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MONGOLIA

Statement by H. E. Ms. Nyamosor Tuya, Minister for External Relations

It is a privilege for me and for my delegation to be here at the Third Ministerial Conference of the WTO and to take part in the exciting discussions that are taking place here – for the third day now - on important issues that have a direct bearing on our peoples' life today, and are vital for tomorrow. I wish to express my gratitude to our hosts, the Government of the United States of America and the City of Seattle, for all the arrangements that have been made in the preparation and the conduct of this Conference, and to note the efforts made by the Director-General and the Secretariat in the difficult lead-up to this Conference.

I wish to associate myself with the many delegates who, before me, spoke on the importance of trade in promoting development and ensuring prosperity. In this age of globalization, development and prosperity can only be achieved through shared effort, and through gearing that effort to the needs of tomorrow's ever more interdependent and ever more technologically advanced world. As we enter a new century, the question we ought to be putting ourselves is whether, decades down the road, our children will still be living in a world divided into the developed and the developing countries, whether there still will be three billion people living under two dollars a day – a mockery of human dignity! – whether, given the already complex nature of the global challenges we now face, we will be able to sustain stability and peace if poverty is not reduced, if trade does not provide economic benefits to today's – and shall I say tomorrow's? – have not's. These are all questions that, as we know, call for an urgent answer. One answer is that we need to build a shared prosperity and ensure a shared growth through better integrating small and vulnerable economies into the international trading system, and building a system that benefits the developing countries and addresses the concerns of economies in transition.

My country, Mongolia, has been a Member of the WTO for three years now. This membership has been consistent with wide-ranging economic reform agenda that my country has been implementing over the past several years. It has also been consistent with our trade liberalization policy one aim of which is to reduce the heavy cost burden caused to companies and consumers alike by the country's land-locked location which, de facto, serves as a natural barrier to our trade expansion. We also see trade liberalization as conducive to our development goals by contributing to transfer of technology and knowledge. Mongolia is now a most liberal trade regime with low tariffs, no quantitative restrictions and no export subsidies whatever.

Work is ongoing in my country on making our domestic rules and procedures and laws consistent with the WTO rules. That proved to be a difficult task which calls for deeper training and expertise. My government therefore is very much supportive of the view that trade-related technical cooperation and technical assistance should be further extended to developing countries to strengthen their institutional and human resources capacity building in the area of the multilateral trading system. In our view, the present notification requirements and procedures need also to be simplified and streamlined without causing prejudice to the transparency of the system.

We in Mongolia believe in the merits of a rules-based multilateral trading system and are convinced that it needs further strengthening to enhance the gains to living standard which come from trade. However, unless the WTO addresses the specific needs and problems of small and vulnerable economies these gains may prove to be volatile. Mongolia therefore supports the incorporation of a provision on small economies into the Ministerial Declaration and the specific suggestion to instruct the Committee on Trade and Development on drawing up a work program aimed at enhancing the small economies' integration into the multilateral trading system.

We support the inclusion into the ministerial text of a paragraph underlying the continuing importance of special and differential treatment for developing countries to enable these countries to reap greater benefits from their membership while they work to resolve their development goals. With regard to agriculture, we believe that greater access for the products from developing countries and subsidies issues need to be addressed.

Mongolia stands unequivocally for further opening of the services sector, which we believe constitutes a major sector for foreign investment, job creation and skill development. Information technology is offering unlimited possibilities for trade expansion, notably through expanding e-commerce. We are for the continuation of the current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions. Being a land-locked developing country we also believe that freedom of transit transportation should be dealt with more closely by the WTO. We should look at the possibility of developing clearer and more specific rules regarding freedom of transit as incorporated in Article V, GATT 1994.

In trade facilitation we believe that a framework of disciplines or guidelines on the administration of trade procedures and customs-related issues should be looked at more closely.

Mongolia's sole neighbours and her major trading partners, China and Russia, are still not Members of the WTO. This constitutes a major weakness for the global trading system, which needs to be remedied as soon as possible. We therefore congratulate China on the conclusion of its negotiations with the United States and wish further progress to Russia's accession efforts. For the WTO to develop into a truly global trade organization membership of China and Russia is crucial

My delegation is confident that at this Ministerial Conference Ministers will spare no efforts to succeed in moving the trading system ahead and thus moving closer to the goal of global prosperity which is our ultimate goal.
