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LIECHTENSTEIN

Statement By H.E. Mr Ernst Walch
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Let me first express my gratitude to the People and the Government of Mexico for hosting this Ministerial Conference and for the excellent organization of this important event. I wish to thank the Chairman of the General Council and the Director-General, and all those who assisted them, for the preparatory work done in Geneva.

We also join the Assembly to welcome our newest Members: Cambodia and Nepal.

In Doha two years ago we launched an ambitious and broad-based negotiating Round. The goal has been to further strengthen, the rules-based multilateral trading system, and by doing so, the world economy. And, we have taken on the commitment to make the multilateral trading system work for developing countries.

As to the Doha timetable this Conference is lagging behind. As I am speaking views still differ sharply among members. This conference can therefore not only be a stock taking exercise. We are here to give new impetus to our trade negotiations. This needs courageous key decisions and guidance from Ministers, and, let me emphasize, it needs a great deal of flexibility and understanding for each others positions and differences. The conditions precedent of members of this organization are too diverse to have a "one-size-fits-all" solution. This is especially true for agriculture. Let us accept the fact that nature and its magnificent diversity ignores national boundaries and does not distribute equally its richness to all the countries.

Our agricultural sector is not only small in absolute but also in relative terms. It accounts for less than one percent of employment, and of course, we are a net food importer. Agriculture is in many countries, including mine, more than just food production. Our agricultural sector has in the last decades and years gone through tremendous structural changes. Not only would it be politically and socially impossible, it would in our case be irresponsible for environmental reasons to simply ruin this sector. In a fully liberalized market environment our type of agriculture dictated on our people by nature could not survive.

We therefore ask, together with many others, that non-trade concerns are being duly taken into account, that means that adequate border measures are kept and that trade liberalization has to be progressive.

As a necessary flanking measure for concessions in the agriculture negotiations it is our position that the extension of protection of geographical indications to products other than wine and spirits has to be a part of this single undertaking.

On non-agricultural products progress in Geneva was more substantial. In this sector - the traditional core business of WTO - we should aim at an ambitious result. Improved market access

means more trade, and more trade is beneficial to all, developed and developing countries alike. It also offers opportunities for growing trade among developing countries.

Services form an important part of the overall package of this negotiating Round. My country has handed in a comprehensive offer a couple of months ago.

We have always favoured a broad working programme and therefore support the inclusion of negotiations on the four Singapore issues in the Doha Development Round.

The outcome of the negotiations should be beneficial to all. In this respect I welcome that specific concerns of developing countries, especially those of least-developed countries, are addressed in all areas of the negotiations. The integration of developing countries in the multilateral trading system and the world economy as such is a big challenge, one if not the most important challenge of this time.

Many have stated in these past days that we must make this Conference a success. Our task here in Cancún is to set the framework for a successful and timely conclusion of Doha Development Agenda, to which my country is fully committed. We have to keep our system relevant to the realities and needs of this century's economy. There is no alternative to the WTO multilateral trading system. So let us make this Conference a success.
