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BELGIUM

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Fifty years of a multilateral trading system

1. Belgium is proud to be one of the 23 founding members of the Havana Charter,

very outset, we have included developing countries in this enterprise, thereby underlining its universal character.

2. Belgium expects a great deal of the multilateral trading system, which must produce wealth that is shared through universal participation. If the WTO is to lay claim to its universal mission, it must include the poorest countries in world trade. Special measures must be taken to meet their needs. The protection of the fundamental human right to work must be taken into account, together with the concerns of governments and society with regard to the environment and health protection. Through constructive dialogue, public opinion must be shown

multilateral trading system. The year 1997 was a fruitful one and saw the successive conclusion of agreements on information technology, telecommunications and financial services.

4. Belgium was an active participant in the Uruguay Round and welcomed the creation of the World

5. In this regard, the WTO and its body of rules are a logical conclusion to the work of the GATT and the successive negotiation rounds held since 1948. The priorities have now moved from the tariff to the non-tariff sector, from goods to services and intellectual property, towards the new form of trade represented by electronic trade, towards the need for new regulatory frameworks that are a response to a global society. Fair rules on investment, government procurement, the organization of competition, relations between the environment and trade ..., respect for basic labour standards.

This is why we would like the WTO to have a balanced programme capable of facing up to these new challenges.

6. Belgium is determined to contribute to liberalization whose main goal is not material gain or unfettered growth but whose priority is to improve mankind's lot.
