

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/MIN(03)/ST/75
12 September 2003

(03-4869)

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
Fifth Session
Cancún, 10 - 14 September 2003

Original: English

UGANDA

Statement by the Honourable Professor Edward B. Rugumayo
Minister of Tourism, Trade and Industry

1. On behalf of the Uganda delegation, allow me to thank you on the way you have presided over this Fifth Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference, and through you to thank the Government and people of Mexico for the warm reception and hospitality extended to my delegation and I believe all delegations present here. Through you, I would also like to extend condolences from my Government and delegation to the Government and people of Sweden upon the death of their Foreign Minister who was my dear colleague. In addition, I would like to add my voice and that of my delegation to those delegations which have recognized the second anniversary of the September eleven tragedy.
2. We are gathered here to review work, which we assigned to our technocrats at Doha and very mindful that this work was specifically designed to bring development issues at the forefront of the work programme. Indeed although the WTO is not a Development Agency, its main objective is to improve the standards of living of the people through increased trade and employment. The decisions we are about to reach should be very mindful of these, in particular the need for the WTO to contribute towards the creation of wealth and therefore reduce poverty from the population.
3. The least developed countries continue to experience declining terms of trade in the world economy, a factor that has greatly contributed to increasing poverty in these countries. This situation contradicts the objective of the WTO in that there is declining volume of real income and effective demand in those countries.
4. The Doha Development Agenda should meaningfully aim at solving these problems if we are to be equal and fully participating partners in global trade. This is possible through certain deliberate actions and provisions that address the development concerns of those weaker economies.
5. Agriculture is the mainstay of most developing economies. In Uganda, it employs and provides a livelihood for about 90 per cent of our population. It is therefore at the centre of our development concerns. For there to be meaningful benefits and make the weak economies truly partners in trade, it is imperative that developed and developing countries use the results of these negotiations to help us by providing our agricultural export products with easier market access conditions, addressing other trade-distorting practices as well as protectionist policies in their economies. These concerns in agriculture include domestic support, export subsidies, tariff peaks and escalations as well as certain non tariff barriers.
6. In addition, least-developed countries should be nurtured to develop more trade potential. They can only do that through a deliberate industrialization policy that addresses increased employment and value addition to their export products. This argument is consistent with the concept of poverty reduction and therefore we should be granted exemption from making tariff reduction

commitments and from increasing our binding coverage. Tariffs are the only viable development tool and policy instrument we can use to direct our industrialization and generate the revenues required to catalyze economic growth.

7. Uganda welcomes those bilateral initiatives by developed countries that grant easier market access to products from the poor countries. We would like to see these opportunities made more predictable through binding under the WTO System.

8. Trade in services is increasing its importance to Uganda's national economy. It plays a very significant role in facilitating numerous other areas of our economic activity and of recent the service sector has become a substantial contributor to our GDP. In view of the above, we are of the strong view that the WTO develops a mechanism to make Article IV of GATS more effective rather than just "a best endeavour" clause. The WTO should also improve commitments under mode 4 of supply to provide greater access to foreign markets for, service suppliers and develop a mechanism for Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualification and licensing requirements.

9. We welcome the recent consensus reached on TRIPS and Public Health. This ensures that our people will have access to affordable medicines at all times. We must build on this positive outcome.

10. In respect of Geographical Indications, we propose its extension to cover products beyond wines and spirits. This is based on the aspirations of our people who would like to maintain the identity of the respective indigenous export products in the global market.

11. Food is a basic human right and so we attach importance to the increased production and preservation of food to ensure food security for all. To that end, we view the relationship between TRIPS Article 27.3(b) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as well as FAOs international undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture as important in achieving these goals. There should be a compatible regime between the three.

12. LDCs continue to face tremendous difficulties in spite of the Special and Differential Treatment (S&D) provisions embodied in the Final Act. We call for full implementation of these provisions and the adoption of new ones to take into account our development concerns. We also call for mutually acceptable solutions to implementation problems encountered by developing countries since the establishment of the WTO.

13. On Singapore Issues, Uganda believes that the agenda is heavily loaded and that there is need to build sufficient capacity in all Member countries to enable them to negotiate fair rules. The Working Groups established should continue their work.

14. Countries like Uganda suffer weak institutional capacities to promote and sustain trade; at the production level, in implementing our obligations under the WTO, and in complying with technical, sanitary and phytosanitary requirements. We commend JITAP and the Integrated Framework initiatives and ask our development partners for more support to build these capacities. Such assistance, however, must address key and real developmental issues like supply side constraints, human resources development, capacity-building and infrastructure development.
