

# WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

RESTRICTED

**WT/MIN(03)/SR/1**

23 December 2003

(03-6746)

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## **MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

### **Fifth Session**

**Cancún, 10 - 14 September 2003**

## **SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING**

Held at the Cancún Convention Centre, Cancún, Mexico  
on Wednesday, 10 September 2003, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: H.E. Mr. Luis Ernesto Derbez (Mexico)

Subjects:

1. Opening Statements
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Order of Business

ANNEX: Announcement by the Chairman on the Organization of the Informal Consultative Process

### **1. Opening Statements**

The Chairman called the meeting to order, and declared the Inaugural Session of the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference open. He requested delegations to remain seated while he, together with the Director-General, escorted the President of Mexico, the Honourable Vicente Fox Quesada, into the room.

Welcoming the President to the meeting, he said that it was an honour and a privilege to do so, and that the President's presence at this meeting was a demonstration not only of the latter's own commitment, but also that of the Government of Mexico, to furthering Members' common goals under the Doha Development Agenda with its potential for bringing substantial economic benefits to all peoples.

The Chairman then delivered an opening address (WT/MIN(03)/9).

Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Director-General of WTO, then delivered an address (WT/MIN(03)/10).

H.E. Mr. Pérez del Castillo, Permanent Representative of Uruguay and Chairman of the General Council, then delivered an address (WT/MIN(03)/11).

Mr. Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, on behalf of Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, then delivered an address (WT/MIN(03)/12).

The Honourable Vicente Fox Quesada, President of Mexico, then delivered an address (WT/MIN(03)/13), and declared the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference open.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Ministerial Conference, expressed appreciation to President Fox for his address, and hoped that all would be able to live up to the President's inspired words and

deliver the results that would make this Conference a success. He then declared the Inaugural Session closed and, together with the Director-General, escorted President Fox from the room.

## **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

The Chairman drew attention to the proposed agenda for the Ministerial Conference in document WT/MIN(03)/W/1.

The Ministerial Conference adopted the following agenda as proposed in WT/MIN(03)/W/1:

- "1. Overview of Activities of the WTO
2. Items Proposed by Members for Inclusion in the Agenda
  - Poverty Reduction – Sectoral Initiative in Favour of Cotton – Joint Proposal by Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali
3. Action by Ministers
4. Date and venue of the Fifth Session
5. Election of Officers."

## **3. Order of Business**

The Chairman drew attention to the Proposed Order of Business in WT/MIN(03)/5/Rev.1, and proposed that the Ministerial Conference agree to the organization of work for the Session as set out therein.

The Ministerial Conference so agreed.

The Chairman then noted that, in accordance with the programme of work just agreed, the Plenary meeting would resume at 2.30 p.m. with Agenda Item 1 – "Overview of Activities of the WTO". At 6.10 p.m., the Ministerial Conference would take up Agenda Item 2: "Items Proposed by Members for Inclusion in the Agenda – Poverty Reduction – Sectoral Initiative in Favour of Cotton – Joint Proposal by Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali." Delegations wishing to speak under Item 2 were invited to inform the Secretariat in order to establish a list of speakers, who would speak from the rostrum. They were also invited to provide their statements to the Secretariat. On 11 September, at 6.10 p.m., the Ministerial Conference would take up the Accessions of Cambodia and Nepal together. In view of the limited time available at that session, delegations were invited to address both Accessions in one statement. As before, delegations wishing to take the floor on this Item were invited to inform the Secretariat in order to establish a list of speakers, who would speak from the rostrum. They were also invited to provide their statements to the Secretariat.

The Ministerial Conference took note of the statement.

The Chairman then declared the Opening Ceremony closed.

The meeting adjourned at 11.30 a.m.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Following the closure of the Opening Ceremony, the Chairman informed delegations about the organization of the informal consultative process to be conducted throughout the Conference. The Chairman's statement is reported in the Annex.

## ANNEX

### **Announcement by the Chairman on the Organization of the Informal Consultative Process**

Following the closure of the Opening Ceremony, the Chairman informed delegations that, as at all previous Ministerial Conferences, he would be organizing an intensive process of consultations throughout this Conference in order to help produce a Ministerial text that could be put forward for formal consideration and action under Agenda item 3 - "Action by Ministers".

The main forum for this consultative process would be informal open-ended meetings of all Heads-of-Delegations. The principal objective of this process would be to facilitate consensus-building on a text in a fully transparent and inclusive manner, while maintaining the necessary flexibility. The informal HODs meetings would proceed in parallel with the formal Plenary Sessions. They would be open to all WTO Members and participants in the negotiations, in a format of Minister-plus-two officials per delegation. A final informal HODs meeting would be organized just prior to the concluding Plenary Session of the Conference, in order that delegations could collectively review the results of work in all areas. All meetings of the HODs would be held in Room Cancún I, on the third floor of the Convention Centre. They would be chaired by himself and would be convened as necessary, but at least once each day. The first meeting would be held on Thursday, 11 September starting at 10 a.m. Delegations would be kept informed of these meetings through every means possible at the Convention Centre.

Building on the practice at the Doha Ministerial Conference, one hour in the morning – from 8.30 to 9.30 – and one hour in the afternoon – from 2.30 to 3.30 – would be set aside during which no informal meetings of any kind would be scheduled. The purpose of this was to allow delegations the time they would require to consult among themselves and in regional groupings as necessary.

He believed that work should have a coherent focus if Ministers were to organize their very limited time in an efficient manner. He had therefore requested the assistance of a number of Ministers who had kindly agreed to help him as Facilitators on key issues, as follows:

1. Agriculture – Minister Yeo (Singapore)
2. Non-Agricultural Market Access – Minister Tang (Hong Kong, China)
3. Singapore Issues – Minister Pettigrew (Canada)
4. Specific Development Issues – Minister Kituyi (Kenya)
5. Other Issues – Minister Rohee (Guyana)

Concerning the issues to be addressed in the group on "Other Issues", he looked forward to receiving suggestions from delegations in the course of work. He was very grateful for the assistance of the Facilitators, who would undertake work on these issues and report back to the HODs meetings on progress. The Facilitators would be free to organize their work as they judged most effective. They were all aware of the need to do so with full respect for transparency and inclusiveness. In pursuit of this, he would ask them to make themselves available to all delegations wishing to raise issues of their particular concern, and to seek the views of all interested Ministers. He believed that one way to do this would be for them to specify a time and room where they would be available to all interested delegations. So as not to waste time, he was requesting the Facilitators to start work already by holding informal bilateral contacts that day, and to report back to the first HODs meeting on Thursday morning about how they intended to approach their tasks. Throughout this process, the Facilitators and he would also be able to draw on the experience and wisdom of the Chairman of the General Council, and the Chairs of the Geneva Negotiating Groups and other WTO bodies, as necessary.

Among the key issues, all knew that agriculture was viewed as extremely important by many governments. He wished to make clear from the outset how he saw the approach to this key area.

First, he assured all Members that, as they would expect, all views would be taken into account and taken very seriously. Nothing would be ignored and no voice would be left unheard. Second, Members were not starting from zero. The different contributions that had been put forward tended to converge on a similar structure. This structure should be used and completed with elements from the contributions that had been made and that all could agree on. This should help make progress towards convergence on substance. With these assurances, to which he fully committed himself and the Facilitators, he trusted that Ministers would be able to focus immediately on the major issues of substance which confronted them and find a balanced and acceptable outcome which fully respected the Doha Mandate.

He wished to emphasize that the assistance he would be receiving from the facilitating Ministers – for which he was most grateful – would in no way be a substitute for the HODs process or detract from the decision-making rights of any Member. Their task was to facilitate work. Delegations would at all times need to keep in mind that this process was aimed at resolving differences and facilitating consensus, and that any decisions could ultimately be taken only by the membership as a whole.

In a sense, all Ministers present at the Conference were facilitators, and he would be seeking advice from other Ministers as well on a constant basis to get a better view regarding overall balance. He knew that the Director-General would also be seeking inputs and advice which he would report to him. It was his hope that in this way, they could better enable these open meetings of all Ministers to function and to deliver a result that reflected the needs of all countries and regions.

As he had mentioned in his statement at the end of the July meeting of the General Council in Geneva, all were involved together in a very important endeavour, and one on whose results the welfare of millions depended. If one failed to deliver on what was expected from all at Cancún, he feared that one might eventually fail an entire generation by not allowing the trading system to produce the results all were awaiting. He urged all to keep their shared responsibility clearly in mind over the next few days.

In view of the limited time available, he intended to follow a very intensive process, and he asked for the understanding and cooperation of all in helping to keep to that schedule.

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