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The world economy needs a positive signal. The poor countries are anxious for a boost to their development. The most advanced countries impatiently await a recovery. The Cancún Conference thus comes at a crucial point in time.

Decisive progress is necessary in our negotiations so as to place the Doha Round on the road to success.

Our main lines of action are the following:

- Gradual liberalization of trade in goods and services;
- strengthening of the multilateral system and of links with other international institutions;
- adjustment by the WTO to the increasingly diverse situations of its Members.

The state of the negotiations prompts me to make a qualified assessment of progress.

First of all, I welcome the agreement reached on facilitating the import of generic medicines by certain poor countries.

I also welcome with satisfaction the maintenance of the level of ambition agreed at Doha with regard to market access.

On the other hand, I regret the fact that neither the negotiations on rules nor those on issues of harmonization such as the environment meet our expectations.

We shall have to redouble our efforts in these fields in order to achieve the ambitious objectives that we set for ourselves in Doha.

Three topics are of particular importance to Switzerland, agriculture, industrial products and the Singapore issues.

On the agricultural question, our aim continues to be the establishment of a legal and economic order that allows types of agriculture that have different objectives and structures to co-exist.

On the contrary, such an agreement is of particular importance to the developing and newly industrialized countries. The level of security for investors is greater than with innumerable bilateral agreements.

The Singapore issues have been on the WTO agenda since 1997. Nothing more needs to be said about the preliminaries. It is now time to launch the negotiations.

Our Conference must lay down clear guidelines by:

- Confirming our commitment to continue opening up the markets for goods and services on an ambitious, balanced and reasonable basis;
- redefining our approach to special and differential treatment in order to meet the specific needs and situations of developing countries;
- completing and modernizing the WTO rules so as to consolidate the foundations of our Organization and adapt it to contemporary economic realities.

In this connection, we must all work together to find a solution to the problem raised by the African countries regarding cotton.

Lastly, I sincerely thank President Vicente Fox and yourself, Mr Chairman, for your warm welcome and I also thank your authorities and the Secretariat for their excellent work in preparing for this Conference.
