

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(03)/ST/66
12 September 2003

(03-4863)

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
Fifth Session
Cancún, 10 - 14 September 2003

Original: English

PORTUGAL

Statement by H.E. Mr António Martins Da Cruz
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Allow me first of all, on behalf of my delegation, to express my gratitude to the Government and people of Mexico for the warm welcome and hospitality that have been accorded us since our arrival in this beautiful city of Cancún.

I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank Dr Supachai the Director-General of WTO and Ambassador Carlos Pérez del Castillo, Chairman of the General Council for their tireless efforts during the preparatory period.

This Ministerial Meeting offers all Members an unique opportunity to prove how much we are determined to strengthen the multilateral trading system and how much we are aware of its important contribution to reduce international uncertainty and instability world-wide, at a time when it is most needed.

For the sake of global economy and global governance, Cancún should be able to give a strong political signal on the principles we should preserve – the level of ambition decided in Doha, the single undertaking and an outcome of negotiations positive for both developed and developing countries.

Our assessment is that an important work was done on the substance and on clarification of positions. But our task goes beyond a mid-term review of the negotiations. This meeting should provide solutions for moving forward in all difficult issues, allowing us to maintain the level of ambition agreed upon in Doha. In a word, to create momentum for a successful conclusion of the negotiations next year.

We are committed to work towards the sustainable integration of developing countries in the multilateral system, providing greater market opportunities based on balanced rules.

This approach agreed in Doha is indeed a big challenge for the WTO. We want to increase market opportunities and strengthen multilateral rules, clarifying the existing ones but also promoting a broader rule making dimension, extending it to new areas such as investment, competition, trade facilitation and transparency on public procurement. We expect that a decision in this regard can be taken, as agreed in Doha.

One of the most important issues of this Doha Development Agenda, long awaited, is the multilateral compromise on TRIPS and Public Health, now agreed by all WTO Members. We realize the importance of finding a solution that should provide a better access of poor people to medicines. We welcome the deal that is a key element in the fight against communicable diseases.

We also need to make real progress on Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) for developing WTO Members, confirming a package of positive and meaningful results and agree on a working programme on the remaining SDT decisions.

But let me stress that the approach to a more effective integration of developing countries into the multilateral trading system should reflect their specific limitations resulting from the widely differential of development stages and the varying nature of the different WTO agreements.

Regarding specific measures to assist the least-developing countries I would like to underline the need for levels of access comparable to the EU Everything But Arms regime to be given worldwide to those countries. This should be an engagement of both the developed countries and of the most developed of the developing countries if we indeed are committed to give priority to issues of particular interest for developing countries.

Let me turn now to other important issues of our agenda.

Agriculture is one of them. The recent reform of EU Agricultural Policy, will reduce significantly our trade distorting subsidies. This will permit the EU to pursue an ambitious agenda as regards trade distorting support, all forms of subsidies as well as market access. But this will only work if our trading partners show their willingness to make equivalent concessions.

The European agriculture integrates not only an economic dimension, but also environmental and social dimensions as well as food safety, and rural development aspects. That's why the outcome will have to integrate non-trade concerns, including GIs. Geographical Indications must be protected since they contribute to rural development and to the quality of foodstuffs, and are a cultural, historical and economic heritage of developed and developing countries. That's why we expect that a decision on register for wines and spirits be taken, as well as on the extension for other products.

On market access for non-agricultural products we hope to reach a result on modalities which reflect the high level of ambition of Doha mandate: tariff peaks, high tariffs and tariff escalation should be reduced or eliminated as well as non-trade barriers. EU is particularly committed to this objective, provided that all Members, developed and developing countries, contribute to this goal, taking into account a SDT dimension, the degree of integration of developing countries and the competitiveness of their industries.

On services, mindful of the Member's desires to protect consumers, the environment and other vital domestic political interests, the aim of these negotiations is to open up trade in the interest of all.

The EU's conditional offer shows our commitment to open markets in many sectors, so we encourage all Members to submit and improve their offers likewise.

Let me conclude by saying that we have a special responsibility in finding collective solutions that allow all countries to benefit from the outcome of this Round. Portugal engages itself in this endeavour.
