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DOMINICA

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We started something very important two years ago when we last gathered like this. We began to give hope, reassurance and confidence to the smaller, weaker, and the poorer, as well as the most vulnerable and the marginalized among us in the possibility of attaining the long anticipated and promised benefits from the WTO and its multilateral trading system. It was called the Doha Development Agenda. We have gathered again here at what should be a midway point. However, the road has proven to be difficult, slow and frustrating. We have arrived at a crossroad. This will be a defining moment for the WTO. Much is at stake for all of us. But so much more is on the line for the smaller, the weaker and the most vulnerable among us.

Dominica along with its fellow CARICOM partners continues to firmly believe that the interests of developing countries must remain at the centre, indeed at the very core of these multilateral trade negotiations. We must not lose the opportunity to correct the many imbalances that exist in the global trading system. The development promise of the Doha Agenda must be realized. In this regard Dominica is particularly concerned that the negotiations have been stalled on several key policy issues of vital interests to developing countries.

It must be emphasized that it is the small and vulnerable economies which stand to lose the most if progress is not made in these essential areas. The particular structural disadvantages and vulnerabilities of small developing economies, in particular Small Island Developing States (SIDS), must be recognized and taken into account in these negotiations and in the formulation and application of multilateral trade rules. The point needs to be made that small economies generally have very little individual or even collective influence on international trade flows. One can hardly talk of trade distortions being caused by any action that these countries might take. Furthermore, the contribution to international trade of small economies has not been increasing. The liberalization undertakings required of these countries must therefore avoid any further loss of their market share and possible de-industrialization.

Dominica joins its fellow ACP Member States in emphasizing that Special and Differential

must be flexible to accommodate the granting of these preferences and exemptions must be allowed