

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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ESTONIA

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Let me begin by thanking the Mexican Government for the enormous amount of work done. It's not an easy task to put together a conference of one of the world's biggest organizations. But our hosts have done a magnificent job! Not to mention this gorgeous location.

We have gathered here to spend five days in heated discussions concerning trade issues. Why? Why is trade so important to so many countries in the world?

To find an answer, let's take a glance into the depths of history. Going back in timeEn6.ng back in

less restricted, has brought us to where we are today. The reality, which we are presently experiencing, is markedly different from the one that existed in the post-war period - during the past five decades, the total volume of world trade has increased 18 times.

This has been made possible by a concerted effort and by a lot of determination. Trade liberalization is not a rubber band that will break if stretched too far. Instead, it is more like a string that we continuously weave. Something which becomes a safety net for us during difficult times; and something, which helps us climb to new heights during more prosperous times.

It would be a contradiction in terms to talk of globalization, without having a truly global reach. And the World Trade Organization, which will soon have 148 Members, can claim to be global, in the true sense of the word. Furthermore, the large number of civil society representatives involved adds to this global dimension. But all of this is accompanied by the heavy burden of responsibility, which requires us to constantly carry out essential reforms, that really make a difference.

The last time we had the chance to make such a difference was two years ago in Doha. We managed to set aside our differing views on details, and were able to achieve DDA that has since then been the basis for our work. The decisions made at Doha have resulted in negotiations and endeavours, which are definitely not over yet. Nevertheless, I'm sure that you will agree with me, that we have come a long way.

In conclusion, I would like to refer to Estonia's speech in Doha, in which we compared trade negotiations with a bicycle ride - if you stop, you fall. Let's not learn this lesson the hard way!
