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PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Statement by H.E. Mr. Shi Guangsheng Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation

(Speaking as an Observer)

On behalf of the Chinese Government, I would like to extend my congratulations on the convening of the Seattle meeting.

From Punta del Este of Uruguay to Seattle, 13 years have passed, through which China has been committed to its bid to enter the multilateral trading system. Not long ago, China concluded its bilateral talks with the United States. Six days ago, we reached an agreement with Canada as well. We are now making greater efforts to conduct negotiations with Members yet to clinch a deal with China under the principle of equality and consultation, mutual understanding and accommodation and to strive for an early conclusion of all the talks. I can predict that in the near future, China will become a full Member of the World Trade Organization.

China's entry into the WTO will be a great contribution to the multilateral trading system and a strong support to the new round of multilateral trading negotiations. After its accession to the WTO, China will fulfill corresponding obligations and abide by the rules of WTO while enjoying its legitimate rights as a WTO Member.

The evolving trend of economic globalization characterizes our time. As one of the major actors in the economic globalization, WTO plays a crucial role in this process. The Chinese Government fully affirms the important part the multilateral trading system has played in the promotion of world economic and trade development over the past five decades. Meanwhile as the biggest developing country in the world, China also feels that the current multilateral trading system has obvious defects. Its failure to fully reflect the rights, interests and demands of the developing countries shows how incomplete and unbalanced this Organization is.

The time of the launching of a new round of negotiations is also the time when the multilateral trading system has to make choices. The choice we must make today is whether to allow more countries, including developing countries, to enjoy the opportunities and benefits brought about by the economic globalization, or to widen the gap between rich and poor countries and even to allow some countries to be marginalized; whether to involve all Members in the formulation of international trade rules for the next century through equal participation and consultation, or to allow a small number of Members to dominate and control the process and the result of the negotiations.

China holds:

First, the economic development objectives of developing countries and corresponding pattern of gradual market opening should be fully respected.

Second, developed countries should meet their obligations stipulated in the agreements of the Uruguay Round, and improve the market access environment for developing countries.

Third, the formulation of new trade rules must have the full involvement of developing countries.

Fourth, the coordination among developing countries should be strengthened, and their collective negotiation ability in the multilateral trading system should be improved.

Fifth, the new round of multilateral trade negotiations should focus on discussing issues related to trade. China holds that those issues that are not related to the functions of WTO such as labour standards should not be incorporated into the agenda.

The times are advancing and mankind is progressing. We hope that through the joint endeavour of all the countries, the new round of negotiations will achieve better results than that of past negotiations.

On behalf of the Chinese Government, I solemnly declare that after achieving its WTO membership, China will contribute to the success of the new round of multilateral trade negotiations in accordance with its own level of economic development. China will be a responsible and constructive member in the future multilateral trading system, which has been proved by China's performance in the Asian Financial Crisis and China's 13 years' efforts for its entry into the multilateral trading system.

In conclusion, I'd like to finish my speech with what we've learned over the past 13 years: China needs to further open up itself to the world, and the world needs a China that is more open than ever before!
