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MOROCCO

Statement by H.E. Mr Mustapha Mechahouri
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I should like, in my own name on behalf of the Moroccan delegation, to express my sincerest thanks to the Government and people of Mexico for organizing this Fifth Ministerial Conference of the WTO, and for their warm welcome and the hospitality they have shown us since our arrival in this beautiful country.

Our thanks go also to the Director-General of the WTO and to all the members of the WTO Secretariat for the efforts they have made since the launching of the Doha Round and will continue to make during this Conference.

True to its tradition, the World Trade Organization has invariably succeeded in taking the right initiative at the right time in order to relaunch multilateral negotiations. We have observed this during the Uruguay Round, before Singapore and here at Cancún. I should like to pay tribute to it on that account.

Allow me to recall that the Doha Conference allowed us to launch a round of negotiations that enjoyed the support of all Members. The Doha Round established an ambitious work programme to further reinforce the multilateral trade system on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced approach which reflects the legitimate interests of all the Members of the WTO and includes the "development" dimension as a fundamental component of all the negotiations.

Under the Doha Ministerial Declaration we are required, in the course of these few days at Cancún, to take stock of progress, to provide any necessary guidance for the relaunching of the Doha Programme and to take decisions as necessary for the completion of the negotiating round within the prescribed time-limits.

The work undertaken so far in Geneva has enabled progress to be made in nearly all areas of the negotiations. But we have not succeeded in reflecting that progress in concrete and binding commitments. Although the implications of the negotiations are better understood, no consensus has been reached on their modalities.

In order to capitalize on the considerable efforts made so far, Morocco is in favour of the approach whereby general frameworks would be adopted setting out the elements of the modalities. In our view, such an approach should allow headway to be made in our future work. That, as we see it, is the ultimate objective of the Cancún Conference.

Previous speakers have presented interesting approaches to addressing the issues before us. For my part, I shall merely explain the position of the Kingdom of Morocco in terms of developments to date in the Doha process.

First, Morocco welcomes the recent agreement on TRIPS and Public Health. That achievement, to which Morocco made a significant contribution as coordinator of the countries of the African Group, is a historic one. It has accordingly lent historic dimension to the Doha Round and will undoubtedly give fresh impetus to our negotiations.

With regard to special and differential treatment, we take stock of progress made on this issue and hope that the negotiations will speed up in order to make this an instrument for integrating the developing countries and the least-developed countries into world trade.

Regarding the negotiations on agriculture, we note that there has been some satisfactory progress. We will need to ensure, however, that there is no lowering of the level of ambition set at Doha. Furthermore, there will have to be significant reductions in domestic support and export subsidies particularly in respect of horticultural products. We express our solidarity, in this context, with the four countries of Central Africa which have tabled an initiative in favour of cotton and we launch an appeal for their legitimate request to be taken into account here, at Cancún.

The developing countries should, moreover, be granted greater flexibility in the various areas of the negotiations to enable them to meet their development objectives as far as is possible, particularly those pertaining to rural development and food security.

Regarding market access for non-agricultural products, Morocco is in favour of a formula-based approach, covering all products without exception, which does not penalize developing countries that have made the effort to reach high levels of bindings, and of which special and differential treatment is an essential component.

Furthermore, participation in the supplementary approaches should be voluntary in order to achieve reductions over and above those obtained through the core modalities.

Morocco is also in favour of taking into account the erosion of preferences that would follow the tariff reductions implemented as a result of the negotiations, and accordingly invites the negotiating group to examine the problem thoroughly with a view to developing an appropriate mechanism to address the situation.

The negotiations on trade in services appear to be following the course charted for them by the Doha Declaration. For its part, Morocco has participated actively in the bilateral consultations and provided all the clarifications requested. However, a balance must be found between the rights and obligations of Members within the framework of the General Agreement on Trade in Services in order to ensure better access for the exports of developing countries to the markets of developed countries, *inter alia* by further liberalizing the conditions governing the movement of natural persons in these countries.

With regard to the negotiations on WTO rules, in Morocco's view it is necessary to preserve the effectiveness of implementing the disciplines governing anti-dumping and countervailing measures, as a means of countering harmful unfair trade practices. The results of these negotiations, which must be limited to clarifying and improving existing rules, should not be reflected as a reduction in the right of Members to resort to remedial trade measures.

With regard to the discussions on the rules applying to regional trade agreements, Morocco is satisfied with the progress made in the negotiations on procedural matters, the aim of which is to make regional trade agreements more transparent. In our view, however, it is time we embarked on negotiations on systemic issues in order to clarify and improve the relevant multilateral disciplines.

On the subject of trade and environment, Morocco takes note of the progress made in determining concepts and definitions for the terms contained in the mandate for these negotiations.

The negotiations on environment provide an opportunity for Members to make good the multilateral trade system's shortcomings in the area of trade and environment, but without using them as an opportunity to restrict market access for exports, particularly those from developing countries.

With regard to the Singapore Issues, Morocco is in favour of commencing the negotiations. We hope that the future multilateral agreements on investment, competition, government procurement, and trade facilitation will be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the particularities of developing countries and their development needs. Morocco furthermore calls for technical assistance to be reinforced, in particular by strengthening human and institutional capacities so as to enable the developing countries to negotiate these future agreements on the best possible footing and to use their implementation as a tool for economic development.

That is Morocco's overall appraisal of the status of the negotiations. It now remains for us to set the course for our future work in order to give new momentum to the Doha Round.

To that end, we propose three courses of action for consideration, to which the Cancún Conference should make political commitments.

First, we must reiterate our attachment to the Doha Programme as a whole and reaffirm that the "development" dimension is its cornerstone. We must ensure that this commitment is likewise observed by our negotiators in Geneva, the political and the technical components being complementary and essential to progress in the negotiations.

The second course of action concerns the approach to be adopted in implementing the Doha Programme. The hallmark of this Round is that it is a single undertaking, and it is therefore necessary to establish a positive link between the various areas of the negotiations so that it is possible to move ahead without having to wait for certain Members to progress on a given issue before others can advance elsewhere.

The third - but by no means the least important - course of action consists in adopting early results on certain priority issues. Issues are, of course, ranked differently depending on the social and economic objectives of Members, but it is necessary to send out clear signals in order to boost the public confidence worldwide in the Doha Round of negotiations, particularly in the developing and the least-developed countries. Such results would be bound to give a new stimulus to the implementation of the Doha Programme and to the continuation of the negotiations with a view to their completion by 1 January 2005.
