmost interest to Ghana. The inability to reach consensus on modalities for further reform is an unfortunate set-back in the negotiations, especially considering the fact that developments in agriculture influence progress in some, if not all, of the other negotiating groups.

Similarly, the area of non-agricultural market access (NAMA) is also of immense interest to my delegation. I need not repeat that tariff peaks, high tariffs and escalation have hampered our efforts at industrialization. Ghana is therefore expecting an outcome which will not only effectively address these obstacles to market entry but will also facilitate the implementation of our current programme of export-oriented industrialization.

While my delegation welcomes the resolution of the impasse on TRIPS and public health, it is also our hope that this outcome will indeed lead to the attainment of the objectives set out in the Doha Declaration in respect of this critical area.

I wish to also mention that there is the urgent need to resolve the implementation-related issues, and more especially, the operationalization of the provisions on special and differential treatment.

My delegation continues to hold the view that the Singapore Issues are not ripe for inclusion on the negotiating agenda, and therefore the educative work on the subjects must continue. This Mr Chairman, is to enable an assessment of the implications of these subjects on our trade.

The Doha Development Agenda if properly handled should become a major opportunity for progress and prosperity for all of us. I concede that there are no easy answers to the problems confronting us in these negotiations. I believe that the fundamental principles that should guide us are, common understanding, collective responsibility, shared and balanced interests.

Ghana will, in these negotiations, undertake commitments commensurate with her level of development that will give assurance of certainty and predictability of her trade and investment regimes to her trading partners. My delegation therefore expects our trading partners to reciprocate this, by addressing issues which are most crucial to our developmental needs.

I would like to end by expressing the profound appreciation of my delegation for the immense technical assistance that Ghana continues to receive from the WTO Secretariat, in particular, under the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund. I also wish to express our appreciation for the inclusion of my country in the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP), a programme which has greatly contributed to the capacity-building efforts in Ghana. We look forward to more of such assistance in the future.
