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Statement Circulated by Mr. Valdis Birkavs,
Minister for Foreign Affairs
(As An Observer)

Allow me on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Latvia to express my great pleasure and high appreciation for having this opportunity to address the Second Ministerial Conference of the WTO held in it(in) TjETBT1 0 0cO0 0 175F17 11 Tf(in) TjETj2F-quareri

our accession to the WTO, the high quality of our market access commitments has been recognized by most of the WTO Members.

In our accession negotiations to the WTO, the Republic of Latvia has committed itself to the implementation of all the WTO obligations upon accession without a recourse to any transitional period. Moreover, we have taken certain significant WTO plus commitments. Although not a WTO Member yet, we highly respect WTO rules and regulations, and their absolute majority already now constitutes an integral part of our legislation. The consequences arising from the accession process and a potential membership in the WTO have very positively influenced and even accelerated the whole reform process in Latvia.

Concerning market access for trade in goods the Republic of Latvia has met all the requests on all tariff lines which were of WTO Members interest. As regards Latvia's commitments for trade in services, the sectoral coverage and quality of our commitments have been recognized by all the WTO

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Members although negotiations have not been completed yet in the audio-visual services sector recognized as very sensitive for the most of WTO Members.

The Government of the Republic of Latvia remains convinced that the current results of our bilateral market access negotiations for both goods and services represent genuinely open market access situation and create a very good precedent for the accessions to follow.

We believe that the Ministerial Conference and the next rounds of trade liberalization negotiations to follow are the best forum for furthering progressive development of the global trading system and the best place for discussions that would increase Members' understanding of each other and would provide for a prompt review of their own policies.

In conclusion let me confirm once more the belief of our Government, that every country to accede to the WTO will contribute to the global and universal nature of this Organization, by expanding the acceptance of the WTO rules and providing extensive market access commitments.
