

# WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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## BURUNDI

Statement by H.E. Mr Charles Karikurubu  
Minister for Trade and Industry

First of all, I should like to express, on behalf of H.E. Mr Domitien Ndayizeye, President of the Republic of Burundi, the Government of Burundi, the delegation I represent and in my own name, our sincere gratitude for the welcome and attention we have received since arriving in this lovely town of Cancún.

Let me also extend my warm congratulations to Mr Luis Ernesto Derbez on his election as chairperson of the Fifth Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference.

Burundi is a least-developed country and, like all the members of that group, we have made foreign trade the key element of our development strategy. Since 1986, we have been liberalizing our economy. Allow me to draw attention to some of the significant reforms already implemented in order to demonstrate our clear determination to contribute fully to the process of establishing the open, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system we all seek to achieve through this Organization. From 1986 until now, Burundi has, *inter alia*:

- Reduced tariff bands and set a ceiling of 40 per cent for import duties;
- lowered import duties with a view to reaching a zero tariff in 2004 for products from within COMESA, the regional organization to which Burundi belongs;
- abolished import bans and quotas;
- liberalized the foreign exchange market and legalized accounts in foreign currency; and
- abolished price controls.

Burundi hopes to continue to consolidate its trade liberalization policy in accordance with the various WTO Agreements. In that context, we submitted our trade policy review document in April 2003, which was accepted by the WTO bodies and fellow Members of this Organization.

Like other least-developed countries, Burundi attaches great importance to enhancing market access for its products. Therefore, we are strongly in favour of unrestricted, tariff and non-tariff barrier-free access to developed country markets for all products from least-developed countries.

Regrettably, there are clear indications that the least-developed countries' share of world trade continues to shrink, and they will have to pool their efforts to reverse that trend. Enhanced market access is the only way to avoid their even greater marginalization from world trade.

