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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Statement by H.E. Mr Orlando Jorge Mera
Minister for Telecommunications

On behalf of the Dominican Republic and President Hipólito Mejía, I wish to thank the Government and people of Mexico for the hospitality extended to us in hosting this Fifth Ministerial Conference. I would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the WTO Secretariat in the person of the Director-General, Mr Supachai Panitchpakdi, and to the Chairman of the General Council, Ambassador Carlos Pérez del Castillo, for their efforts in preparing the Conference.

The Dominican Republic has been a Member of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade since 1949. During that time, we have acknowledged the need for a balanced rule-based multilateral trading system that takes special account of the interests of developing countries, a need that was reiterated by all Ministers at the Fourth Ministerial Conference, held in Doha, Qatar, in 2001, where we agreed to launch the Development Round, in which the core issues on the agenda were aimed at meeting the needs of the poorest countries in the world.

In meeting for the first time since the new Round was launched, we would like to make a brief review of the headway made in the work done. First, we are compelled to express our regret with regard to agriculture that we have failed to meet the deadline of 31 March 2003 agreed on in Doha for adopting detailed modalities for negotiation. At this meeting we shall endeavour to move forward and agree on a general framework that will enable us to pursue our work so as to adopt such

important for food security and rural development, which will be exempted from the tariff reduction undertakings and the commitments on tariff quotas. This flexibility will be needed while large sums

work needs to be done to secure better results, since from about 80 proposals submitted by developing countries consensus has been reached on only 24 of them.

Lastly, I wish to affirm our full support for the declaration of the ACP Ministers for Trade and the Declaration of the Group of 77 for this Ministerial Conference. The Dominican Republic is ready to continue to strive for a balanced multilateral system in which we can achieve greater liberalization of trade, but remembering that we should not look on liberalization as an end in itself but as a means to obtain better development of our countries and an improved standard of living for our citizens.
