

WORLD TRADE  
ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(98)/ST/91

20 May 1998

(98-2102)

---

Original: English

**MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**  
**Second Session**  
**Geneva, 18 and 20 May 1998**

**LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

Statement Circulated by Ministers of the Least-Developed Countries

The LDC Ministers express their deep concern that the share of LDCs in world exports continues to be under 0.04 per cent resulting in their marginalization in world trade. This painful state of affairs is taking place in the backdrop of the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for LDCs and the WTO Plan of Action adopted at the First Ministerial Meeting of WTO, held in Singapore in December 1996, which provides a framework for further market access concessions to LDCs and recalling further the outcome of the High-Level Meeting on the Integrated Initiatives for LDCs

We recommend to all multinational and regional finance organizations and bilateral/multilateral donors to give special attention to the building of infrastructure (power, ports, telecom, roads, rails, airports, hotels etc.) which enhance the attractiveness of LDC economies to foreign investments.

We welcome the proposal by the Director-General of the WTO to consider, in the preparation for the Third Ministerial Conference, proposal for elimination of all tariff barriers in favour of the least-developed countries on a priority basis in the negotiations, starting in 2000.

The time-frame established for the compliance of the provisions in the Agreement is not sufficient for LDCs. Additional time should be granted to LDCs for the compliance of the provisions of the different Agreements.

---