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NICARAGUA

Statement by H.E. Mr José Augusto Navarro
Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Affairs

I should like, on behalf of the people and Government of Nicaragua and President Enrique Bolaños Geyer, to thank the host country, the United Mexican States and its authorities, for the hospitality extended to our delegations and for the excellent organization of this Conference.

I should also like to express our gratitude to the Director-General, Mr Supachai Panitchpakdi, and the Deputy Director-Generals, as well as His Excellency Ambassador Carlos Pérez del Castillo, Chairman of the General Council, and the Ambassadors who supported him in the arduous preparatory process.

The Doha Development Agenda acknowledges the contribution of the multilateral trading system to economic growth and job creation, but emphasizes the need for it to contribute to the recovery and growth of the developing countries.

In this context, Nicaragua is concerned to see that the level of compliance with the Doha mandates and particularly the importance assigned

My country considers that the special and differential treatment clauses contained in the Chairman's text do not properly reflect food security and rural development concerns. It is inconceivable for our country to move ahead on the path of liberalization without including basic elements such as strategic products, differential concessions and a safeguard mechanism for developing countries. This is all essential to arrive at balance and equity in these negotiations, where the overall level of ambition is considerably higher than in the Uruguay Round.

Similarly, convergence is needed in regard to the modalities for non-agricultural products. Nicaragua started to open up its trade in the 1990s. We now have one of the lowest average tariffs in Latin America, barely higher than 5 per cent and comparable to that of many developed countries.