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Statement by the Honourable Antonio Marzano Minister for Productive Activities

Let me express our gratitude to the Government of Qatar for the brilliant organization of this WTO Conference.

Let me also thank the Secretariat of the WTO, its Director-General and the Chairman of the General Council for the excellent work they have done to lay the foundations of a successful outcome.

This 4th Ministerial Conference is taking place at a momentous time of mankind's history. The holding of such a meeting, in spite of the tragic events of two months ago, bears witness of our willingness to react against disruptive violence and to revive the climate of dialogue that has allowed the tremendous development of our economies for the last 50 years.

During this period of time, international trade has been pivotal in promoting growth. Now we must make sure that it will continue to play that essential role even in the future, thanks to a stronger, more efficient rules-based multilateral system.

Italy has always been committed to the strengthening of this system. It is a hallmark of our foreign and economic policy precisely because our very economic interests call for its full support.

As President Berlusconi reaffirmed in a letter of 8 November to other G7 leaders, the effective enhancement of the multilateral trade system will only be patent when a greater number of countries will be able to reap the benefits of liberalization. Today those advantages are still limited to few geographical areas.

To reach this goal, the new negotiations round, that I do hope we will be able to launch here, shall be characterized by the "development" dimension.

In the last few weeks, the WTO people in Geneva have done an awful amount of work to craft important documents. Those important documents are not definitive yet. Some questions are still open to debate but they could well find easy solutions if Member countries have the political willingness to go beyond their parochial, specific interests.

In this regard, a top priority remains the decision on implementation-related issues. We should send a clear signal to developing countries.

On this point, I would like to make a reference to the textile sector, just to stress that the European Union is fulfilling its commitments under the Marrakesh Agreement. Our efforts to keep up with our obligations have been significant. We expect that our partners will not only follow us on the same path but that they will also throw more open their own markets.

