

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(98)/ST/62

18 May 1998

(98-2063)

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
Second Session
Geneva, 18 and 20 May 1998

Original: English

UKRAINE

Statement Circulated by Mr. Sergly G. Osyka,
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(As An Observer)

I am very honoured to participate in the Second Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization.

I am also delighted that the Conference coincides with the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the multilateral trading system. It is appropriate that the Second Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization is held in Geneva, the very place where the bases for the multilateral trading system were set 50 years ago, and where the first round of the major trade negotiations was held.

Half a century has elapsed since these memorable events. During this time the legal framework for multilateral conduct of international trade has gone through a long and complicated process of evolution and development, involving more and more sectors of international trade. And the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, together with the creation of the World Trade Organization, has brought into existence a qualitatively improved legal process for a more dynamic economic environment through the creation of a more open and predictable international trade system. These actions create new opportunities for the development of both a better international community, as well as improved economic conditions in every country.

One of the important accomplishments in the 50 years long history of the world trade system is that export growth rate is permanently exceeding production growth rate (in 1997, exports increased three times faster than production), and the significant growth in the number of customs unions and free-trade areas formed by nations enjoying different levels of economic development. These developments have greatly facilitated market access in goods and services.

It was not very long ago, at the First Ministerial Conference in Singapore, that important decisions were made directed at the elimination of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and the further reduction of protectionism in world trade. However, I am very pleased to note that, in my opinion, during this short period of time so much has been accomplished. I refer specifically to the successful completion of multilateral negotiations on basic telecommunications and financial services.

At the present time, at the threshold of new Millennium, the trade system is at a crucial point. It is facing new tasks and challenges which must be solved before the system enters the 21st Century. The new round of multilateral trade talks, which is to start in this century, will be of paramount importance in this respect.

This is important for Ukraine, a State seeking to participate in this new round of talks as a full Member of the WTO. And considering the efforts of the Government of Ukraine in the process of accession to the WTO, I believe its participation in the talks to be a distinct possibility. Ukraine has chosen an absolutely correct path in seeking WTO membership, a path tested by dozens of other nations. It is the path of building mutual relations in international trade upon foundations, acceptable throughout the world - namely the rules contained in the WTO Agreements.

With respect to the process of accession, Ukraine has met twice with the WTO Working Party since the Singapore Ministerial WTO Conference. The second of these meetings took place on 24-25 November 1997.

In 1997, Ukraine also began to hold bilateral talks with WTO Member States on mutual market access issues. Five rounds of such talks took place in the course of the year. Generally, Ukraine maintained talks with 22 countries, as

Finally, I would like to express my full confidence in the ability of WTO to realize its mandate fully, particularly in the sphere of globalization and liberalization of world economy, and in the expansion of economic interdependence among States. I am confident that WTO will become a more effective instrument of promotion in the successful development of emerging and transitional economies, as well as in their integration within the international trade system and, indeed, the world economy.
