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Statement by Mr Pascal Lamy Commissioner for Trade

It is nearly two years since we met, in the shadow of 9/11, and a sluggish world economy. The responsibility we shouldered in Qatar was to launch new round of global trade talks for 15 years, and to commit to conclude by the end of 2004. We showed - and I think it is something of which we should be intensely proud - that the international community can respond to a major political imperative with flexibility and solid practical measures.

The need for the timely and successful conclusion of that round is if anything even clearer today. The overall economic situation is no better, and indeed one of the paradoxes with which we are wrestling is that while slow growth makes our job as negotiators more difficult, our success, in delivering the results, is more necessary than ever.

But let us not forget that we called this new Round the Doha Development Agenda. Cynics say that this is simply post-Seattle spin, a wolf masquerading in sheep's clothing, the re-branding of a discredited process. If so, I wonder why developing countries have entered into the process with such energy and commitment, something which I welcome with great enthusiasm. The DDA has clearly become a genuine process to address the needs and concerns of all WTO members, including developing countries, and this has already created the conditions for a new approach in the treatment of development issues.

Just take, for example, the deal on access to medicines. Vital if we are to show that the WTO and the multilateral system is not just about mindless liberalization, or kow-towing to globalization. Of course, we have much more work to do to ensure delivery in practice, on the ground. But the deal, however long we waited for it, shows that the WTO can and will put people before markets.

I think most delegates to this conference would also agree that we have taken the development dimension seriously across the board. We have made real progress on the issue of implementation, and we are on the way to re-vamping the application of special and differential treatment, both in a series of specific measures, and of course SDT appears in each and every one of the individual market access negotiations. And when it comes to committing money to Trade Related development assistance, the European Union is ready to put its money where its mouth is - our total contributions amount to around half the total commitments for 2001-2002 recorded by the WTO.

But let us recall that the goal remains: the integration of developing countries into the world economy. In years to come, they will not thank us if we only manage to create a two tier membership in the WTO. So let us continue down this path of integration and avoid the creation of a group of Members who have second-class responsibilities, but also only second-class rights.

That is why I am so pleased that we have made real progress, at last on the accession of least developed countries into the WTO. This year in Cancún, we will welcome the entrance of Cambodia and Nepal and hope to move ahead on