

**DECLARATION OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA  
ON THE FOURTH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AT DOHA, QATAR**

Communication from Cuba

The following communication, dated 22 October, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Cuba, with the request that it be circulated to Members.

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1. The Group of 77 and China support the rules-based multilateral trading system (MTS) as one of the essential instruments for the promotion of economic development, the facilitation of developing countries' integration into the global economy, and the eradication of poverty worldwide. We recognise the critical importance of the rules-based multilateral trading system and of transparent decision-making process in the WTO managing globalisation and reducing the scope for unilateral actions.
  2. Developing countries have a clear interest in strengthening the system in a manner that promotes their development. In many respects multilateral rules need to be improved to become more responsive to the trade and development interests of developing countries and to achieve equitable objectives.
  3. Due to the systemic shortfalls in the international economic and trading system, a large majority of the developing countries have, so far, failed to accrue a share in the global economic prosperity. Moreover, the global economic slowdown/recession is going to affect all including most seriously the developing countries and the poorest among them.

countries have identified 104 implementation issues which emanate from the inadequate or faulty implementation of agreements, in letter and spirit; those arising from incorrect interpretation of the provisions of those agreements; and those which arise from inherent asymmetries and imbalances within the WTO agreements. We reiterate the need for full and faithful implementation and the redressal of existing imbalances arising from the Uruguay Round Agreement, which is an important step towards confidence building and restoring the credibility of the multilateral trading system and, therefore must be meaningfully resolved, with urgency before the 4<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting and without any extraneous linkages.

6. We note that the Uruguay Round Agreements have not resulted, as promised, in greater market access to the developed countries' markets for the exports of developing and least developed countries. The continued existence in developed countries of tariff peaks, tariff escalations and other non-tariff barriers such as arbitrary and complex rules of origin, technical barriers to trade, and sanitary and phytosanitary measures used for protectionist purposes, as well as abuse of the so called trade remedies such as anti-dumping, countervailing duties and safeguard actions particularly in sectors of interest for developing countries including textiles and clothing, agriculture and other agro-industrial products has had a serious negative impact on the trade and development prospects of the developing and least developed countries and has prevented these countries from reaping the benefits of trade liberalization. The Ministerial Meeting in Doha should address the negative impact of these measures on market access opportunities for developing countries with a view to their elimination.

7. We believe that since the Special and Differential (S&D) provisions in the existing UR

- The redressal of the inequitable nature of existing provisions of the Agreement on Agriculture. In this regard the proposal by developing countries on “Development Box” should be included in the provisions of a renewed and more equitable agreement as well as other proposals made by developing countries on S&D and the concerns of single commodity producers and SIDS. Proposals made by developing countries on non-trade concerns-namely food security and rural development shall also be addressed. As agreed, the appropriate mechanisms should be established to ensure the implementation of the commitments made in the Decision on Measures in favour of Net Food importing Developing Countries and LDCs.

16. Measures to address implementation and mandated negotiations including the review of various WTO agreements already constitute a broad agenda for work. We recognize that issues such as trade and investment, competition, transparency in government procurement, trade facilitation, are important. However, any decision to conduct negotiations on these issues in WTO should be on a consensual basis and would need to be carefully assessed in respect of any implication on developing countries and their capacity to engage in negotiations. Furthermore, proposals of the developing countries to redress the development deficit in WTO must constitute first priority for any additional negotiations.

17. We note that developing countries have highlighted some issues like trade and debt, trade and finance and trade and transfer of technology in the preparatory process for Doha and earlier Seattle. The establishment of mechanisms to meaningfully address these issues, which are of utmost concern to developing countries, should be urgently considered.

18. We consider that developing countries continue to be constrained among others by limited technical and institutional capacities to fully adapt their national laws and fulfil their obligations as required and take full advantage of the provisions of the multilateral trade agreements. We urge developed-country Members of the WTO to fulfil their obligations and undertakings with regard to capacity building and other technical assistance support to developing and least developed countries in letter and spirit. There is a need to enhance and ensure the provision of necessary resources on a predictable and regular basis and that technical cooperation activities should be funded from the regular budget of the WTO. We call for strengthening technical assistance and capacity building activities of WTO, the international agencies of United Nations and other relevant organizations. Technical assistance should not be subject to conditionalities.

19. We stress the importance for all countries of consistency between national trade policies and the multilateral trade agreements. In this regard, we reiterate our concern and call for the elimination of the continuing use of coercive economic measures against developing countries, through, *inter alia*, unilateral economic and trade sanctions which are in contradiction with international law, in particular new attempts aimed at extraterritorial application of domestic law, which constitute a violation of the United Nations Charter and of WTO rules.

20. There is an urgent need to implement the commitments undertaken in the Plan of Action adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC III) in particular Commitment 5, "Enhancing the Role of Trade in Development" and Commitment 7, "Mobilizing Financial Resources". There should be a binding commitment to grant LDCs duty free and quota free access by the developed countries for their exports.

21. The developed countries should also give due regard to the interest of other developing countries for future improved market access commitments.

22. The Integrated framework (IF) remains a viable mandate for delivering co-ordinated trade and trade-related technical assistance to LDCs. The IF trust fund requires adequate funding and greater transparency in its implementation, including the basis for selecting beneficiary countries.

23. In view of the increasing marginalization of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in world trade, we urge the Ministerial Conference of WTO to take into account the spirit and recommendations of the Declaration of the recently LDCs Trade Ministers Meeting held in Zanzibar, to enhance their participation in the multilateral trading system.

24. LDC applicants for WTO membership should be allowed to accede on a fast track on the basis of flexible agreed criteria and obligations commensurate with their stage of development and based on

the S&D treatment in favour of LDCs. The commitments of acceding LDCs should not exceed those of LDCs currently Members of WTO.

25. We reaffirm that ILO is the competent body to set and deal with all issues relating to labour standards. We therefore firmly oppose any linkage between trade and labour standards. We are also against the use of environmental standards as a new form of protectionism. We believe that issues relating to such standards should be dealt with by the competent international organizations and not by the WTO.

26. Developing concepts such as global coherence with other intergovernmental organizations like

trade, and in particular, for greater participation in international trade on the part of developing countries and for their small and medium sized enterprises.

35. We reiterate the need to urgently reach a decision in WTO with regard to the request for permanent observers status that have been submitted by regional and other intergovernmental organizations from developing countries.

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