

Statement by Barbados on Behalf of the SVEs
at the WTO General Council,
February 7, 2007

Mr. Chairman, the Small, Vulnerable Economies welcome the formal resumption of negotiations and wish to express appreciation for the marathon journeys of the Director General in search of the appropriate conditions for the resumption we will formally note today. We also wish to thank the Chairs especially the Chairs of the Agriculture Special Session and the Negotiating Group on Market Access for their efforts in trying to find that elusive “landing zone”. Let me remind you gentlemen that small economies have only small landing strips and you should therefore try not to approach us at too great a speed.

But we do have a concern.

In recognizing the small window of opportunity, it seems to us that negotiating around averages, bands and headline numbers can be completed quickly – especially since we were already in that zone for sometime. It is not unrealistic to expect that any wide ranging product-specific analysis and negotiations will likely take lots of time – time which we do not have.

This reverse engineering, as I understand it, was not a creation of developing countries nor was it proposed to help us achieve the mandated development outcome.

SVEs are concerned that we may be adding complexity at a time we should be looking for conclusion, and bearing in mind our anxiety that adequate time must be available for our concerns to be properly addressed – we remain concerned.

Mr Chairman, in July 2006 we expressed the hope that the suspension would be temporary – and so it was. We thank the full membership and especially our political masters for engineering some light in the tunnel. We can only hope that this light will not now be re-engineered beyond the summer, nor indeed into extinction.

SVEs look forward to participating at all levels with the aim of ensuring that our concerns are adequately understood and the contribution required of us be sympathetically engineered.

I thank you.

Permanent Mission of Barbados

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