

# WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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## COLOMBIA

Statement Circulated by Dr. Carlos Ronderos Torres,  
Minister of Foreign Trade

Globalization, liberalization and the expansion of trade have generated new opportunities for the development of our peoples, for increased wealth and employment, and for the improvement of living standards. The multilateral trading system plays a fundamental role in this respect in that its rules provide

narrowing  
the gap between the developed and the developing countries. In this respect it is important that the chief trading partners of the WTO take positive measures to ensure proper access to their markets for products of interest to the developing countries, avoiding the use of protectionist measures and using trade remedies in ways that are consistent with WTO rules and regulations, in particular the provisions granting special and differential treatment to exports from developing countries.

This approach should guide the discussions of this Ministerial Conference

countries to participate effectively in the various dispute settlement mechanisms provided for in the WTO Agreement.

In analysing the multilateral trading system, we must not lose sight of the contribution of regional integration agreements. Colombia is convinced of the benefits of pursuing a policy of integration within the framework of open regionalism consistent with the WTO disciplines, and has participated actively in the modernization of the institutions of the Andean Community, whose integrationist vocation in the American hemisphere has a strong liberalizing effect.

Colombia recognizes the responsibility of governments to adopt domestic policies which enable them to take advantage of the benefits of the multilateral trading system, and to create the necessary conditions for the development of private initiative. Thus, since the beginning of this decade it has been promoting a policy of internationalization of its economy backed by trade liberalization and the dismantling of restrictions to foreign investment. At the same time, it has introduced an industrial development strategy which has made it possible to promote the dissemination of technology and the emergence of new productive sectors which could hardly have developed on their own. The adoption of this model reflects the belief of the Colombian Government in the benefits of trade liberalization as a tool for modernization and economic growth contributing to the development and welfare of our population.

At the same time, Colombia considers the reorganization of production to be a necessary complement to the liberalization process. To that end it has drawn up a specific competitiveness strategy which aims to facilitate restructuring in the framework of an open economy. The mechanisms set forth in the WTO Agreements for use by the developing countries in boosting the competitiveness and productivity of their economies, paving the way to increased participation in foreign markets, have been of considerable use in this respect. Only through increased productivity will it be possible to improve our competitiveness. We must recognize, however, that the ability to take advantage of existing incentives depends on the country