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Statement by H.E. Mr Hwang Doo-yun
Minister for Trade

On behalf of the Korean Government, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the people and Government of Mexico for hosting the Fifth WTO Ministerial Conference. I would also like to thank Director-General, Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi, the WTO Secretariat and Ambassador Carlos Perez Del Castillo, the Chair of the General Council, for their dedication and hard work in preparing for this Ministerial.

I would like to begin by taking this opportunity to wholeheartedly welcome our newest Members: Cambodia and Nepal, who will formally join the WTO at this Ministerial Conference. Our congratulations also go to the Republic of Macedonia and Armenia, who joined us this year. My country looks forward to working together with these new Members to meet the many challenges facing the WTO.

Two years ago in Doha, we launched the Doha Development Agenda, with a shared belief in the primacy of the multilateral trading system. We are now at the mid-point of the negotiations, yet the landscape is filled with hazards. The recovery of the global economy continues to suffer amid economic uncertainties and growing tensions around the world. The expansion of international trade has virtually come to a halt over the last two years, departing from the unprecedented growth in the previous decade. The proliferation of regional trade agreements has raised doubts about the validity of the WTO. And, in wake of the breathtaking advance of globalization, the multilateral trade rules are in urgent need of adjustment.

These are serious challenges, but these are the very reasons why we cannot allow these negotiations to fail. To dispel the doubts and restore confidence in the global open economy, the success of the Doha Development Agenda is crucial.

We have made considerable progress under the Doha Development Agenda thus far. The progress may not be up to the standard we set for ourselves in Doha. But we are now seeing encouraging signs of renewed momentum. The historic agreement on TRIPS and public health reached less than two weeks ago in Geneva not only shows that the system is working, but it also demonstrates to the world our commitment to alleviating human suffering.

It is my sincere belief that we can build upon this momentum to fulfill our mission here in Cancún. In our view, the principal tasks are threefold: first, to establish sound frameworks for the agriculture and the non-agricultural market access negotiations; second to launch the negotiations on the Singapore Issues; and third, to provide necessary political guidance in other areas.

In the area of agriculture, Korea remains committed to continuous reform. To this end, Korea has been faithfully implementing its Uruguay Round commitments. But the process has been extremely painful and difficult, politically as well as economically. A more radical reform

