

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(99)/ST/143
2 December 1999

(99-5369)

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
Third Session
Seattle, 30 November - 3 December 1999

Original: French

GUINEA-BISSAU

Statement by H.E. Dr. Suleimane Djassi Secretary of State of Trade, Industry and Tourism

First of all, allow me to congratulate you, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf on your election to the Chairmanship of our Conference.

My sincere thanks also go to the outgoing Chairman for the outstanding work he has done for our Organization during his term of office.

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the United States Government for the warm welcome we have received since our arrival in Seattle and for all the facilities that have been provided so that the delegations from the least-developed countries (LDCs) can take part in this important meeting.

Finally, I should like to convey my sincere appreciation to Mr. Mike Moore, Director-General of the WTO, and to the members of the Secretariat for all the efforts made to enable this Conference to be held.

As you know, this Third Ministerial Conference must analyse and find an answer to three main issues: shaping a new trading policy for the third millennium, adopting a ministerial declaration and starting a new round of negotiations.

As regards new trading policy, Guinea-Bissau is a vulnerable country confronted by the growing liberalization of world trade.

Consequently, we think that the shaping of a new policy in the context of the WTO must take account of the realities that face the least-developed countries, of which Guinea-Bissau is one.

With regard to the Seattle Declaration we will be adopting at this Conference, a number of matters which appear important to me, in particular the creation by the WTO of mechanisms which can facilitate access to the global market for products originating in the LDCs.

In view of the poor response capacity of the LDCs to the demands of international trade, the WTO must speed up the actual implementation of the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance by providing adequate financial resources.

We also consider that the time-frames given to the LDCs for implementing the WTO Agreements are too short. We therefore call for these time-frames to be extended.

Again, as regards the fresh round of negotiations, I should like to voice a number of concerns here:

Our country greatly appreciates the support of the international organizations for the LDCs. Nevertheless, there is a need for coherence between the WTO rules and the reforms recommended by the World Bank, the IMF and the United Nations System.

The world is facing major challenges such as poverty, under-development and environmental issues.

We believe that the WTO must take these concerns into account and endeavour to resolve them. It is therefore necessary to adopt policies and set up mechanisms that help to meet these challenges successfully.

These are a few matters I wanted to bring to the attention of this illustrious assembly.
