

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

RESTRICTED

WT/COMTD/LLDC/W/4

27 March 1997

(97-1281)

**Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries
Fifth Session**

Original: French

STATEMENT BY MADAGASCAR IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PREPARATION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

My delegation would not like today's discussion on the high-level meeting on LDCs to be a repetition of the debate held on this topic in the Committee on Trade and Development some ten days ago. We would like it to make a decisive step forward by launching the preparatory phase for the meeting, to which we attach the greatest importance.

I shall therefore not repeat what I said in the Committee on Trade and Development on 17 February.

I would just like to stress a number of points.

For my delegation, the objective and outcome of the high-level meeting should be to launch initiatives and take action so as to resolve the practical difficulties and meet the real needs of the LDCs in their aspiration to become integrated in the multilateral trading system. This high-level meeting must not be a theoretical exercise on what should or should not be done, nor a sterile political exchange of views.

I therefore consider it absolutely essential, well ahead of the preparatory process, somewhere between phase I and phase II mentioned in the document, in other words as of tomorrow morning, to begin an intermediate stage consisting in the evaluation of the needs of the least developed countries.

This evaluation of needs should be carried out by each LDC in the light of its own priorities and its situation with respect to world markets, in a memorandum addressed to the three or six secretariats responsible for organizing the high-level meeting. The Secretariat should validate this evaluation made by each country of its needs, by indicating for each need expressed the measures that could be taken and the time-frame for carrying them out, taking into account the programmes that already exist within each organization.

Following this exercise, we should be in a position to have a classification of the needs of the least developed countries:

Firstly, according to their nature i.e:

- Needs related to strengthening the LDCs' production and export capacity;
- market access difficulties;
- export promotion and product marketing problems;

./.

- issues relating to participation in WTO activities.

And secondly, according to the response capacity of the international agencies:

- Needs for which programmes already exist, which can be implemented immediately provided they are financed by donors;
- difficulties for which solutions will have to be worked out in the form of new programmes that can only be launched over a certain time-frame;
- issues falling within the purview of forums other than the high-level meeting.

The high-level meeting should thus be organized around a practical, operational discussion of the implementation of the programmes and launching of the initiatives responding to the needs clearly expressed by the LDCs themselves with the assistance of the Secretariats.

In the view of my delegation, if we undertake this prior process of identifying the LDCs' needs and the international agencies' response capacities, the high-level meeting will be in a position to conclude with the adoption of an integrated and coherent programme on behalf of the LDCs.

The three Geneva agencies have already developed an integrated programme on behalf of African countries. It would be sensible to take advantage of this experience and draw on it to launch an integrated and coherent programme covering all LDCs, with the added participation of the two Bretton Woods agencies as well as UNDP.

If this preparatory phase is conducted well, the high-level meeting could take place over two or three days, focusing on action to be taken and programmes to be launched, and avoiding frustrating the LDCs which will previously have had a chance to express their desiderata in the memorandum evaluating their needs.