

WORLD

among its Members including its developing Members. In this regard, the Organization needs to provide flexibility in the application of rules and obligations and this with particular reference to its smaller, vulnerable and least-developed Members. We warmly welcome the proposal for a WTO Work Programme on Small Economies, designed to facilitate the greater participation and integration of these countries in the multilateral trading system.

As an ACP member country, Trinidad and Tobago shares the concern of its fellow ACP members, on the inordinate and unjustifiable delay in the granting of the waiver request for the ACP/EC Partnership Agreement, the "Cotonou" Agreement. We are firmly of the view that this issue, which has serious systemic implications for the Organization, must be addressed and resolved in the course of this Ministerial Conference.

Trinidad and Tobago like many Members of the WTO, developed and developing countries alike, shares the view that one of the outcomes of this Ministerial Conference must be a clear and unequivocal statement to the effect that "nothing in the TRIPS Agreement shall prevent governments from taking measures for protecting public health and nutrition as well as to ensure access to affordable medicines".

Trinidad and Tobago wishes to make particular mention of the accession procedures in the WTO and to the establishment of a Working Group for the accession of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, the only CARICOM member country that is not yet a WTO Member. Trinidad and Tobago calls on WTO Members to refrain from placing excessive or onerous demands on the application of this fellow country and also on least-developed countries seeking accession to membership of the Organization.

Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the accession of the People's Republic of China, a founding Member of the GATT, and welcomes China back into the fold.

In closing I wish to reiterate Trinidad and Tobago's support for a strengthened rules-based World Trade Organization and multilateral trading system. We remain convinced that the trade interests of the developing world will only be assured by a strengthened, equitable, balanced and just rules-based system, with "development" as its primary mandate, that takes on board the interests of all its Member countries and in particular the interests of its smallest, most vulnerable and least-developed Members.
