



In addition, the textiles and clothing produced by Guatemala are widely accepted in international markets. The importance of this sector for jobs and the generation of foreign currency, as well as the transfer of technology, fully justifies our membership of the International Textiles and Clothing Bureau.

Within the ITCB, we join with other textile and clothing exporting countries in calling for observance of the conditions laid down in the WTO for greater access to global markets by small-scale suppliers.

The extension of Article 27.4 of the Agreement on Subsidies is also in our interest so that countries such as Guatemala can be given instruments that no significant or distortionary effects on global trade flows but are indispensable in order to strengthen their economic and social development.

Guatemala also has much to offer in the services sector. Our tourism potential is well known throughout the world because of Guatemala's cultural and historical heritage, its sports and ecological opportunities and its scenery, among other natural attractions. Furthermore, our geographical situation encourages the development of transport because we are in the heart of the American continent and have coastlines on both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

We are confident that the multilateral system will move in the direction of freer trade in services and we remind Members of the importance of giving developing countries the necessary flexibility.

In general terms, we agree with other small countries that have a low level of economic development that there is a need to set up a working group on the smallest economies so as to consider the equitable distribution of the benefits derived from the multilateral agreements reached in the WTO in such a way that our intrinsic weaknesses do not constitute an obstacle to the general spread of economic well-being over the world as a whole.

As far as intellectual property is concerned, Guatemala has met its commitments under the TRIPS Agreement, but it also expects just and fair treatment in this regard. We advocate maintaining the flexibility between public health and access to medicines contained in the TRIPS Agreement.

We hope that the understandings on investment will foster an environment that allows greater flows of capital and technology to strengthen the development of small economies, complemented by progress in the area of competition.

In conclusion, Guatemala supports the view that protectionism harmful to a free, fair and comprehensive market should rapidly disappear. It agrees that legitimate concerns relating to the environment, labour standards and food security should not be distorted in such a way that they are used as barriers to trade and that the precautionary principle in relation to the environment or health should not be utilized for disguised protectionist purposes.

Following on the proposal that this meeting should be called the development round, allow me to express my belief that it will see the initiation of renewed efforts to move towards global development that guarantees high standards of living for all the Members of the WTO.

Guatemala thanks the people and Government of Qatar for their hospitality and congratulates them on the organization of this Fourth Ministerial Conference, which will be a guarantee of its success.

---