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Statement by H.E. Mr. Hamad A. Al-Ghanim, Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs

First of all, on behalf of the Government of the State of Kuwait, myself and the members of the accompanying delegation, I would like to extend my congratulations to you for being elected as Chairman of the Third Ministerial Meeting of the WTO. I also congratulate the members of the Executive Bureau wishing them all success.

On this occasion, let me convey to both the American Government and the friendly American people our appreciation for hosting this big well-organized conference. I would like also to congratulate both Mr. Mike Moore and his colleague Mr. Supachai for being selected to lead the WTO during the next six years. I am confident that both of them will be able to realize his aspirations.

While this meeting is being held, we are about to celebrate a few spiritual occasion which embody the best meanings of humanitarian cooperation and unity among all peoples to the best interest of man who has been dignified by the creator.

The auspicious month of Ramadan will start within a few days, and in its simplest meaning means the assistance given by the rich to the poor without favour, followed by the world celebration of Christmas, the birthday of Christ, the spirit of tolerance and solidarity, culminating in the New Year and the new millennium during which I wish prosperity and stability for all people.

In my brief speech, I have to point out the dramatic economic changes that took place during the 1990s, and the nations attitude towards adopting the principle of liberal economy instead of other prevailing economic theories. The State of Kuwait has adopted this principle since its independence and even before out of its firm belief of the importance of the open economy in pushing forward towards prosperity and meeting human needs. In this regard, it is my pleasure to inform you that an international investment forum will be held in Kuwait from 4-5 March 2000 to serve this worldwide tendency.

Our meeting follows a series of regional, international and even local intensive meetings. I personally think that these meetings as well as our next meetings will spontaneously shape the futuristic picture which will lead to globalization imposing itself as a historic inevitability.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the forces of globalization are humanitarian forces based on humanitarian work and it is not a commodity with specific expiry. This globalization "the picture" is to be finally drawn after negotiations and conferences so as we can share it and not face it.

I have read and scrutinized, with my work team, the draft statement to be declared at the end of our meeting which includes some paragraphs reflecting the discussions and negotiations conducted by the permanent delegations to the WTO in Geneva. Let me share with you a few suggestions hoping that they will be tackled during the next round of negotiations, to be an element of stability and optimism for the developing and least developing countries, they are as follows:

1. To take into consideration the developing and least developing countries view points which constitute the majority not in the WTO but in the world, they are competing to join your esteemed organization hoping for prosperity.
 2. To take into consideration the "implementation principle" which is a collective request for all WTO Members, unfortunately, the developing and least developing countries faced and are still facing some difficulties regarding implementation, therefore, I suggest to give them time to organize their internal matters.
 3. The exchange of privileges between the World's North and South countries for the common good, putting into action the principle of balance and justice.
 4. Within the context of the previous suggestion, we see that the transfer of technology among the WTO Member states is a vital issue for the developing and least developing countries. The above-mentioned transfer should be without heavy financial burdens.
 5. The opening of markets for the developing and least developing countries emerging industries, and assisting them to reach new markets through an information database to be established by the WTO will inevitably develop their economy.
 6. The most upsetting issue for the developing and least developing countries wishing to join the WTO is that they face a lot of requirements which sometimes are impossible with respect to their national capabilities. We think that the WTO should have a clear and streamlined strategy for the joining of countries to the WTO without having to wait for a long time or constituting a burden on them.
 7. The State of Kuwait diligently endeavoured since 1994, at the time of signing the final document of Uruguay Round. To update its national laws and legislations to cope with the WTO Agreements. Further to this, and with respect its regional membership to the Gulf Cooperation Council, calls upon the Members to accept the joining of our brotherly countries: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman. So as our region will have full membership, this will undoubtedly push the WTO forward.
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