

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(99)/ST/48
1 December 1999

(99-5241)

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

Original: French

MALI

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Fatou Haïdara Cisse, Minister of Industry, Commerce and Handicrafts

I would like to begin by congratulating the government of the United States and the authorities of the State of Washington for their welcome and hospitality.

I also congratulate the Director-General of the WTO, Mr. Mike Moore, and all of his colleagues, who have spared no effort in ensuring that this conference is successful in all respects.

The Seattle Conference, which is taking place at the dawn of the third millennium, is of particular significance for the government of Mali in that it should enable us to draw, together, the outlines of the world of tomorrow - a task in which we must all share - and to usher in a new era of peace, prosperity and social justice for all humans.

Free trade between nations must not be a zero-sum game in which the more powerful nations impose their laws and regulations to the detriment of the poorest and most vulnerable.

Human civilization in the 21st century would not survive if the cancer of poverty that cripples many countries in the developing world were to persist.

Free trade between nations must lead, first and foremost, to a rise in the standard of living of the partners committed to building together a just and equitable world in which we can all put our particular gifts to the most advantage.

In this context, the World Trade Organization must reflect the diversity of its Members; it must encourage fruitful dialogue between them on all subjects of concern to the human race in order to foster policies of cooperation that favour the integration of the world's least developed countries into the world system.

Within the WTO, each one of us must be heard, each one of us must be listened to, each one of us must have his place and be recognized as a full partner, whatever his weight within the world economy.

In this connection, we welcome the recent bilateral agreement between the United States and China which will open the door to the rapid accession of our friends to this Organization.

Mali is an advocate of globalization with a human face, of a globalization that creates synergies among all of the peoples of this planet, of a globalization that highlights the diversity of cultures, of a globalization that brings prosperity and peace to humanity.

The Seattle Conference, which is to be the starting point for a new round of negotiations, should, in our humble opinion, produce balanced and equitable results which take account of the views of each one of the partners here today.

Allow us to make a few remarks concerning the subjects under discussion.

- Concerning agriculture, we think that the developed countries should eliminate export subsidies on agricultural products over a set period of time during which the international community would undertake to support the least developed countries in the development of their own agricultural production.
- Concerning the Agreement on Trade in Services, we would agree to the further liberalization of trade in services while safeguarding the interests of all participants.
- Regarding the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, we think that the objective is to agree on rules that are accessible to the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, and to distinguish between mandatory rules and optional guidelines or recommendations.
- Concerning the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, we should clarify the international rules and simplify the conformity assessment procedures.
- Finally, with respect to the Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures, we should take account of the multifunctional nature of investment in order to encourage investment, in particular in the developing countries.

These remarks reflect our desire to refine the functioning of our organization.

Indeed, as I said a short while ago, the World Trade Organization must reflect the diversity of its Members and must not be an instrument in the hands of the more powerful by which they impose their law.

To improve the way in which the Organization functions, we think that there should be an assessment of the agreements in force so that we can determine what is working and what has not been working.

At the same time, we should introduce a functional cooperation mechanism between the Bretton Woods Institutions with which the developing countries, like ours, are involved in long-term structural adjustment programmes.

By doing so, we would be able to make the policies implemented in cooperation with the international community more coherent for the greater benefit of our peoples.

Moreover, in order to ensure maximum participation of the developing countries in the World Trade Organization, we think that it is necessary to introduce a far-reaching cooperation programme which would enable them to:

- Participate fully and efficiently in the forthcoming negotiations;
- fulfil the commitments they have entered into the framework of our Organization;
- be better prepared with respect to dispute settlement;
- acquire greater expertise in the field of trade policy.

In short, the developing countries should be in a better position to defend their interests.

If we want the third millennium to be the work of all human beings, we must ensure that solidarity and justice are allowed to triumph and lead human civilization into the 21st century.

Only then will the world of tomorrow be able to make its way in peace through new adventures, opening up a positive future for humanity.
