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Statement by H.E. Mrs Lydie Polfer
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Allow me first to thank you for so kindly welcoming us to this perfect place, and also for hosting the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the WTO - it has to be admitted that since Seattle, embarking on such a venture amounts to a feat of bravery. We have all come here to Cancún with two goals: to defend the interests and positions of our respective countries and to join forces in seeking satisfactory responses to the challenges of globalization.

To be in a position to find those responses, we must build relationships based on reciprocal knowledge, trust, support and mutual respect. We must learn to leave national egoism aside and demonstrate our solidarity, since a multilateral trade system is just and fair only if it enables everyone, particularly developing countries, to benefit from it.

We have come a long way since Seattle. One by one we have come to realise that to take account of the economic dimension alone is not enough to build the kind of healthy framework in which multilateral rules can be developed for the liberalization of trade. We have realized that survival of the fittest is no basis for trade and that even the smallest voice must be heard!

At Doha, we succeeded in making development the focus of our work and reached agreement on a real development programme. Luxembourg fully endorses the objectives set on that occasion and, incidentally, earmarks more than 0.8 per cent of its national wealth for official development assistance, in the conviction that international trade and development aid must support each other mutually.

With regard to the Doha Programme, I of course welcome the recent agreement on TRIPS and public health. It is a clear sign of our shared determination to find solutions to very difficult situations. But we must be under no illusions: essential as it may be, the agreement addresses only the purely commercial aspects of the issues and will not rid the world of the AIDS scourge overnight. That will require joint efforts by the international community in other areas.

I note with satisfaction that good progress has been made in recent months on the implementation of special and differential treatment. I am confident that some essential issues still pending will be satisfactorily solved before the end of the year.

We are here first and foremost to undertake a midway review of the work we embarked on at Doha and to complete it by means of supplementary negotiations in a number of areas. I am aware of the many obstacles in our path: we need look no further than agriculture, branded, as always, the stumbling-block of the Conference.

Aware of how important agriculture is to the majority of its partners in the WTO, the European Union has started implementing a package of reforms and adjustments of the Common Agricultural Policy, in order to equip it with instruments which imply no – or very few - trade

distortions, and yet will strengthen the multifunctional role of European agriculture. I must point out, in this connection, that it is of fundamental importance to Luxembourg that non-trade considerations be taken into account. The consumers in our country are passionately concerned about food security and animal welfare.

But agriculture is not the only sector in which non-trade concerns must be taken on board. Luxembourg hopes that environmental and social considerations will be integrated in all the work done at the WTO.

One subject that the Doha Declaration has left aside is the transparency of our Organization to the outside world and the way in which national parliaments could be encouraged to participate in our work more actively. It would be a good idea to reflect on this and to set up a working group to explore the best way of making our Organization more transparent and more easily understood by lay people. It would also be appropriate to consider the possibility of opening certain meetings of the decision-making body to the public, as occurs with debates in the United Nations General Assembly.

I said earlier that development has been placed at the core of our Organization. We must not only listen but also demonstrate solidarity with the poorest countries. That holds good for the cotton initiative put forward by a number of African countries. We should reflect on the matter in order to find the best way of resolving it together.

Our Organization continues to grow. With the accession of Cambodia and Nepal, which I welcome most particularly, our membership has risen to 148. These are, moreover, the first accessions by least-developed countries since 1995. The decision of 2002 to facilitate accession by the least-developed countries is thus bearing its first fruits. The tendency of our Organization towards universality will be further reinforced by the prompt conclusion of current accession negotiations.

Lastly, I thank the Director-General and the Secretariat for their efforts in favour of technical assistance to trade. I welcome the ongoing commitment by the main donors to improve the quality of such assistance. My country is renewing its attachment to the Doha Fund by making a significant new contribution, akin to the one it made last year.

Finally, I wish to make a point of paying tribute to the Chairman of the General Council, Ambassador Perez del Castillo of Uruguay, for the masterly way in which he has headed the preparatory work in Geneva. I hope that his tireless efforts will bear fruit here in Cancún.

In conclusion, I emphasize that Luxembourg associates itself with the statements made by the representative of the European Commission and Italy, which holds the Presidency of the European Union, and hope that the time-frame set at Doha for concluding the negotiations will be observed. Our Organization has an important role to play in the attainment of the goals set by the United Nations Millennium Summit to halve poverty in the world by 2015. Let us capitalize on the momentum.
