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including by Members, by the Director-General and his colleagues in the Secretariat, by the Chairpersons of the relevant WTO bodies and by my predecessor Ambassador Bryn.

Our deliberations over the past two years have yielded a much greater understanding of how the expressed concerns might be addressed, through decisions for immediate action and in the context of the future work programme to be decided by Ministers here at Doha. An initiative by a group of seven Members in June induced signs of real progress. The Director-General and myself were subsequently able to put forward, for the General Council's consideration, draft decisions to address all outstanding implementation-related issues and concerns. The draft decision of 1 November has been transmitted on our own responsibility to Ministers here in Doha for consideration. It is our assessment that most elements of this text are acceptable to Members, and that Ministers therefore need to devote their time to a limited number of outstanding issues in order to reach final agreement.

2. Preparations for the Fourth Session of the Ministerial Conference

Preparations for the Fourth Session of the Ministerial Conference have involved extensive efforts to develop a draft Ministerial Declaration, as well as a separate draft Declaration on Intellectual Property and Access to Medicines or Public Health – an issue to which many Members attach great importance. This process has been both transparent and inclusive, and I would like to thank all delegations for their committed and constructive spirit, goodwill and hard work.

Although all delegations showed a willingness to engage constructively and considerable progress was indeed made, the distance between positions in some key areas remained significant. In an effort to provide a basis for eventual consensus, the Director-General and I put forward on 27 October, on our own responsibility, draft texts of a Ministerial Declaration and a Declaration on Intellectual Property and Access to Medicines or Public Health, making it clear that these texts did not purport to be agreed in whole or in part at this stage.

The Director-General and I are satisfied that these texts, which we have also transmitted to Ministers under our own responsibility, represent the best possible basis for Ministers to build on in the course of their work at this Session. We are confident that Ministers have in their grasp the elements necessary to reach a positive and balanced result from their important deliberations here in Doha on the WTO's future work programme.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all Members for their continuous support and cooperation, as well as to the Chairpersons of all WTO bodies for their hard work, determination and valuable assistance throughout the year. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Director-General of the WTO, Mr. Mike Moore, and his Deputies for their tireless efforts and support in the preparatory process leading to this Ministerial Conference. Finally, let me join the Director-General in thanking Your Highness for the outstanding generosity of your Government in inviting us to Doha for this important Conference which, I am sure, will long be remembered as a milestone in the WTO's development.
