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Let me first express my warm thanks to the people and the Government of Mexico for the warm hospitality and the excellent organization of the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization.

Special thanks are also due to the Secretariat of the WTO, its Director-General and the Chairman of the General Council for their efforts towards a successful outcome of this Conference and of the whole Round.

We strongly believe that the success of this Ministerial Conference is an important milestone towards the liberalization of international trade. It constitutes a great opportunity to reconfirm our political will to work together to strengthen the multilateral trade system with a view to promoting sustainable development and growth. It is thus important that, at this juncture, the WTO "family" increases with the addition of Nepal and Cambodia.

Regarding the substance of the negotiations, we should all keep in mind that this is a development round. Addressing the developing countries' concerns, requires an integrated approach within which trade is a very important component. For this reason, we welcome the Agreement on TRIPS and Public Health that was recently achieved. We consider this as an important humanitarian aspect of the WTO system. We also believe that we should make an effort to meet in a satisfactory manner the other concerns of developing countries regarding technical assistance and Special and Differentiated Treatment.

Agriculture is a key sector in these negotiations. The recent EU decision on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy constitutes an important contribution to the WTO negotiations, while the joint EU/US proposal provides a realistic basis for a framework agreement with a view to establishing comprehensive modalities for further commitments in agriculture. Within this framework, we should acknowledge and secure the multifunctional character of agriculture. In this regard it is imperative to retain the appropriate level of flexibility and the instruments, among which the domestic support plays a key role, to address these concerns.

Another very important issue which addresses consumer concerns and sustainable development in rural areas, recognized also by developing countries, is the protection of Geographical

