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SUDAN

Statement by H.E. Mr. Adam Eltahi Hamdoun Minister of Foreign Trade

The continuing marginalization of the 48 least-developed countries to which Sudan belongs, in a rapidly globalizing and liberalizing world economy poses a unique challenge to us at the national level as well as the international community at large.

Enhancing our trade performance and accelerating the integration of our economies into the global economy and the multilateral trading system is closely linked to broader development issues including those in the trade area. This calls for strengthening our supply capacities, assisting our countries in overcoming supply side constraints and improving competitiveness. At the dawn of a new millennium, it is timely to consider the opportunities and challenges of translating the reality of a globalizing and interdependent world economy into an improvement in the standard of living of people in LDCs. The first step in integrating LDCs into the global economy and the international trading system is their institutional integration in the system. Sudan is one of more than 30 applicants and among six LDCs which are in the process of accession to the WTO. Sudan submitted its Memorandum of Accession early this year. We call upon the interested WTO Members to speed up their consideration of the Memorandum in order to put the process on track. It is imperative that improved and clearly defined accession procedures for LDCs be established on priority basis. Experience so far has proved that onerous and excessive demands are being placed on acceding LDCs.

In this respect, we believe that a simplified procedure be established with clearly defined guidelines. LDCs seeking accession should not be called upon to assume obligations or commitments that go beyond what is applicable to WTO LDC Members.

In view of the limited human, institutional and technological capacity of our countries, we call upon the WTO and other competent organizations to provide adequate technical and financial support to assist us in our endeavours to accede to the WTO. Such support should come from the regular budgets of the core agencies implementing the integrated framework initiative.

Let me reaffirm that my country will continue the reform and liberalization of the economy – in a manner that would enhance our integration in the multilateral trading system.

Finally, let me recall that as a group we have submitted proposals for a comprehensive new plan of action addressing our concerns. In addition, we call for the full and effective implementation of the Marrakesh decision in favour of LDCs.

We wish to emphasize the importance of bound, duty-free and quota-free market access for all products of LDCs. The special and differential measures which are of particular importance to LDCs should be strengthened and made an integral part of the multilateral trade rules. The transitional periods for LDCs should be extended for reasonable time-periods.