

PRESS RELEASE

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STATEMENT BY ABLASSE OUEDRAOGO WTO DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

At the end of his first week in office as Deputy Director-General, Mr. Ablasse Ouedraogo issued the following statement:

"The multilateral trading system established after the end of the second World War has contributed immensely to the expansion of the global economy and guaranteed peace and stability. It has assisted a significant number of countries to diversify their economies and thereby achieve economic development and prosperity. One of the main challenges facing the World Trade Organization as we approach the twenty-first century is to ensure that developing countries, especially the least developed among them, derive tangible benefits from the system. The WTO also needs to assist the integration of these countries into the multilateral trading system.

The task which lies ahead of the WTO is immense. New rules must be developed to cover new areas of international commerce, and existing rules must be fully implemented or if necessary re-designed, to ensure they remain relevant in the ever-changing world of international trade. The WTO also needs to re-invent itself and become more accessible to the general public. The agenda of priorities stated by Mike Moore, the Director-General, enables us to meaningfully address these challenges. At the Seattle Ministerial Conference, therefore, WTO Members should seize the opportunity to strengthen the multilateral trading system.

I trust that Members can rely on the dedication of the Director-General, myself and the entire Secretariat, in carrying out the objectives they set for us in Seattle. While there have been some difficulties in the preparatory process, I believe that Members will, in time, agree on an agenda which should ensure the balanced outcome which makes the multilateral trading system more dynamic, inclusive, credible and equitable.

I am pleased to have joined the WTO Secretariat at this critical time and look forward to working closely with Mr. Moore, WTO Members, and the Secretariat in fulfilling our objective of strengthening the rules-based, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system."