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SIERRA LEONE

Statement by H.E. Dr Kadi Sesay
Minister of Trade and Industry

I thank you and your Government for hosting this Ministerial Conference and for the excellent arrangements and hospitality.

Sierra Leone hopes for a successful outcome of these deliberations, an outcome that should engender a spirit of mutual cooperation, mutual interest and mutual benefits for both developed and developing countries.

Sierra Leone and other developing countries participate in the multilateral trading system with the expectation that globalization would lead to our economic development and trade benefits will reach many people in our countries and so alleviate poverty. We are interested in a system that will make our people richer and not poorer.

Sierra Leone is now making significant strides in consolidating the peace, pursuing policies geared

addressing global economic policies and the focus on mainstreaming trade in our development process.

At Doha, we expressed reservations to the inclusion of the Singapore issues in the programme of work of the WTO and the current round of negotiations. The point was made that the Singapore issues needed further clarification and that any decision on the commencement of negotiations on them would require an explicit consensus on the modalities in this Ministerial Conference. It remains clear that there still exists significant differences in the views of Members on many elements. This being the case, we would continue to note the desire for this issue to be discussed but at a more appropriate time after sufficient clarifications have been made. Meanwhile, we will join others in developing a framework for future negotiations.

What we want to achieve in this Session is a multilateral trading system that is not only pro-growth but also pro-poor and emphasizing poverty reduction. We want to continue to work in a WTO that is transparent and all-inclusive and one that effectively ensures compliance on issues of rights and obligations for all Members - both rich and poor.

Sierra Leone wants to ensure that the benefits of globalization and liberalization reach the majority of its citizens so as to alleviate poverty and help consolidate the peace that we now enjoy. We want to see an effective system that will lead to market access for our products.

To enable us to produce competitive products, Sierra Leone needs capacity-building both in terms of the rebuilding of infrastructure and human resource development.

Though we have expressed disappointment in the lack of progress made in some areas of extreme significance to developing countries, we believe in this Ministerial Conference's decisive political guidance what will ensure meaningful progress. To this end we welcome the recent decision on TRIPS and public health that would make poor countries access cheap generic drugs for HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases. We hope that the system that is being put in place will address the urgent legitimate needs of our people without it being stifled by bureaucratic procedures.

We strongly support the initiative taken by African countries on cotton subsidy and commodity price stabilization.

My delegation is confident that under your astute leadership, the development work programme will remain in focus and that by the end of this Fifth WTO Ministerial Conference, we would collectively have found significant solutions to some of the contentious issues.
