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VENEZUELA

Statement Circulated by Dr. Hector Maldonado Lira,
Minister of Industry and Trade

1. The holding of the Second Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization is a cause of satisfaction for Venezuela, especially as it coincides with the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the multilateral trading system. Our country considers that the liberalization of trade and the integration of economies are the foundations for economic growth and that, through such growth, they can contribute to the social development of nations.
2. The Uruguay Round has made important contributions to strengthening those foundations, increasing market access opportunities and consolidating a set of multilateral rules and disciplines. With the support offered by these rules and disciplines, countries should be able to orchestrate international economic policies which will become more and more harmonious and complementary, while remaining consistent with the development objectives of each and every one of them. It is the joint responsibility of the developed and developing countries to ensure that both the implementation of the existing rules and disciplines and their improvement and possible extension, are in keeping with those purposes. We must not lose sight of the fact that we are united in seeking the well-being and fulfilling the hopes of progress of each of our societies, objectives of which liberalization should

Future negotiations in this area must not lose sight of the need to establish provisions that effectively respond to these requirements.

6. On the other hand, the implementation of some agricultural disciplines presents significant challenges to developing countries which, like Venezuela, are net importers and are engaged in a process of modernizing and increasing productivity. In this sector, the developed countries must commit themselves, in the coming negotiations, to reducing the asymmetries in their favour resulting from the Uruguay Round negotiations. The commitments assumed by our country on that occasion have been steadily and effectively put into practice, although the effort at liberalization and modernization has not been free from social and political repercussions and has had to be supplemented by measures intended to encourage, within the framework of the multilateral rules, the stability of production and employment. This is a priority area for Venezuela on the agenda of negotiations within the WTO and we hope that those negotiations will reduce the asymmetry which exists in favour of the major agricultural producers while

's participation in this important meeting
to express our gratitude for its excellent organization and to express our pleasure, once again, at the
commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of