



## SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Developments in other organizations****Addendum: Extracts from statements  
made at the Third Ministerial Conference  
of the World Trade Organization  
(Seattle, 29 November-3 December 1999)**

In view of the interest shown by the Working Party in the compilation provided by the Office in March 1997 of relevant extracts from statements referring to labour standards and the ILO, made at the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (Singapore, 9-13 December 1996),<sup>1</sup> it has been decided to provide a similar compilation of extracts from statements made in Seattle. These extracts are reproduced below. *Not being complete texts, they should be read in the context of the full statements*, which may be accessed on the WTO's Internet page.<sup>2</sup> All translations and designations are those of the WTO.

**Austria****Statement by H.E. Mr. Hannes Farnleitner,  
Federal Minister for Economic Affairs**

In the past Austria has always supported the consideration of core labour rights in the multilateral trading system. Therefore it is a primary concern for Austria to include the social dimension in the next negotiating round. The respect of core labour rights shall not impair the comparative advantages of developing countries, but lead to a rise in life quality for the population and contribute to sustainable development to the benefit of all WTO Members. Therefore we strongly support the creation of a joint ILO/WTO standing working forum to deal with this subject in a larger context, including areas of particular concern to developing countries. We do not aim at new protectionism or sanctions but at breakthroughs which are to be made with regard to core labour rights by economic incentives.

<sup>1</sup> GB.268/WP/SDL/1/3, Corr. and Add. 1.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.wto.org/wto/seattle/english/state\\_e/state\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/wto/seattle/english/state_e/state_e.htm).

## Bahrain

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Ali Saleh Al-Saleh, Minister of Commerce***

Concerning the labour standards, we believe that the International Labour Organization (ILO) is the correct venue for labour issues, as was agreed at the first Ministerial Meeting held in Singapore in 1996.

## Belgium

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Pierre Chevalier, Secretary of State for Foreign Trade***

Belgium attaches particular importance to the relationship between trade and *international labour standards*. We regret that the important work accomplished in the ILO since Singapore has not received sufficient support in the WTO. Belgium advocates that the issue of international labour standards should be dealt with in a constructive and non-confrontational manner within the WTO, in close collaboration with the ILO. In no case will Belgium accept that this debate becomes a pretext to apply measures of a protectionist nature.

## Botswana

### ***Statement by the Honourable Daniel K. Kwelagobe Minister of Commerce and Industry***

With regard to the issues relating to environment and labour standards, Botswana believes that these are important issues which have to be addressed in promoting sustainable development. However, while we support improvement of environmental standards, we note the existing working group on trade and environment, which we believe has to continue to study and analyse the relationship between the two issues. Indeed, on core labour standards, we note that the Singapore Ministerial Conference took a definitive decision to refer this matter to the appropriate organization, the International Labour Organization.

## Brazil

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Luiz Felipe Lampreia Minister of Foreign Relations***

Protectionism in developed countries is on the rise. Now and then, people's genuine concerns and good faith are used as a disguise. Environment and labour standards – which the international community has created specific rules for, and entrusted specialized agencies with – are two such new issues being brought to the trade agenda in a way that leaves much room for suspicion. We are not convinced of the need to make changes in the WTO Agreements to that effect.

## Brunei Darussalam

***Statement by the Honourable Pehin  
Dato Abdul Rahman Taib  
Minister of Industry and Primary Resources***

Brunei Darussalam, like many other WTO Members, subscribes to core labour standards. Nonetheless, we feel compelled to reiterate our Singapore agreement that the International Labour Organization is the competent body to deal with such issues.

## Bulgaria

***Statement by H.E. Mr. Valentin Vassilev,  
Minister of Trade and Tourism***

We should not neglect the issues of e-commerce, the relationship between trade and labour standards and the impact of trade on the environment.

## Burkina Faso

***Statement by H.E. Mr. Abdoulaye Abdoukader Cisse,  
Minister for Trade, Industry and Handicrafts***

We call on the World Trade Organization to [...] ensure that environmental and social standards do not become disguised forms of protectionism.

## Burundi

***Statement by H.E. Mr. Darius Nahayo,  
Minister for Trade, Industry and Tourism***

Some issues should be discussed taking into account all their aspects and not simply be considered as purely trade subjects. For example, social standards, the environment and the patentability of living organisms should not be tackled purely from the point of view of trade. This also applies to cultural goods and services. Harmonization is difficult to achieve and the WTO is not the only institution or even the institution best adapted to deal with these questions.

## Canada

***Statement by the Honourable Pierre S. Pettigrew,  
Minister for International Trade***

Coherence and coordination among our many international organizations is also vitally important. Too often, countries are caught in a tug-of-war between widely different, even contradictory visions or policies of the key international organizations. That is why Canada has proposed a working party on globalization to ensure that the WTO works in coordination with UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development), the ILO

(International Labour Organization), UNEP (UN Environment Programme), the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and others.

## Chile

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, Minister for Foreign Affairs***

Nor can we ignore the need to adopt new regimes in the labour field. For that we already possess a forum that we must utilize: the International Labour Organization. We need to strengthen the links between the ILO and the WTO.

## China

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Shi Guangsheng, Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (speaking as an observer)***

The new round of multilateral trade negotiations should focus on discussing issues related to trade. China holds that those issues that are not related to the functions of WTO such as labour standards should not be incorporated into the agenda.

## Colombia

### ***Statement by H.E. Mrs. Marta Lucía Ramírez de Rincón, Minister of Foreign Trade***

It is a paradox that some of the countries that place the greatest emphasis on the linkage between trade and labour rights have not yet signed most of the Protocols of the International Labour Organization. While it is true that subjects such as the environment and labour rights are not incompatible with trade-related subjects, it would be unacceptable if the relevant standards were raised through trade restrictions.

## Congo

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Pierre-Damien Boussoukou-Boumba, Minister of Trade, Supplies, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises, in Charge of Handicrafts***

More generally speaking, the Congo would not wish to see environmental policies and labour standards converted into new technical barriers to trade between the States.

## Costa Rica

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Samuel Guzowski, Minister of Foreign Trade***

As to workers' rights, I must point out that for more than half a century Costa Rica has had advanced labour legislation guaranteeing respect for such rights and has played an active part in the International Labour Organization (ILO). Costa Rica believes that this subject should continue to be dealt with in that organization and not in the WTO, for it is not a trade subject and there is a threat that it could be used for protectionist purposes. The Singapore Ministerial Declaration clearly established the guidelines for dealing with this subject by stating that the International Labour Organization is the appropriate body. Accordingly, we do not think it necessary to add more to what was agreed on at Singapore in this regard.

## Czech Republic

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr Jilí Maceška, Junior Minister of Industry and Trade***

Social issues, including labour standards, clearly belong to most contentious subjects we are confronted with. Wide gaps exist as to the role the WTO is supposed to play in enforcing objectives in these areas. Our view is that these issues could and should be discussed amicably. We need a good point of departure allowing to get out of various myths, misperceptions and accusations, a mechanism enabling to increase mutual confidence through an open and non-prejudicial dialogue.

We would be supportive of the idea of establishing a mechanism somewhere between the ILO and the WTO to debate trade and labour as well as other relevant issues. However, we would not support the establishment of any institutional links between trade and labour and inclusion of this issue into the next round.

## Denmark

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Niels Helveg Petersen, Minister for Foreign Affairs***

On labour rights let me make two points: (1) We reject protectionism and sanctions. (2) We insist on positive steps, transparency, non-discrimination and dialogue. These elements would form a sound basis for constructive work during the coming round.

We believe that the relationship between trade and labour rights should be explored further during the round. With our EU partners we have therefore put forward the proposal that a joint permanent ILO/WTO working forum on trade, globalization and labour rights issues be established. It is our belief that such a forum would serve a useful function and help eradicate some of the misunderstandings that surround the inclusion of labour rights on the international trade agenda.

We are prepared to look deeper into how the relations between labour rights and trade could be carried out in practice. As mentioned, positive measures are the only means by which these standards should be implemented. We believe that special trading preferences

should be accorded to countries that integrate ILO core labour rights into their national policies. Such a system of preferences should be established within the framework of the WTO, thus assuring full transparency.

## **Dominica**

### ***Statement by the Honourable Norris M. Charles, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Marketing***

The Government of Dominica is also concerned about the plight of workers. We support workers' organizations' calls for a better life for working people. We must ensure that the WTO achieves its noble goals of increased living standards, raising employment and achieving sustainable growth for everyone in the world. But we are of the view that the ILO should continue to play the lead role in the promotion of labour standards.

## **Egypt**

### ***Statement by H.E. Dr. Youssef Boutros Ghali, Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade***

We also have a firm point of view as regards the new issues such as trade and environment, and core labour standards. We oppose the inclusion of those issues in the new trade negotiations, as this would lead to new disguised barriers to trade and would further minimize market access opportunities for developing countries, thus adding to their economic and social suffering.

In our view, core labour standards do not belong to trade negotiations. We believe that the ILO is the competent body to deal with this issue and it should stay this way.

## **El Salvador**

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Eduardo Ayala Grimaldi, Vice-Minister of Economy***

For El Salvador, the rights of workers are an extremely important aspect which we are dealing with very seriously in the competent international body, the ILO; and in that body, we hope that labour laws will receive the attention they deserve.

## **European Communities**

### ***Commission of the European Community: Statement by Mr. Pascal Lamy, Commissioner for Trade***

I know that the issues of trade and labour, and trade and environment worry many developing countries.

But on trade and labour, I urge you to look again at our proposal for an ILO/WTO forum. It is firmly based on what was agreed at Singapore. It does go further. It aims to start a real dialogue on the issue. But the proposal has been carefully designed: not just to prevent the possibility of unfair protectionist sanctions, but to avoid even the suggestion that this could happen.

## **Fiji**

### ***Statement by the Honourable Mahendra Chaudhry, Prime Minister***

Before concluding, let me make a brief mention of the new issues that have been proposed for the upcoming negotiations. These include, to mention a few, the issues of environment, labour standards, investment and competition, transparency in government procurement, and trade facilitation.

## **Finland**

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Kimmo Sasi, Minister for Foreign Trade, on behalf of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union***

In an interdependent world, the WTO cannot work in isolation. Stronger bridges between the WTO and other relevant international organizations are needed to ensure the necessary coherence of action at international level. The new round should maximize the potential for positive synergies between trade liberalization, environmental protection and economic development. A close cooperation between the ILO and WTO on the issue of trade and labour rights would be a promising way. In this context the EU has proposed the creation of a joint ILO/WTO standing working forum on trade, globalization and labour issues.

## **France**

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Christian Sautter, Minister for the Economy, Finance and Industry***

#### **2. A means: Fair rules of the game**

Our aim is to free energies for growth and channel them for the common good [...]. It is also why we are asking that fundamental social standards be taken into account, not in order to establish a worldwide minimum wage, but in order to combat child labour and prison labour [...]. As far as basic social standards are concerned, we prefer an approach based on incentives and encouragement through the creation of a permanent forum between the WTO and the International Labour Organization.

## Georgia

***Statement by H.E. Mrs. Tamar Beruchashvili,  
Minister of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations  
(speaking as an observer)***

Georgia looks forward to full participation in the efforts of the WTO to further expand international trade. We have accepted virtually all of the sectoral initiatives and plurilateral agreements. We support reasonable environmental and labour agreements.

## Germany

***Statement by H.E. Dr. Werner Müller,  
Federal Minister of Economics and Technology***

Only a broad mandate for negotiations can answer the ever more urgent question about the relationship between trade policy and other policy fields.

Examples are: investment, competition, environment, health, consumer protection, and labour and social standards.

## Greece

***Statement by H.E. Mrs. Rodoula Zissis,  
Deputy Minister of National Economy***

Concerning trade and core labour standards, we believe that it is necessary at this stage to create a joint ILO/WTO forum of dialogue to better understand each other's concerns.

## Group of 77 (Morocco)

***Statement circulated by H.E. Mr. Mohammed Benaissa,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation  
of Morocco,  
President of the Ninth Ministerial Meeting of the G-77***

### Labour standards

Let me make clear at the outset that the Members of the Group of 77 and China are unanimous in recognizing the importance of labour standards and the welfare of workers in general throughout the world. This is clearly an important feature of development. The Group of 77 is therefore ready and willing to discuss these issues. However, two things must be emphasized.

Firstly, and as explicitly stated at Marrakesh by the Ministers of the G-77 and China, the developing countries are firmly opposed to any linkage between labour standards and trade. And secondly – and this follows on logically from the first point – the question of labour standards should be dealt with by the competent international organizations and not by the WTO. And in this we are simply endorsing the position established in the Singapore



Ministerial Declaration. Let me just recall that, on the question of core labour standards, the Declaration stated unequivocally that the International Labour Organization is the competent body to set and deal with these standards. This is the position of the Group of 77 and China.

And of course, when we do discuss labour standards in the ILO, we will base ourselves on the principle, also agreed upon at Singapore, that the comparative advantage of countries, particularly low-wage developing countries, must in no way be called into question.

## **Guatemala**

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. José Guillermo Castillo, Minister of Economy***

For Guatemala, the proposal to link trade and labour issues is a matter of great concern. Time and again we have been obliged to protest against the proposal to deal with labour standards in the WTO because, in our view, they should be dealt with in other forums.

## **Guyana**

### ***Statement by the Honourable Clement J. Rohee, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs***

... the matter of core labour standards. We have said it before and we wish to emphasize it again. We believe in the right of workers to belong to trade unions and to be engaged in the collective bargaining process. This in my view is a reasonable undertaking in a civilized society and it explains why we have not hesitated to ratify and honour various Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

However, it would be a backward step for all of us – for the process we are seeking to consolidate here – if concerns for labour standards and workers' rights were to serve as a pretext for countries to institute new barriers to trade. This we must avoid at all costs.

## **Haiti**

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Gérald Germain, Minister of Trade and Industry***

We think that it is premature to plan on negotiations aimed at reaching a multilateral agreement in areas such as investment, labour standards, environment and competition policy within the framework of the WTO. These areas, although of interest to the WTO, should continue to be dealt with by the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. However, we encourage the different working groups set up to study the links between trade and these different areas to pursue their work.

## Holy See

***Statement by Monsignor Osvaldo Neves de Almeida,  
Head of Delegation of the Holy See  
(speaking as an observer)***

Questions of human and labour rights deserve particular attention. The Holy See greatly appreciates the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and considers it to be an appropriate response to the challenges presented by the globalized economy. Child labour, organized prostitution, slavery and forced labour, and the proscription of labour unions can never be part of national policy or be defended by a country's right to development (cf. Pope John Paul II, Encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (1981), N.17). But, in order to facilitate full compliance with the principles enunciated in the ILO Declaration, rich countries need to avoid any kind of protectionism in the guise of the aforesaid principles.

## Honduras

***Statement by Dr. Reginaldo Panting P.,  
Secretary of State for Industry and Trade***

Honduras is a country which respects human rights and workers' rights, and here we reiterate our position expressed in Singapore and adopted by that Ministerial Conference, which recognized that the ILO is the only body competent to handle the subject of the promotion and application of core labour standards, and therefore we reject any initiative which seeks to discuss this subject in the context of the WTO with the aim of introducing protectionist trade measures against countries which have comparative advantages.

## Hong Kong, China

***Statement by Mr. Chau Tak Hay,  
Secretary for Trade and Industry***

But the WTO is not an appropriate forum to solve all the world's problems, nor is it as well equipped to study some of these issues as other institutions. The introduction of matters such as labour into the WTO would do the Organization irreparable damage. As we already acknowledged and decided at Singapore, the International Labour Organization is the competent body to deal with labour issues. Let there be no doubt that Hong Kong, China strongly supports labour standards and the work of the ILO. The WTO's contribution to the question of improved social conditions is indirect, through raising the prosperity of people everywhere through increased trade. That is the only relationship there can be between trade and labour standards. We should concentrate on our core business of progressive multilateral trade liberalization and leave labour standards to the ILO.

## Hungary

### ***Statement by Dr. Attila Chikán, Minister of Economic Affairs***

In our view, continued worldwide economic growth through trade and investment liberalization is the key to the improvement of social conditions in every country. However, we are not against the idea of having an active dialogue about the interface of trade and labour, provided that it is conducted outside of the WTO. We are convinced that the setting and enforcement of international labour standards should remain to be the job of the ILO.

## Indonesia

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Jusuf Kalla, Minister of Industry and Trade***

#### Labour standards

On the question of labour standards, it was agreed in the Singapore Ministerial Conference that the ILO is the competent body to set the labour standards and deal with labour issues, and that the WTO and ILO secretariats will continue their existing collaboration. In our interpretation, collaboration means only exchange of information and documents. It was also our position that the Ministers' decision on this issue in Singapore should not lead to the WTO to acquire a competence to undertake further work on labour standards. Indonesia has ratified all the core Conventions of ILO and remains committed to their observance. Nevertheless, Indonesia has serious difficulties with the proposal that the WTO should pursue further work in this area. This, we believe, is inconsistent with the agreement reached at Singapore.

## India

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Murasoli Maran, Minister of Commerce and Industry***

On the issue of labour, India is fully committed to observance of labour standards and has ratified most ILO Conventions. We also cherish all the values of democracy, workers' rights and good governance. These issues however are not under the purview of the WTO. At Singapore, we decided once and for all, that labour-related issues rightly belong to the ILO. India resolutely rejects renewed attempts to introduce these in the WTO in one form or another. Any further move will cause deep divisions and distrust that can only harm the formation of a consensus on our future work programme.

## Ireland

### ***Statement by H.E. Dr. Tom Kitt, TD, Minister of Trade***

The issue of trade and labour standards is also one that we regard as important and appropriate for consideration. The EU proposal for a forum to consider the matter is a realistic way forward and one which I hope other delegations can rally to.

## Israel

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Ran Cohen, Minister for Industry and Trade***

Israel attaches great importance to the respect of core labour standards and environmental issues. While the WTO may have a role to play, the comparative advantage of low-wage countries should not be jeopardized, nor may labour standards or environmental measures be used as a non-tariff barrier.

## Italy

### ***Statement by the Honourable Piero Fassino, Minister of Foreign Trade***

The most critical and sensitive social aspect should be tackled with this same spirit; the protection of labour rights, starting from the weakest sectors – such as minors and women – that are the most exposed to intolerable forms of exploitation, when not real modern slavery.

We know how sensitive this issue is for less advanced countries. Therefore, it is necessary to identify forums that can single out forms and tools to tackle such a crucial issue with the active contribution of less advanced countries. Italy believes that an ad hoc working group within WTO or even at an ILO/WTO forum could be useful. Anyway, a close cooperation between ILO and WTO is necessary. What matters is that the issue of social rights is dealt with in a constructive manner by working out positive measures for training and technical assistance to help those countries to change their legislation in order to increasingly protect the work of the weakest groups in society.

## Lao People's Democratic Republic

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Siadsvath Savengsuksa, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Commerce and Tourism***

The Lao People's Democratic Republic endorses the calls by others for this round to meet the needs of developing countries. This requires undertakings made in the Uruguay Round to be fully implemented and for this round to focus on core issues. Non-trade issues such as labour standards and environment should be addressed in the appropriate international institutions, not the WTO.

## Liechtenstein

### ***Statement by H.E. Ms. Andrea Willi, Minister for Foreign Affairs***

Not only in the preparation for this meeting, the issue of trade and social standards has been discussed. International cohesion, cooperation and integration require a vision embracing the values on which our societies are based. In view of the increasing global economic interdependence, we are urged to address this issue and to find the appropriate body to deal with it.

## Luxembourg

### ***Statement by Mr. Eugène Berger, Secretary of State for the Environment***

The Organization must take into account the fact that it and its Members depend on the expertise available elsewhere. My country encourages a closer dialogue between the WTO and international organizations such as UNCTAD, the ILO, WHO, WIPO and UNEP. The WTO should engage in an effort of collective responsibility and I welcome the availability of leaders of the international community such as the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, Mr. Rubens Ricupero of UNCTAD and Mr. Juan Somavia of the ILO, who have come to Seattle.

My country can understand the reluctance of those who fear being forced to make concessions in the area of social standards under the pressure of the negotiations.

My country nevertheless considers that the WTO has reached the necessary maturity to engage in a dialogue with the ILO on the interaction between trade and social standards.

## Malaysia

### ***Statement by Mr. Asmat Kamaludin, Secretary-General, Ministry of International Trade and Industry***

It is our view that the issue of trade and labour had already been settled at the Singapore Ministerial Conference when it was decided that the International Labour Organization is the competent body to deal with core labour standards. We would like to reiterate that all countries should conform to the core labour standards agreed to in the ILO. Malaysia as a responsible Member of the ILO has subscribed to almost all the core Conventions relating to these standards.

Attempts to discuss labour in the WTO is a cause for concern to us. We believe such discussion in the WTO would ultimately lead to calls for changes in WTO rules that would permit trade measures to be used to force compliance of labour standards. This would only erode the fundamental principle of MFN in the WTO. It would also permit countries to justify new forms of protection and negate concessions made in previous negotiations.

WTO cannot be the forum to discuss and provide the cure for all the social ills of the world. To do so we would only jeopardize rather than promote future trade liberalization.

## Mexico

### ***Statement by H.E. Dr. Herminio Blanco Mendoza, Minister of Commerce and Industrial Development***

In addition, trade has a positive impact on the welfare of workers. Trade creates more and better jobs. In Mexico, the export sector has accounted for over half of the jobs created since 1995. These jobs pay wages that are 30 per cent higher than those in non-exporting activities.

Given the benefits of trade, it is strange to hear voices around this conference calling for a halt to the process of liberalization on the pretext of protecting the environment or labour standards. They do not realize that in so doing they are achieving the opposite objective of the one they pursue. We cannot let these interests contaminate the WTO's agenda. Solutions to environmental and labour issues must be found in their own multilateral forums, not in the WTO. Introducing these issues into the WTO would open the door to protectionist interests wrecking the essence and success of this institution.

There is no denying the role of the multilateral trading system in the liberalization of world trade and the ensuing impact on economic growth and social well-being. Today we have an opportunity to give a fresh stimulus to this process. We must not let it slip by. Let us agree to launch a comprehensive new negotiating round. Let us not allow protectionist interests to limit the scope of what we can achieve here.

## Morocco

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Alami Tazi, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Handicrafts***

With regard to labour questions, we are convinced that the International Labour Organization (ILO), which currently enjoys universal support and recognition in the promotion of fundamental labour rights, remains the only competent body in that sphere.

It would be important to ensure that environmental and labour issues do not become new forms of disguised protectionism.

## Nepal

### ***Statement by the Honourable Ram Krishna Tamrakar, Minister of Commerce (speaking as an observer)***

With regard to trade and labour standards, we endorse the commitments made by Commerce Ministers at the Singapore Ministerial Declaration.

## Netherlands

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Gerrit Ybema, Minister for Foreign Trade***

Last but not least, I wish to stress that trade policy cannot be pursued in isolation from other fields of policy. It is very harmful for public acceptance of the important work of the WTO, if its rules are perceived as being an obstacle for effective policy-making in – for example – environmental, health or social matters. I am convinced that we can find ways to ensure that we can proceed on the course of trade liberalization without reducing our capacities for effective policy-making in other fields. Therefore, I hope that we can reach common ground here in Seattle on how to address these issues.

## New Zealand

### ***Statement by the Honourable Lockwood Smith, Minister for International Trade***

How can we take this Organization into the new millennium, mousing concern about labour standards and the environment, yet supporting subsidies that destroy our limited fish resources, or subsidies that stop developing economies building their trade, lifting their people out of poverty and raising their standards in the workplace.

I urge you to think about that.

## Nicaragua

### ***Statement by H.E. Mrs. Azucena Castillo, Minister of Development, Industry and Trade***

#### Employment and environmental issues

On behalf of my country I should like to reiterate the position expressed at the Second WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva on the need to take up labour topics in the proper forum: the International Labour Organization. Nicaragua is a signatory to and has always shown respect for the seven basic agreements of that Organization and has sought to ensure their fulfilment. We are a responsible country committed to social welfare and sustainable development. However, we are opposed to the use of employment or environmental conditions so as to block access to a specific market.

Figures and statistics on trade and employment, far from representing a threat to the industrialized countries, are in their favour and show a significant gap with the developing countries, which are facing high levels of unemployment and a worrying situation of social unrest. It needs to be said that there was clear evidence of the power of manipulation of powerful sectors yesterday, Tuesday, 30 November, here in Seattle, but there are also millions of workers and peasant farmers in the developing countries that are silently asking, without being present here in Seattle, for the creation of jobs and the reduction of poverty so as to be able to meet their basic needs. As responsible governments and countries we cannot allow large trade unions with the power to organize demonstrations to drown out those voices that we silently hear in our consciences.

## **Nigeria**

### ***Statement by the Honourable Mustafa Bello, Minister of Commerce***

On the issue of environment and labour standards in the agenda for future negotiations, the question is not whether these are objectives worthy of international cooperation and negotiations. The real substance is whether the WTO is the right place for such cooperation. Under the circumstance, Nigeria shares the view that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have the mandate, experience and capacity to deal with these issues. Our efforts, therefore, should be to assist these international institutions in carrying out their respective mandates and work programmes. In our assessment, attempts to overload the WTO agenda with non-trade issues will be counter-productive. It will mean that while the WTO will not have enough time to contribute meaningfully to environmental and labour issues, it will also lose the capacity to deliver on the issues of trade liberalization.

## **Norway**

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Knut Vollebæk, Minister for Foreign Affairs***

The trading system must also develop an increased awareness of core labour standards, while securing that these concerns are not misused for protectionist purposes. There is therefore a need for a dialogue between industrialized countries and developing countries about core labour standards.

## **Pakistan**

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Promotion***

There is a persistent, and disturbing, effort to introduce issues which are completely extraneous to the mandate of this Organization. I am referring to labour and environmental issues which are being introduced, not with the altruistic aim of raising standards in these areas, but with the clear objective of using these as a pretext for imposing market restrictions on competitive exports from developing countries.

Pakistan strongly opposes the attempt to raise the issue of labour standards in the WTO. This is a cynical and self-serving approach. The genuine concerns of ordinary people about the social effects of globalization are being manipulated to serve protectionist ends. Many of the people who are gathered in the streets outside entertain valid apprehensions about the impact of liberalization on their daily lives. We empathize with them, for many of our citizens are equally concerned about their economic and social well-being in a global economy which changes with dramatic rapidity.



## Panama

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Joaquín Jacome, Minister for Commerce and Industry***

We also respect the internationally recognized core labour standards and regard the International Labour Organization as the competent organization to deal with this matter.

## Papua New Guinea

### ***Statement by Mr. Michael Maue, Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry***

While the Government of Papua New Guinea fully supports the objectives of assuring appropriate environmental and labour standards of which we have heard so much in the past few days we consider these to be most appropriately determined within the context of national policy. Papua New Guinea recognizes widely accepted international standards set in forums such as the International Labour Organization. Papua New Guinea is a signatory to the agreements on core labour standards, and seeks to maintain high environmental standards and recognizes international health values where these exist. Papua New Guinea, along with other developing countries, however, categorically rejects the notion that any country, no matter how large or powerful, has a right to impose its labour and environmental standards on other WTO Members.

## Peru

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Juan Carlos Hurtado Miller, Minister for Industry, Tourism, Integration and International Trade Negotiations***

In the current context of openness and constant change, we consider that there is no room for protectionism in any form, since this in itself is a factor which distorts the foundations of the free market. We must express our rejection of the proposals to bring subjects into the WTO which belong to other international organizations, namely labour and environment issues.

## Philippines

### ***Statement by the Honourable Jose T. Pardo, Secretary of Trade and Industry***

There are issues like labour and the environment, which the principle of subsidiary dictates should be dealt with appropriately and competently by other international organizations.

## Poland

### ***Statement by Ms. Anna Skowronska-Luczynska, Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy***

There is no need to emphasize that human rights and labour standards issues rank prominently on Poland's political agenda. Accordingly, we see a possibility to establish an appropriate forum outside the WTO structure to initiate an analysis of new and complex interrelationships among trade policy, trade liberalization, development and core labour standards.

The outcomes of such works should in no case create a base for protectionist actions, for example in the form of trade sanctions related to the non-observance of labour standards.

## Portugal

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Joaquim Pina Moura, Minister for Finance and the Economy***

The WTO must respond to the changes in international economic relations, especially with respect to the increased importance of investment and international competition conditions. It must also play its part in responding to the legitimate concerns of our fellow citizens on matters such as environmental protection, consumer protection, food security, product quality and the relation between international trade and social standards.

## Saudi Arabia

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Osama J. Faqueeh, Minister of Commerce (speaking as an observer)***

The new round of trade negotiations is an ambitious undertaking. Its objective should include securing a fair share for developing and least developed countries, commensurate with their economic needs. The agenda and scope of future negotiations should be balanced and manageable. It should include the positive agenda proposed by developing countries especially such issues as transfer of technology, appropriate safeguards for LDCs, credit for autonomous liberalization and integration of developing countries into the multilateral trading system on equitable terms. Controversial issues such as labour standards and social clauses, on which there is no consensus, should be kept off the agenda.

## Sierra Leone

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Mike Lamin, Minister of Trade and Industry***

We recognize that in signing the Singapore Declaration of 1996, we were committing ourselves to the issue of core labour standards which is now a debate as to whether it should be taken up or not. We note the many apprehensions pronounced as to the real intention. We see the issue as important to all of us. Our concern, however, is that at the

end of the day, the rules should secure our mutual interest. In particular, it should ensure cohesion that will promote better conditions.

## **Singapore**

***Statement by H.E. Mr. BG (NS)  
George Young-Boon Yeo,  
Minister for Trade and Industry***

For the developing countries, the proposals to discuss the relationship between trade on the one hand, and good governance, environmental protection and core labour standards on the other, are viewed with mixed feelings. All of us desire good governance, environmental protection and core labour standards. It cannot be that those who live far away care more for these issues than we ourselves do. The key is to see clearly the motivations behind the proposals. When the motivations are protectionist, let us recognize them for what they are. Where the motivations are well intentioned, we should in our own interest listen carefully and adjust our policies.

## **Slovenia**

***Statement by H.E. Mr. Marjan Senjur,  
Minister for Economic Relations and Development***

The multilateral trading system could serve as a continuous force for economic growth, even more if the coherency mandate would be fully exploited. The WTO could play a significant role in what is sometimes called “a new world architecture”, together with institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the International Labour Organization. The WTO needs to engage more in issues of international concern and the public debate what the international community needs to do in times of crises and how to counteract protectionism. We need a “millennium” model of economic development that would balance economic efficiency and social justice.

## **Spain**

***Statement by H.E. Mr. D. Rodrigo De Rato y Figaredo,  
Second Vice-President and Minister of Economy and  
Finance***

Aspects such as consumer protection, and within that concept, the precautionary principle, the multifunctionality of agriculture, and cultural values, to name but a few, require the utmost attention on the part of international trade officials. At the same time, within what has come to be known as the “new international trade agenda”, increasingly intensive discussions have developed on the subject of trade and its relationship to other aspects of economic activity such as investment, competition, labour rights and the environment. WTO agreements must be inspired by the principle of sustainable development.

## **Sri Lanka**

### ***Statement by Mr. Anton Alfred, Secretary of the Ministry of Internal and International Commerce and Food***

As for the attempts to introduce linkages between trade and core labour standards, it is our considered view that, as decided at the Singapore Ministerial Meeting, the ILO is the most competent organization to deal with this subject and that therefore it should not be brought under the purview of the WTO agenda.

## **Sweden**

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Leif Pagrotsky, Minister for Trade***

In order to succeed in promoting prosperity, we must create a sense of partnership among ourselves, among WTO Members. Distrust is a major obstacle to progress today. We in the developed countries need to prove ourselves serious partners, if we are to count on the help of less developed countries in tackling the new trade issues of great concern to our citizens. Therefore, we need to concern ourselves with being consistent free traders, deserving the trust of others. We must behave so that our motives, also when raising environmental issues and core labour standards, cannot be put in question. It must be absolutely clear, that when we raise the issue of human rights in the workplace, we are not talking about the fundamental rights already established by the ILO. We should leave no room for individual fantasies about for example wage levels. As a credibility raising measure, I call on all WTO Members to ratify the relevant ILO Conventions.

## **Switzerland**

### ***Statement by H.E. Mr. Pascal Couchepin, Federal Minister of the Economy***

The WTO is presently the subject of unprecedented attention. This should be welcomed. But it means intensifying the dialogue with the public and non-governmental organizations, if only to clarify the many misunderstandings surrounding the multilateral trading system. This applies in particular to the legitimate concerns of consumers and the relationship between core labour standards and trade. On this last point, Switzerland welcomes the outcome of the work carried out by the International Labour Organization (ILO) since the Singapore Ministerial Conference. Switzerland supports significant strengthening and broadening of the collaboration between the ILO and the WTO in accordance with the commitment made in Singapore.

## Turkey

### ***Statement by H.E. Prof. Dr. Tunca Toskay, Minister of State***

As you will recall, WTO Members renewed their commitment to the observance of internationally recognized core labour standards and affirmed that the International Labour Organization (ILO) is the competent body to set and deal with these standards in the Singapore Ministerial Declaration.

To that end, we should reconfirm what we have declared a few years ago and still recognize the ILO as the competent body while supporting close cooperation between this Organization and the WTO.

## Uganda

### ***Statement by H.E. Brigediern Moses Ali, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Trade and Industry***

Uganda welcomes the initiatives under way to further improve market access. In the interest of transparency and predictability we believe the new market access measures must be bound at zero duty, and cover all products of export interest to economies such as ours. We, however, would like to be assured that non-trade matters such as those advocated in the name of environment and labour standards do not nullify the benefits of more open markets.

## United States

### ***Statement by the Honourable Daniel Glickman, Secretary of Agriculture***

If we approve a ministerial declaration that meets these tests, we can [...] create a working group on the links between trade and core labour standards.

## Venezuela

### ***Statement by H.E. Dr. Juan de Jesús Montilla Saldivia, Minister of Production and Trade***

Venezuela believes that topics such as the relationship between environmental protection and trade, as well as human rights, including labour rights, deserve attention because they form part of a fundamental aspect of the societies in which we live, namely, human development. However, we believe that the WTO's contribution is to incorporate development objectives in its own disciplines and not to seek to become a forum for providing solutions to environmental and labour problems. Therefore, we would like to emphasize that international multilateral trading rules should not be linked to those matters because there are disciplines, mechanisms and other appropriate forums to address those concerns. This is why we recognize and support the ILO Declaration on Fundamental

Principles and Rights at Work, the multilateral environmental agreements and the agreements resulting from the Earth Summit, among others, which include broad, comprehensive aspects of those specific areas, including their relevance to international trade. If the WTO wishes to prove its legitimacy to the peoples of the world, it cannot divorce itself from human development, especially in disadvantaged countries, but its role is appropriate incorporation of the development dimension in trade, and not any other role.

## **Zambia**

### ***Statement by the Honourable William Harrington, Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry***

Regarding labour, Zambia supports the maintenance of core labour standards. We are of the view that while accepting that a working relationship between WTO and ILO is helpful, the body responsible for labour remains ILO.

## **Zimbabwe**

### ***Statement by the Honourable N.M. Shamuyarira, Minister of Industry and Commerce***

The issue of labour standards and its place in the WTO is frankly being belaboured. We had agreed in Singapore on a consensus modus operandi, which recognizes the ILO as the relevant and competent body, for dealing with this question. Until that route has been satisfactorily exhausted, Zimbabwe does not see any merit in including, let alone trying to make this an element of the work programme of this conference.

Geneva, 15 March 2000.