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Allow me first of all to join with previous speakers and, on behalf of the Government and people of Togo, express our heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Sweden following the tragic death of Mrs Anna Lindh, Sweden's Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was taken from us only a few days ago.

It is a great honour for me to represent my country at the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization and to have an opportunity to address this august assembly of the international community.

I should like first to take this opportunity to perform an agreeable duty, namely, to convey to the Conference a message of support and hopes for success from His Excellency Gnassingbe Eyadema, President of the Togolese Republic, and from the Togolese Government and people.

I wish to congratulate and thank the Mexican authorities on providing the WTO with the opportunity to hold the Fifth Ministerial Conference in this great and beautiful country and particularly in this lovely city of Cancún, as well as for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to me and my delegation since we arrived.

I also warmly congratulate the Chairman of the General Council and the Director-General of our Organization for their arduous work at every level in the preparing and organizing of this Conference.

From GATT to WTO, the international community's goal has been ever-increasing liberalization of economic and trade activities through the progressive reduction of customs duties and the lifting of non-tariff barriers so as to facilitate market access for everybody, along with the harmonization of economic and trade policies and practices within the framework of a new international trading system and globalization.

To this end, the Uruguay Round agreements had emphasized, among other things, the need to effectively implement measures on special and differential treatment and to pay special attention to the problems of developing and least-developed countries, first, so as to expand their economies and trade, and second to help them adapt to the new international economic and trade context and integrate in and draw benefit from it.

Following the inception of the WTO in January 1995 and after the Ministerial Conferences in Singapore in 1996 and Geneva in 1998, the hope of meeting this challenge was nourished by many

new subjects as well as by various assistance programmes introduced for the developing and least-developed countries in order to promote their trade and effectively integrate them in international trade.

However, the failure of the Third Ministerial Conference, in Seattle, revealed the extent of the diverging interests and the balance of power among international trade partners and the assessment in Doha in November 2001 was disappointing: the hopes raised by the Uruguay Round agreements and the ministerial conferences had not materialized, for implementation of the agreements had been generally insufficient and inadequate, the provisions on special and differential treatment for the least-developed countries had not been applied, and arbitrary measures had often been imposed on their products.

Nevertheless, the conflicts of interest on international trade issues were more or less reconciled. A new negotiating round, called the Doha Development Round, was launched and took account of many aspects of the world economy, thus renewing the hope for a better future.

Unfortunately, now when this Fifth Ministerial Conference is being held for a mid-term review, the negotiations on the Doha Mandate have not moved at the requisite pace and, in most cases, apart from the consensus on modalities for negotiations, no tangible results have been obtained.

The long-sought liberalization is still being impeded by trade-distorting practices, characterized more particularly by tariff peaks, protectionist measures, subsidies and support, which affect the exports of the developing and least-developed countries.

Hence, after more than half a century of the international trading system and over and above good intentions, the results are not conclusive and the share of developing and least-developed countries in world trade is still falling.

The Doha Development Round must eliminate imbalances and make the multilateral economic and trade system more open and more transparent in the interest of everyone.

It is therefore essential for the international community meeting here at this Fifth Ministerial Conference to reach compromises so that the concerns of interdependence, solidarity, integration, poverty reduction and globalization will effectively lead to concrete results in an international economic and trade system profitable to everybody, in a spirit of justice and equity.

The major challenge to be met in Cancún is to make sure that the international trading system is a springboard for complementarity and interdependence in the economies of nations and a *rapprochement* of peoples.

If no agreement is reached in any of these areas, the Fifth Ministerial Conference should issue decisive instructions and guidelines for the negotiations to continue and for them to be completed within the deadlines prescribed by the Doha Mandate.

My delegation therefore hopes that, in a spirit of genuine solidarity, all sides will reconcile their differences so that material shape can be given to the hopes raised at Doha.

In this regard, my delegation is deeply concerned about the persistent disagreement on a number of questions of paramount importance to developing countries.

A few months ago, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali took a major step in the WTO in connection with the cotton sector.

On behalf of the eight Member States of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), which includes Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali, I should like to say that this is a vital issue for our nations, which obtain the bulk of their income from this product.

For this reason, we demand:

- That cotton be treated in the WTO as a special product in view of its strategic importance to our economies;
- The total elimination of all cotton subsidies for a period of three years;
- The introduction of a mechanism to compensate our countries' cotton producers for loss of earnings due to subsidies.

If a proper solution to this critical issue is not found at this Conference, the poverty and precarious conditions that the international community seeks to combat will grow worse in the producer countries.

I therefore urge each and every one to display vision, political will and solidarity in the course of our consultations on this matter.

Similarly, I urge the partners in international trade to take the requisite steps to find appropriate solutions to the concerns of developing countries, more particularly in agriculture, market access, services, special and differential treatment, implementation of agreements and undertakings, technical cooperation and capacity-building.

As to the Singapore Issues, my delegation, like the delegations of other WAEMU Members, deems it premature in the present situation to launch negotiations on these questions. We consider that clarifications are necessary before we decide on the advisability of initiating negotiations in these fields.

With reference to the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, Togo welcomes the recent agreement in this area. We nonetheless consider that, if the needs and expectations of our peoples are to be met effectively, the agreement must be accompanied by flexible modalities of implementation.

I should like at this time to join with other delegations in congratulating Cambodia and Nepal on their accession to the WTO. These new admissions show that the international community has accepted the multilateral trading system within the WTO. It was therefore essential for the requisite means to be placed at the disposal of our Organization so that it can achieve the noble objectives of development for everyone.

I hope that the work of this Fifth Ministerial Conference will lead to a happy outcome that will rebuild worldwide confidence among peoples and countries in the international trading system.
