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## BOTSWANA

Statement by the Honourable George Kgoroba,  
Minister of Commerce and Industry

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our appreciation to the Director-General and the Swiss Government for the excellent arrangements made for this second Ministerial Conference. This forum provides a unique opportunity for all WTO Member States to continue to exchange views on the current issues pertaining to the world trade and the multilateral trading system. It is only through this forum that we can build a deeper understanding of each other's concerns and be able to develop appropriate strategies relevant to our unique situations. It is in this context that Botswana reaffirms its commitment to the rules-based multilateral system which is based on transparency, consensus, predictability and unity of purpose.

It will be recalled that when we came out of the first Ministerial Conference in Singapore some 18 months ago, it became evident that the majority of developing countries and more especially the least-developed countries were lagging behind in complying with the WTO obligations particularly with respect to notification requirements and development of appropriate legislations. In this regard, the need for targeted technical assistance was recognized as an essential prerequisite to the developing countries' ability to meet their obligations in terms of the WTO Agreements. I would like to commend the Director-General for having managed to conduct seminars focused on specific sectors. However, there is still need to conduct more of these seminars, not only to sensitize the public sector personnel, but also to target civil society so that they too could play a meaningful role in the implementation of the WTO Agreements.

Botswana fully supports the need to involve the wider civil society in WTO issues. It is only through this process that the respective constituencies can appreciate and begin to participate in reshaping the world trading system for the benefit of all humanity. However, to achieve this, it is even more urgent for developing countries to be assisted in order to develop capacity for the smooth implementation and management of this change.

We note with satisfaction the progress made by the Director-General in implementing the Singapore Ministerial Declaration on Least-Developed Countries to enhance their trading opportunities through the integrated programme of assistance. We urge the concerned organizations to maintain the momentum in implementing this programme of assistance. While a lot has been achieved in implementing some of the Singapore decisions, much work is still required to be undertaken by WTO Members and the Secretariat to assist developing countries, especially the net-food importing countries. There is therefore a need to also formulate a special assistance programme for the net-food importing countries as provided for in the Marrakesh Agreement.

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With regard to the future agenda of the WTO, Botswana appreciates the concerns of various Member States in the development of a new agenda for the work of this body. While we have no doubt that these concerns are genuine, we believe that ultimately the future of the WTO agenda has to be determined on the basis of experiences gained during the Uruguay Rounds negotiations, the capacity of developing and least-developed countries, to effectively participate in these negotiations and the genuine need for cooperation and consensus building among WTO Member States. This will undoubtedly form the basis for a realist approach in future WTO negotiations.

With regard to the built-in agenda, the developing countries made it clear that much work still needs to be done before discussions on the "new issues" could be taken on board. Much progress seems not to have been achieved in the areas of market access, agriculture, intellectual property rights and services. Developing countries should be assisted in their endeavours to fulfil their obligations in these areas.

With regard to the new issues, Botswana's position is that while there may be merit to debate these issues in the WTO, it is not appropriate to broaden the current agenda. As far as we are concerned, the WTO is still debating the implementation of Uruguay Round Agreements as well as addressing the built-in agenda. Botswana also believes that the capacity of the developing and least-developed countries, and this will limit their participation in the multilateral trading system.

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