

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(01)/ST/105
12 November 2001

(01-5688)

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
Fourth Session
Doha, 9 - 13 November 2001

Original: French

CAMEROON

Statement by H.E. Mr Maigari Bello Bouba
Minister for Industrial and Commercial Development

I should like to begin by adding my voice to those of the previous speakers who have thanked the authorities and people of Qatar for their warm welcome and the flawless organization of our work.

I also take this opportunity to address my sincere congratulations to H.E. Mr Youssef Hussain Kamel, Minister of Finance, Economy and Commerce of Qatar, for his election as Chairman of this Conference.

The importance of our work is now heightened by the environment in which it is taking place: international trade has stalled and world economic growth is in a tailspin. The disappointing performance on these two fronts is a challenge for the WTO, one of whose objectives is to boost growth by developing international trade.

In this connection, I wish to reaffirm that Cameroon firmly believes that it is necessary to establish an open, transparent and fair multilateral trading system, which is why it has embarked on a reform process aimed in particular at liberalizing its economy.

Cameroon is happy to participate in this meeting. Nevertheless, it considers that a new negotiating round cannot be envisaged unless the issues it addresses include the concerns of all our countries. It is therefore heartening to note that all countries can clearly and freely voice their views in the course of our work.

Accordingly, I should like briefly to set out my country's position on some essential issues, a position which is also that of all the developing countries in general and the ACP countries in particular.

With regard to agriculture, in view of the sector's importance for our economy, Cameroon proposes that the strengthening of the rules and disciplines governing agricultural trade should be done in such a way as to promote development by creating a "development box" and taking into account our countries' non-trade concerns such as food security, sustainable rural development and poverty reduction.

In addition, sanitary, phytosanitary and technical rules and standards must not be used as unjustified obstacles to trade: hence our plea that technical assistance and the Marrakesh Decision be made operational with a view to better implementation of the WTO Agreements.

With regard to TRIPS, we would stress that the benefits stemming from the regimes applicable to intellectual property must be fairly shared between inventors/owners and users/consumers of technology. After all, the protection of intellectual property should encourage innovation and technological development. But we would also state once again that TRIPS must be

flexible enough to allow developing countries to adopt measures to protect public health and ensure access to medicines at reasonable prices.

I cannot conclude without conveying my congratulations to the People's Republic of China and the other new Members on joining the big WTO family.

It is my hope that our work will continue and conclude as it began, in this atmosphere of constructive dialogue and mutual concessions. Thank you for your kind attention.
