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Ambassador, Head of Delegation

I should like to thank the Government of Mexico for its generous hospitality as host to this important meeting and congratulate it on the excellent organizational arrangements.

Peru has come to this WTO Ministerial Conference with the sincere and firm intention of confirming its full commitment to the multilateral trading system, a system based on predictable, transparent and mandatory rules for all Members.

We recognize the major benefits of international trade liberalization in terms of economic growth, increased export competitiveness, possibilities of exploring new markets and opportunities for all countries, as attested by Peru's own experience over more than a decade.

However, much work remains to be done. Developing countries need rapid quantitative and qualitative advances in order to improve their development opportunities and thus lessen the major economic inequities which exist at both international and domestic level. Trade can and must play a key role in this endeavour.

special safeguard which we have proposed are a vital means of freeing them from poverty and exclusion. Likewise, our climatic and biological megadiversity harbours enormous potential. The elimination of all tariff and non-tariff barriers by developed countries is therefore a priority for Peru, in order to maximize access to their markets for our products. Moreover, there can be no delay in reaching agreement on a framework defining agricultural negotiating modalities which provides, in the shortest possible time-frame, for a significant reduction in domestic support and the elimination of