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FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Statement by H.E. Dr. Becir Zuta
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy
(Speaking as an Observer)

Allow me on behalf of the Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to express my great pleasure of having this opportunity to address the First Ministerial Conference of WTO held in Singapore.

I have the honour to express our appreciation to the WTO Secretariat and its Director-General, Mr. Renato Ruggiero for their efforts made in preparing and organizing this important Conference.

We recognize the strivings of WTO initiated towards ensuring an open, fair and dynamic multilateral trade system as a basis for global environment conducive to economic growth.

The creation of an open market economy is a fundamental objective of the economic reforms in my country. Following the independence, the process of comprehensive reform undertakings in the economic and political system continued. The guiding basic principles are democracy, political pluralism, respecting the human rights and freedoms, ethics of civil society, rule of law, as well as the market economy. With this view, my Government is committed in the first place, to the strengthening of stability, stabilization of economics trends, implementation of economic reforms with the ultimate objective to create an efficient market economy.

The new legal regime creates a framework for modern and dynamic trade relations on the basis of market criteria and principles. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia envisages its economic prosperity throughout creation of an open market economy that would exchange a large part of its product on the world markets. Although at the onset the adjustment of the national economy to the conditions and requirements of the world market is a difficult task, it is the only way of attaining a sustainable economic growth and development.

The Government attaches great importance to the accession to the World Trade Organization and wishes to complete it as soon as possible. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia builds its position in international economic relations by observing international principles and standards. Although not a WTO Member, we respect the basic GATT principles which became part of WTO regulations, and they are an integral part of our legislation. We have already submitted our Memorandum for accession and we are looking forward to starting the first meeting of the working party very soon.

We believe in the universal character of the WTO as a multilateral system which will enable growth of the world trade investments and possibilities for new jobs. In this context, we expect realistic results from the Singapore Conference, which will strengthen the rule-based, open, fair and dynamic multilateral trading system.

Allow me, in concluding, to express my gratitude to the Government of Singapore for its efforts and its kind hospitality extended to us.