

Statement by Ministers at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Ministerial Council Meeting (25 June)

We the undersigned Ministers are committed to resisting protectionism and reaching an ambitious and balanced conclusion to the Doha Development Round in the shortest possible time. We welcome the important commitments undertaken at the meetings of the G20 in London and the Cairns Group in Bali.

The current crisis constitutes the most severe global economic shock since the Great Depression. Global output for 2009 is expected to decline by nearly 3 per cent. Trade is predicted to drop even more sharply by 9 per cent. Protectionism can only deepen the crisis and add years to the time for recovery.

Therefore, we must not allow protectionism to prevail over the collective interest or erode the basis of the multilateral trading system embodied in the WTO. By promoting open markets, non-discrimination and global competition, the GATT/WTO system has contributed significantly to the national welfare of all over the last 60 years. Thanks to advancing trade and specialisation, millions of consumers and producers worldwide have won easier and more affordable access to goods and services.

The Doha Round has a crucial role to play at this time. Concluding the negotiations will contribute to economic recovery and reinforce the benefits of the multilateral trading system. Reforms resulting from the Round will also provide valuable insurance against the threat of protectionism.

WTO Members must now show political will to act on two levels: building on progress already made, senior negotiators must reconvene in Geneva to agree on a path towards the conclusion of the negotiations so as to start down that path before the European summer break. At the same time, WTO Members must take advantage of every opportunity to engage at the political level to drive progress over the coming weeks and months.

In parallel, we must remain vigilant against increased protectionism, which can take the form of tariffs and subsidies plus other restrictive non-tariff measures. Even measures applied within WTO commitments can have a significant protectionist effect. WTO Members must exercise utmost restraint and not follow the easy path of resorting to

such measures at this difficult time. We call on all our trading partners to rectify promptly any protectionist measures already introduced, including all those recently taken, in the shortest possible timeframe.

We call on all our trading partners to share our commitment to resist protectionism and to conclude the Doha Round negotiations as soon as possible. We are committed to engage actively on both fronts.

Mariano Fernandez Amunategui, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chile

Luis Guillermo Plata, Minister for Trade, Industry and Tourism, Colombia

Marco Vinicio Ruiz, Minister of Foreign Trade, Costa Rica

Rita Lau, Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Hong Kong, China

Aurelia Frick, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Liechtenstein

Gerardo Ruiz Mateos, Secretario de Economia, Mexico

Tim Groser, Minister of Trade, New Zealand

Makhdoom Muhammad Amin Fahim, Minister for Commerce, Pakistan

Mercedes Araoz Fernandez, Minister for Trade and Tourism, Peru

Doris Leuthard, Vice-President of the Swiss Federal Council and Minister of Economy, Switzerland

Gonzalo Fernandez, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Uruguay