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TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
Statement by the Honourable Kenneth Valley
Minister of Trade and Industry,
Minister in the Ministry of Finance

On behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend best wishes to the Government and People of Hong Kong and commend you on the hosting of the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO). My delegation deeply appreciates your hospitality and the efficient logistical arrangements which you have provided.

As a small, vulnerable economy, Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to the multilateral negotiating process. We believe enhanced market access is critical to our developmental efforts. It provides the market space as well as the demand-pull which allows us to achieve the requisite economies of scale.

However, Mr. Chairman, while there is now general agreement that the small size and inherent vulnerabilities of some developing countries must be taken into account in the negotiation process, progress has been slow. Four years on since Doha, there has been little movement on the Developmental issues which Ministers sought to place at the heart of this Round of trade negotiations.

While we commend the decisions to extend until 2013 the deadline for least-developed countries to comply with the provisions of the WTO Agreement on intellectual property rights and to amend the TRIPS Agreement to allow developing countries more flexibility in responding to public health crises, we view with regret and concern the lack of progress in other areas of the Doha Work Programme.

It is our hope that this Ministerial Meeting will approve paragraph 41 of the Draft Text which relates to the application of the concept of Special and Different Treatment to the least-developed countries.

Special and Different Treatment is a core principle of the Doha Development Agenda. We are appreciative that the “*one size fits all*” application of rules is now seen as being inappropriate given the myriad of peculiarities that exist among Members. We continue

to recommend a continuum approach to the operationalization of Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) which takes into account differences in economic size; levels of development; production competencies and resource endowment. We see the provision of SDT for LDCs as a useful yardstick for the application of this concept to developing countries and this Ministerial Meeting must consider the need for a built-in schedule to address the requirements of other small, vulnerable countries. We call on this Ministerial Meeting to outline a work programme to concretize a proposal for such developing countries by early 2006.

Enhanced market access in areas of interest to developing countries, is another essential element of the DDA. My delegation is hopeful that this Conference will ensure progress in the traditionally difficult area of Agriculture – both with respect to market access and to the removal of subsidies that are trade distorting.

Capacity-building is also a central goal of the DDA. It is vital to developing countries, and, in essence, is at the heart of the concept of special and differential treatment. This concept must encompass technical, developmental and financial assistance targeted towards redressing supply side capacity constraints as well as providing adjustment support. We appreciate the articulated commitment of Japan to allocate \$10bn over the next three years for infrastructure development related to trade, production and distribution in developing countries. We invite other developed countries to follow this initiative.

Mr. Chairman, we recognize the inherent complexities in these trade negotiations. It is important that we make strides on the development issues, in NAMA and Agriculture. The success of this Round will be judged by the extent to which the development issues permeate every aspect of the Agreements emanating therefrom.

A genuine commitment to the primacy of development will contribute to levelling the playing field, as it were, while redressing imbalances in the multilateral trading system, thereby allowing small vulnerable economies the opportunity to share in the benefits of trade liberalisation. In so doing, the convergence in income growth and development between developed and developing countries, on which the best argument in favour of free trade is based, may be finally realized.

I thank you.