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Statement by H.E. Mrs. Aichatou Agne Pouye
Minister of Trade

I should first like to join other delegations that preceded me to express, on behalf of His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, the Prime Minister and Government of Senegal, my gratitude to the Mexican authorities for the impeccable organization of this Conference and the hospitality shown to myself and my delegation since we arrived in Mexico.

I should also like to address my sincere congratulations to Cambodia and Nepal, which are the first least-developed countries to accede to the WTO under our Organization's simplified procedure.

This statement complements that of His Excellency Mr Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, on the occasion of the Fifth Ministerial Conference, which is being transmitted to the WTO, for circulation as an official document from Senegal.

The Fifth Ministerial Conference marks a decisive step halfway along the path towards implementation of the WTO's Doha Development Agenda.

I should therefore like to take the opportunity given to me to reaffirm the importance attached to this event by Senegal, as a least-developed country, because of the special place it quite rightly gives to **development**, which should lead to the implementation of the concrete measures awaited by the Members of the WTO.

In this respect, our country cherishes the hope that all Members will make the extra effort to ensure that the work continues at a satisfactory pace in the interests of all.

I am sure that this conviction is shared by all the Members which, by belonging to the WTO, are placing their future in a common vision of making trade a tool for progress for the peoples of the world.

There can be little doubt that belonging to this Organization poses challenges that are much more daunting for developing countries in general and least-developed countries in particular, because of their special constraints.

This is why the principle of flexibility was enshrined in the rules of the GATT and then of the WTO through special and differential treatment in order to facilitate participation in global trade by developing and least-developed countries.

Nevertheless, it has to be recognized, ladies and gentlemen, that the system has not yet been able to respond to our countries' expectations and, after the WTO was established, they started to

detect the lacunae in implementing the rules laid down, which have in fact led to imbalances in favour of developed countries.

After Doha, the majority of Members placed great hopes in the work programme, which represents a historic opportunity to place trade at the heart of development issues: health, poverty reduction, food security, etc.

This is why issues such as TRIPS and Public Health, special and differential treatment and implementation were given precise timetables.

Moreover, in all the areas of negotiation, it was planned to give developing and least-developed countries special treatment consistent with their development needs and thus, allow them flexibility in implementing their obligations as well as ensuring that developed countries took a positive stance towards them in certain cases.

At the current stage of the negotiations, it is to be regretted that there has been no substantial progress in implementing this programme owing to notable shortcomings as regards the timetables set, but also the inadequacy of the results achieved.

This situation calls into question the hopes that arose after Doha and introduces an element of uncertainty into the possibility of concluding the work by 1 January 2005.

It is, therefore, a matter of urgency that our efforts overcome this mental block, which focuses on the deadline for the single undertaking when certain development issues should have been dealt with long ago.

I should like to draw attention to the issues of priority to Senegal, which are consistent with the well-known concerns and interests of least-developed countries and, to a large extent, those of a number of developing countries.

With regard to **the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health**, I welcome the spirit of wisdom that has prevailed on this issue, which is a question of survival for our populations and has both symbolic and humanitarian connotations.

But this consensus should not be used by some as an excuse for failing to deal with pending substantive issues of interest to developing countries.

With regard to **special and differential treatment and implementation issues**, we must express our disappointment at the meagre preliminary results, despite the efforts made by developing and least-developed countries

In the negotiations on agriculture, we consider that the least-developed countries should not have to assume reduction commitments, as was the case during the Uruguay Round, because, more than any other Members, they are the most exposed in a global trade in agricultural products that is strongly marked by the distortions caused, particularly by developed countries.

This is why, with the aim of removing all these distortions, Senegal is in favour of total elimination of all forms of subsidy and export credits by developed countries as soon as possible because they distort trade. This is in fact one of the relevant components in the joint proposal on **cotton**, and we fully support the modalities for a solution put forward by the co-sponsors.

I should point out that, on the eve of my departure for Cancún, I received a petition containing 240,000 signatures by members of civil society and the four presidents of parliamentary groups in the National Assembly in support of the cotton initiative.

The WTO should take steps to establish a mechanism to compensate for the loss of revenue caused by such unfair practices.

In addition, special and differential treatment in the agricultural negotiations should involve the creation of an appropriate financing programme intended to upgrade our agriculture so as to build our capacity to export to developed countries' markets.

With regard to negotiations on **services**, we underline the need to help our countries undertake an assessment of the impact of implementation of the GATS on our economies, as provided in the Doha Ministerial Declaration.

We recognize that the services sector is a dynamic element of growth in GDP in many least-developed countries and we therefore also call for appropriate capacity-building so as to allow our countries better to understand the complex issues of the negotiations on services.

As regards **market access for non-agricultural products**, we draw attention to the commitment made by Members in Doha to promote duty-free access to markets without quotas for products from developing and least-developed countries. Likewise, the tariff preferences given to our countries should not be jeopardized by non-tariff obstacles of all sorts.

In the area of **technical cooperation and capacity-building**, as a least-developed country, Senegal was eligible for the **Integrated Framework Programme**, whose objective is to enhance the benefits our country derives from technical assistance provided by development partners with a view to expanding its trade potential and becoming better integrated in the multilateral trading system.

This gives me the opportunity to renew my sincere thanks to the various international organizations and multilateral and bilateral development partners for the support they have given for the implementation of the Integrated Framework, whose sphere of action was approved by the Government and the donor community.

I strongly appeal to our development partners to provide the remaining funding for the programme's spheres of action intended to build up our trade capacity within the framework of implementation of Senegal's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

I also welcome the fact that Senegal is eligible for Phase II of the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP II).

In conclusion, I once again underline my conviction that the development dimension must remain the first priority when implementing the Doha Programme.

In this respect, I urge Members to ensure that pending development issues are resolved as soon as possible.

The Fifth Ministerial Conference will only truly achieve its objectives if, ultimately, it still keeps alive the hopes raised at Doha by giving the work a new impetus so that, when assessing progress, development is given its proper place in the list of tangible results.
