

Statement by Ambassador/PR of Nepal Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai at the WTO General Council on February 22, 2010.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me join previous speakers in extending a very warm welcome to new Ambassadors.

My delegation thanks the Director General for an overview of the developments in the Doha Development Agenda.

I would like to associate myself with the statement made by Zambia on behalf of the LDCs.

This meeting comes at a crucial stage of negotiations. As we prepare for next month's stock taking exercise, we find great stakes involved in the process. After almost a decade of negotiations, the question is what is in store for sealing the Doha deal by the end of this year?

Mr. Chairman,

Over the years, LDCs have carried out deep reforms of their economies. They have acted on their commitments in the hope of rapid growth and development. Where are our hopes, dreams and expectations of being fully integrated in the multilateral trading system and partnership in prosperity?

In addition to our traditional challenges, a new set of challenges and crises including the financial and economic crisis, growth of terrorism, environmental degradation, energy crises, food crisis and climate change have emerged. They have impacted adversely on trade, investment, financing for development and trade, and employment. Where do we stand in pushing the Doha Development Agenda with development at the center of the process in the midst of these challenges? These are the questions which should form the core component of the stock taking exercise next month.

While we appreciate the generosity of developed members of this house, we call upon the entire membership to listen to the cries of poor and address the irony and contradictions that beset the functioning of the world trade system. We call for early corrections of historic distortions and structural flaws in the global trading system, and address the legitimate concerns and aspirations of the poor.

Mr. Chairman,

LDCs account for 1/4th of the UN membership. Taken together 12 countries that are in line of accession, LDCs account for about 30% of WTO membership. Of the 26 countries under review for WTO accession, 12 are LDCs, accounting for over 40% of the ongoing accession. LDCs need generous support and assistance of development partners. A more inclusive, predictable, transparent trading system and participatory process will make the WTO truly universal organization.

Poverty is an affront to a dignified society which we claim to be working for. The poor are tired. Let it be understood that LDCs issues are about the livelihood of the people who account for about 12% of the global population living in abject poverty and daily deprivation. They continue to suffer from widespread poverty and remain vulnerable and marginalized.

My delegation would like to request the membership of this house to agree on the early harvesting on the followings that are of crucial importance to LDCs:

1. Implement fully the DFQF market access for all products originating from LDCs at the earliest,
2. Cotton issues,
3. Operationalization of LDCs Service waiver,
4. Trade Facilitation measures: operationalize Special and Differential Treatment principles, make Aid for Trade operational to help mobilize adequate resources for LDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

Accession route for LDCs has been complex and time taking. Despite the WTO General Council decision on December 10, 2002, the 'accession of LDCs should be conducted under a fast track approach,' seems to be hardly working. Accession process has taken as long as 185 months. My own country waited restlessly for over 179 months for accession. Capacity of the acceding countries must be given due consideration. What LDCs want is to see simplified and streamlined accession procedures, and be provided adequate technical assistance and capacity building.

The founding documents of the WTO recognize that trade has to help LDCs secure a share in the growth in international trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development. The documents also promise to protect the export interest of LDCs and substantially increased technical assistance

and timely review of the needs and positive measures. We have dreams, promises and hopes from the Doha Round to have meaningful market access, support for the diversification of production and export bases and trade related technical assistance and capacity building. HK Ministerial Declaration clearly reaffirmed commitment to effectively and meaningfully integrate LDCs into multilateral trading system. Seventh WTO Ministerial meeting held in Geneva in November/December last year reiterated for an early conclusion of the Doha Development Round with development at the center of the process. It is time we seriously reflect on mountains of pledges and promises made against the reality on the ground.

One sixth of the global population lives in poor countries. Two thirds of the countries in the world are either in the traps of political tensions or violent conflicts or in the aftermath of conflict or war. Most of them include middle level or low level income countries. The immediate tasks in these countries include establishing peace, injecting trust and confidence into the society to create an environment of national reconciliation, and generating economic opportunities to sustain peace, democratic and development process. This is economically essential. This is essential for socio-political stability, and this is essential for human security.

It is time to be serious, show results and work towards lifting the millions and millions of people out of poverty and conflicts towards building a stable architecture of global peace, security, stability and prosperity. A fair and free global trading system can act as a powerful instrument in this process.

Finally, Nepal would like to reiterate its commitment to work for the success of multilateral trading system, a system that must benefit the poor.

Thank you.