Statement by Mr. Mike Moore
Director-General
World Trade Organization
It would be difficult to exaggerate the significance of the WTO's 4th Ministerial Conference which ended in Doha, Qatar on Wednesday. Just two years ago, in Seattle, similar talks failed amid doubts about the future of the multilateral system. Success in Doha has put many of those doubts to rest. China and Chinese Taipei formally acceded to the WTO, adding some 1.3 billion consumers to the global trading system, and moving the WTO a crucial step closer to the goal of universal membership. At the same time, the WTO's 142 Members also agreed to launch an ambitious new round of global trade negotiations aimed at strengthening the rules of the system and liberalizing trade in a wider range of sectors, from services, to agriculture, to industrial goods.

Success owed much to important changes to the WTO since Seattle. The extraordinary process of consultation and debate which has dominated the work of the WTO throughout the past two years showed that the WTO had learned an important lesson from Seattle – namely, that the system had to be made more inclusive of all its Members if consensus decision-making was to have any meaning. In Geneva, thousands of hours were spent in plenary discussions and in meetings of heads of delegations. Every issue, and every national position, had been fully explored before Doha. At the Conference itself, every effort was made to keep Ministers and delegations fully involved in the negotiations, and the final text was approved by all representatives. The transparency and inclusiveness - which is to say the legitimacy - of the process helps to explain why Members were more prepared and more willing to reach agreement.

The most important change since Seattle is the growing influence of developing countries. Developing countries now make up 80 per cent of the WTO's Membership, and with China's accession their influence will only increase. Their share of world trade and output has risen steadily since 1986, reaching 30 per cent in 2000. In dollar terms, merchandise exports from developing countries rose 24 per cent last year — twice the world rate — largely as a result of the huge import demand of the United States. It has been estimated that two-thirds of the benefits of further cuts in industrial tariffs would go to developing countries. It is also clear that developing-country exporters of agricultural and primary products would make significant gains from new liberalization and disciplines on subsidies - that is another major reason why the
launch of a new round of negotiations was so important. Increasingly no one has a greater stake in strong multilateral rules and open world trade than developing countries.

This explains why "development" issues have risen to the top of the WTO's agenda. From being a fringe issue a generation ago, the debate over how to better integrate development priorities into the trading system moved to the center of the preparatory process for Doha - and its resolution was key to the agreement to launch new negotiations. Developing countries such as India, Brazil, Pakistan, and South Africa were in the forefront of countries shaping a positive outcome in Doha – and their ministers, ambassadors and officials stand among the most effective and influential trade-policy practitioners in the world today.

If Seattle raised doubts about the future of the multilateral trading system, Doha gives it new hope. We must not squander it. The need to assist developing countries – especially the least developed – to take advantage of open world markets and secure trade rules has never been greater. The scope, complexity, and value of the WTO's legal system continues to expand. Much of the recent controversy about the implementation of Uruguay Round commitments stemmed from the human and resources constraints faced by developing countries in adapting legislation to new obligations and building the infrastructure needed to implement them. These constraints should concern every Member, not just the countries subject to them. As the WTO embarks on new negotiations and rule-making, and as its membership continues to widen, the multilateral trading system's future success will hinge directly on the ability of all countries to participate fully in the process and to feel "ownership" of the outcome.

Thanks to the generosity of Members, who have financed our activities through trust funds and other donations, we have been able to do far more than would have been possible on the basis of the regular WTO budget. But we are far from meeting current needs, let alone future demands. In Doha Ministers were asked to endorse long-term funding for WTO technical assistance. Immediately following the Ministerial, we will be presenting the Members with a fully detailed plan, for adoption, that will complement the Ministers' decision and ensure a secure and predictable approach to funding for the ambitious programme of work which the WTO has now embarked upon. I use this opportunity to appeal to Finance and Development
Ministers – as well as our sister organizations, the IMF and the World Bank - to support these goals. To give substance to our repeated calls to mainstream trade into development.

Doha has delivered an important message of hope. It underlines in the most concrete terms the commitment of 142 governments to open markets and international cooperation, at a time of global economic uncertainty. It signifies, above all, a new commitment to making trade work for development – and the willingness of developing countries to give the WTO a second chance. But the launch of new negotiations is just that – a launch, the beginning of a long and difficult process, not an end in itself. We need the coherent support of all international organizations, all Ministries, if the promise of Doha is to become a reality.