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MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF THE INFORMAL GROUP OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The following communication, dated 9 December 2017, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Honduras on behalf of the Informal Group of Developing Countries.

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1. We, Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Informal Group of Developing Countries comprised of over 120 Members, met in Buenos Aires on 9 December 2017 on the occasion of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC11).
 2. We express our deep gratitude and congratulations to the Government and people of Argentina for their hospitality and excellent work in organizing and hosting this important conference in one of South America's most dynamic cities and regions.
 3. We express our deep appreciation for the Director-General Mr. Roberto Azevêdo and congratulate him on his reappointment; we also express our sincere gratitude to him and to the Chair of the General Council H.E. Ambassador Xavier Karim, for their leadership and efforts in preparing MC11.
 4. We reaffirm the principles and objectives set out in the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO, and commit to strengthen the rule-based multilateral trading system. We firmly believe that a strong, rule-based multilateral trading system is a cornerstone of the global economy and provides stability for international trade. We also recognize the need for all to benefit from the increased opportunities and welfare gains that the multilateral trading system generates.
 5. We will strive to safeguard and strengthen the core values and basic principles - rules-based, open, equitable, transparent, non-discriminatory and inclusive - of the WTO, and commit to enhance the relevance of the organization. We pledge to strengthen the multilateral trading system to provide a strong impetus to inclusive prosperity and to respond to the specific development needs of developing country Members, in particular the least-developed country Members.
 6. We shall maintain development as a core objective in the WTO, and reaffirm that the principle of special and differential treatment shall remain integral to the organization, recognising that the majority of WTO Members are developing country Members.
 7. We reaffirm our commitment to fully implement the Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least-Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries, including differential treatment in line with the Marrakesh Decision in the context of the agriculture negotiations, in recognition of the challenges that these Members continue to face.
 8. We reaffirm our commitment to continue to address in every area of WTO work, in a substantive and meaningful manner, the needs of small, vulnerable economies (SVEs) and to favourably consider the adoption of such measures as would facilitate their fuller integration into

the multilateral trading system. We will take into account the needs of SVEs in all areas of negotiations, without creating a sub-category of WTO Members.

9. We recognize the special situation of the Members acceded in accordance with Article XII of the Agreement *Establishing the World Trade Organization* who have undertaken extensive market access commitments at the time of accession. This situation shall be taken into account in the negotiations.

10. Without creating new sub-categories of WTO Members, we also recognize the needs and challenges of the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

11. We also believe in the importance of accessions to the WTO and underscore the need to facilitate and accelerate accession of more countries to the WTO, in particular least-developed countries.

12. We recognize the role WTO and international trade can play in development and poverty reduction by boosting growth in line with 2030 sustainable development goals in-so-far as they relate to WTO mandate. Integration into the Multilateral Trading System of the WTO helps the long-term growth prospects of developing country Members. By increasing growth, trade can also make available the necessary resources to implement other development targets. In this regard, we call for full engagement of WTO Members to achieve all SDG targets in the area of trade.

13. We reaffirm the positive link between trade and development and call for focused work in the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) in accordance with its mandate.

14. We express our sincere wishes to see a forward-looking and balanced outcome at this Ministerial Conference.
