

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(98)/ST/61

18 May 1998

(98-2052)

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
Second Session
Geneva, 18 and 20 May 1998

Original: French

NIGER

Statement Circulated by H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Koussou,
Minister of Trade and Industry of Niger

I should like first of all to express to you, Mr. Chairman, and through you to the people of Switzerland, my deep gratitude for the warm and hospitable welcome given to our delegation. I also wish to address my thanks to Mr. Renato Ruggiero, Director-General of the WTO, and all his staff for the efforts they have made in organizing and running this Conference.

After Singapore, it is now Geneva's turn to host the Ministerial Conference of our common organization, the World Trade Organization (WTO). The holding of this second Conference coincides most fortunately with the 50th Anniversary of the multilateral trading system which we are going to celebrate in this magnificent city, headquarters of several of our international organizations.

The history of the multilateral trading system has been marked, as you know, by major events at the economic, social and political levels. They have included:

- The formation of large economic groupings in all regions of the world;
- major economic and political changes in central and eastern Europe and in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;
- the launching and consolidation of the democratic process in our countries; and, lastly,
- the completionand

of the Plan of Action for the Least-Developed Countries constitutes an opportunity for gauging not only the international community's commitment to furnishing technical assistance to our States, but also the degree of incorporation of the developing countries into the new multilateral trading system.

./.

First of all, my country, like the other least-developed countries, welco