

Antigua and Barbuda
Statement for
General Council
Global Review of Aid for Trade
21st November 2007

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Let me express my delegation's appreciation for organizing this Global Review on Aid for Trade. We believe that it is timely and important that we discuss ways at the highest level to move this process forward towards the next step in this very important process. We commend the WTO Secretariat staff for a well thought out result oriented Conference. My delegation as a non-resident certainly appreciates the WTO organizing Geneva Week around this important event.

Antigua and Barbuda earlier this month concluded its Trade Policy Review along with the other five Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) WTO-Members. This exercise helped us to realize that while we have made tremendous progress in modernizing our Trade Policy Regime due to domestic economic reforms efforts, there is room for improvement.

We have full intentions of taking advantage of the benefits of being a member of the WTO. Indeed Antigua and Barbuda is the smallest WTO Member to use the dispute settlement mechanism. So we understand the benefits, but to have them fully realized, we will need assistance.

Such assistance can be through Aid for Trade. OECS Members have produced a paper on our trade related needs assessment and also one on our Aspirations for Aid for Trade. With assistance for organizations such as the Agency for Trade Information and Cooperation (AITIC) and the OECS Secretariat, all OECS WTO members included a segment on Aid for Trade in their Trade Policy Review. During the TPR, WTO Members also requested more precise projects. They indicated that we should note key priority areas that could stimulate growth once Aid for Trade is implemented. Through organizations including the WTO Secretariat, ITC, AITIC, and

OECS Secretariat, we are presently working on more precise project requests including regional projects. We are no strangers to regional approaches and recognize its advantages to providing aid. This is notwithstanding the fact that there is still a lack of clarity on any formal request mechanism for Aid for Trade. This is obviously something we all at WTO Members must address – that is a *clear, simple, Aid for Trade request mechanism*. Such Mechanisms should include “*Clear and simple*” procedures making it easy to access the pledged funding without burdensome bureaucratic rules that are inflexible to the needs and realities of the beneficiaries. To make Aid for Trade effective, reporting features *must* also be simplified.

Measurement, monitoring and evaluation are important so that we can judge what progress we are making. That is pellucid! This was a recurring theme this week. Antigua and Barbuda believes that many solutions came from the discussions this week, especially those with the major donor agencies. We hope that we will not spend another year or two discussing how best to monitor and evaluate Aid for Trade. As *Minister Sithanen of Mauritius* noted this morning, let’s focus on *actual implementation* so that we can have *real* eradication of poverty through trade.

Despite the ambiguity in the definition of Aid for Trade, we all know what the obvious areas are. There is indirect Aid that may be related to trade perhaps more in the long-run. This may be aid that support schools that build the human capital stock of a country for future contribution to an export-oriented labour force. But there are more obvious projects under the *aegis* of Aid for Trade. We should allow the donors and partners to decide bilaterally the types of projects that are closest to what is internationally considered to be Aid for Trade. Let the actual needs and feasibility studies decide, so that we do not let a definition hamper *implementation*.

Finally, Antigua and Barbuda fully believe that the Doha Development Agenda can promote the growth and development of all WTO Members, even us Small, Vulnerable Economies. Aid for Trade is an appropriate solution to help us fully recognize the benefits of the Multilateral Trading System.

Chairman, I thank you.

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