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BELGIUM

Statement by H.E. Mr Louis Michel
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

I wish to convey to you, Mr Chairman, our gratitude and appreciation for the splendid way in which you have organized this Ministerial Conference and also the Mexican people for their warm welcome.

The objective of our Conference cannot be understood or envisaged separately from what I would call the revelations and tangible traces of a complete shift that has shattered our conventional points of reference, our beliefs and indeed our firmest convictions. It is as if a world volcano one thought was shuddering suddenly began to roar, revealing long-suppressed fears, suspected doubts that dared not be uttered, questions that would have to be answered one day when they could not be ignored any more.

Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Iraq – so many conflicts that appyil that kills all that is sacred and finest in humanity, the splendid sentiments that spring from man's heart and intelligence: tolerance, the right to be different, justice, solidarity and freedom. In a word, well-being.

To put it more simply, in my opinion, primacy must be given to political matters, in other bility – to conceive and implement, in the interest of all States throughout the world, a multilateral system for world trade and turn it into a tool for equitable redistribution and human development. When the world economy combines opening up markets with proper regulation, it generates growth, creates jobs, sustainable development, reduces poverty, brings predictability and shared wealth.

This is the only real answer in the long term to the frustrations that fuel conflict and violence

The key to success is full and harmonious integration of developing countries in the multilateral system, along with the adoption of measures to boost international economic recovery.

My Government strongly reaffirms its attachment to a bold policy and welcomes the recent reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, a reform that will make a powerful contribution to the food sovereignty of the countries of the South while promoting their agricultural production and exports.

But to this end, rules need to be adopted to provide developing countries with the means for better integration in international trade.

Cancún can give a new political stimulus to something that is, in our view, a right and not an ambition.

Society in each of our countries is aware of this and, in some many ways, urges us to foil a deadly situation in which power, money and force alone have the means to dictate the rules.

The Millennium Summit, Doha, Monterrey, Johannesburg were all promising milestones, but so far they have proved to be what I

The second element is technical assistance, as well as transfer of technology. Otherwise, the integration of developing countries in the WTO system is to be regarded as impossible. In this connection, the European Union's undertaking is to be welcomed.

The Belgian Government, for its part, is gratified to announce to our African colleagues a €2 million increase in its share in the Trust Fund in the context of the Doha Development Agenda. This year, our Government has already pledged €500,000, on a recurring basis. For its part, the government of Flanders has come in with €150,000, together with the €154,000 in 2002.

This Conference cannot fail to take a universal political view. Without specific, committed voluntarist lucidity, we know, indeed we realize, it will be a long time before we can offer the world what is demanded and warranted by the most elementary of human rights.

In recent months, we have all sometimes been stupefied to see the unrelenting and tragic effects of this striking gap between the uncontrolled, frightening new powers and the impotence of policy and politics to tame their excesses. The challenge at Cancún is to bring the rules of the world economy into line with the social and political rights of mankind.
