

**WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION**

People and organizations in different parts of the world are asking us to find more human and more imaginative ways of promoting greater economic and social development in our countries.

Once and for all, we must meet the challenge of responding to this demand. Let us give a hearing to groups which are legitimately defending different economic alternatives. Let us listen to the ideas and proposals of those who, at this very moment, are expressing their views outside.

It is vital to find a global development strategy in which competitiveness and efficiency are associated with equality of opportunity. Let us once again ask ourselves whether we can afford the luxury of failing to establish just ties with least-developed regions and countries; whether we want conflict and violence to be the distinguishing traits of the 21st century.

I am convinced that combatting poverty is a combat in favour of justice and peace in the world. The major challenge facing humankind is to achieve far-reaching and equitable development, prosperity that is shared by all peoples on earth.

The WTO plays an essential role in this task because trade should be a catalyst for economic growth and make a decisive contribution to progress in all countries. Our challenge today is to consolidate a transparent and efficient multilateral trading system. With the rules we have adopted as a basis, let us guarantee freedom and equity in all our trade, and so promote real assistance for developing countries.

Thanks to teamwork, we can also speak of concrete results. In 2002, there was an increase in international trade in goods despite a slowdown in global growth.

The WTO has provided the environment for this recovery, for reflection and the discussion of ideas. There has also been progress in the anti-dumping negotiations and in access to global trade by the least-developed countries.

Our Organization, the WTO, can also help to resolve humanitarian problems. I would like to express my satisfaction at the recent agreement which allows the poorest countries to import generic medicines, that is to say, high-quality medicines at lower cost, in order to deal with such serious diseases as AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis, *inter alia*.

As Members of the WTO, we have placed development issues at the forefront of our negotiations. The Doha Round incorporates the interests and needs of developing countries in an ambitious and extensive work programme. Our success will define the terms for international trade relations in this new century and what we decide in this Organization could therefore have a major impact on the future of millions and millions of human beings.

We must reaffirm our commitment with a revitalized system of multilateral cooperation that underlines the joint responsibility of countries to deal with the problems of poverty, unemployment and the misuse of natural resources.

We therefore welcome the considerable efforts made by the United Nations and global institutions to promote and give impetus and commitment to a "virtuous circle", with the holding of meetings such as the one in New York in order to put into practice the Millennium objectives relating to human development. Mexico has assumed this commitment with the utmost seriousness and has given it the first priority.

Over the past two years, Mexico has reduced extreme poverty, families living in extreme poverty, by 17.1 per cent according to data from ECLAC. Maternal mortality has fallen by

With your permission, I shall now open the meeting.

It is my great pleasure now to formally declare open the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization and express the hope that its work will be of great benefit to all the countries participating.

Once again, I wish you every success and hope that you have a pleasant stay in Mexico.
