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GRENADA

Statement by H.E. Dr Patrick Antoine
Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the WTO

On behalf of the Government of Grenada, which I have the honour to represent, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the Government and people of Mexico for hosting this Fifth Ministerial Conference.

We wish at the very beginning, to reaffirm our commitment to a rules-based multilateral trading system. We would however wish to see rules that are designed to achieve fairer and more balanced trade for all countries; rich and poor.

Grenada wishes to reaffirm that special and differential treatment provisions must be an integral part of all WTO Agreements. But to be effective, special and differential treatment must be translated into legally binding measures.

At the Fourth Ministerial Conference at Doha, Ministers unanimously committed to participating in a broad work programme which should result in economic growth, the reduction of poverty and sustainable development for all people.

The purpose of this Ministerial Conference is to review the negotiating process. We believe, however, that decisions on certain key issues must be taken. Ministers must give clear, unambiguous political guidance in order to push this negotiating process forward.

On the issue of small developing economies, greater recognition must be given to their peculiar situation and circumstances. We believe that in the reduction of tariffs, these small island developing economies should be exempt from making further commitments. In addition, adequate compensation should be provided to these economies to assist them during their transition period.

Market access modalities for non-agricultural products must take full account of the export interests of developing countries and revenue implications of further liberalization.

My Government considers the inclusion of strategic products without further tariff reduction and a specific safeguard mechanism to be critical elements of a successful deal here at Cancún. This flexibility for countries such as Grenada must be included in any agreement approved at this Conference.

We welcome the decision on the implementation of paragraph 6 of the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and public health, which will ensure access to certain pharmaceutical products for countries facing specific health problems. We are anxious to begin working towards a permanent solution to this problem as well as concrete actions to deliver these medicines to those most in need in the short run.

The Doha Round is premised on addressing the development needs and concerns of the least-developed countries and facilitating their integration in the multilateral trading system. We give our unambiguous support to the cotton initiative and urge the meeting to endorse measures aimed at operationalizing this most needed action of subsidy phase-out in cotton in favour of the LDCs.

On the issue of agriculture, the modalities for the negotiations should address issues such as food security, poverty alleviation, as well as the special needs of Net Food Importing Developing Countries.

On non-agricultural market access, our position is that developing countries should be allowed to liberalize at a rate commensurate with their level of development, so as to make the necessary structural adjustment in the long run.

In addition, recognition should be given to small developing countries that have undertaken unilateral liberalization by affording them greater flexibility.

We believe, that the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round can accelerate economic growth, and improve the standard of living of our people and therefore look forward with great expectation to this outcome.

My government believes in people-centred development. The eyes of the world are upon us as we deliberate here at Cancún. We are driving the character if not the kind of world that we will shape for the next several years.

It is my fervent hope that this Conference will produce positive results. The credibility of our institutions is at stake. We must deliver on the promises made within the framework of the Doha Development Round.

Finally, we appeal to all Members to redouble their efforts in order to reach consensus on many of the outstanding critical issues. There must be a clear commitment and political will to accommodate each other's interests if these negotiations are to make progress.

We would like in closing to welcome to the fold the countries of Cambodia and Nepal. Their accession to the WTO will no doubt enrich our institution and will contribute to the thrust forward and full inclusion of developing countries and LDCs in the global trading system.

In conclusion, the credibility of our institution is at stake. The voice and aspirations of my people implore us to act.

History and our collective destiny beckons us.

We must heed the call!!
