

# WORLD TRADE

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trade rules, and especially intellectual property rules, and health. Governments have a primary responsibility to protect the lives and security of their citizens. The Ministerial Conference should give a clear message that there is nothing in the rules of the international trading system that should prevent governments from addressing urgent public health needs. Where flexibility exists within such rules, then there should be a concerted attempt to make that flexibility work fully, rapidly and in an unobstructed way.

The second area is that of market access for products in which the poorest countries have advantage. In international trade, as in any sector, rules are there in a special way to protect the weakest. Prolonged protectionism and other trade practices which bring disproportionate benefit to wealthier sectors of the world's economies cannot be the basis for an equitable rules-based system. Reform in the area of market access for the products of the poorer countries especially agriculture and textiles, cannot be put aside indefinitely, without causing irreparable damage the multilateral trade system itself.

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