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FISHERIES SUBSIDIES

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF ARGENTINA, AUSTRALIA, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM, CANADA, COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, FIJI, HAITI, ICELAND, MEXICO, NEW ZEALAND, NORWAY, PAKISTAN, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, PARAGUAY, PERU, SENEGAL, SOLOMON ISLANDS, SWITZERLAND, UNITED STATES, URUGUAY, VANUATU AND OECS ECONOMIC UNION WTO MEMBERS (ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, DOMINICA, GRENADA, ST KITTS AND NEVIS, ST LUCIA, AND ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES)

Revision

The following communication, dated 19 December 2015, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of New Zealand.

Acknowledging that the future of marine capture fisheries is an urgent resource problem facing the international community, and recognizing the importance of taking measures aimed at the conservation and sustainable management of fisheries, including disciplines on fisheries subsidies;

Recognizing the crucial role of fisheries in ensuring food security, employment and livelihoods in developing countries, in particular LDCs;

Recognizing that fisheries subsidies contribute to economic losses in the fisheries sector and create serious distortions in global fish markets and serious impacts on food security and livelihoods, particularly in developing countries, and that effectively addressing fisheries subsidies will deliver trade, economic, development and environmental benefits;

Concerned that the world's fisheries resources continue to decline and are in certain cases at risk of collapse, with nearly 30% of global stocks classified as being overfished by the FAO in 2014; yet the billions of dollars a year spent by governments on harmful fisheries subsidies have increased and continue to be a major contributing factor to this situation; and that there is also diminishing room for growth in catches through increased fishing effort, with 61% of stocks classified as being fully fished;

Considering that the WTO must play a central role in achieving effective disciplines on fisheries subsidies that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity, and that action is urgently needed to control, reduce and eventually eliminate fisheries subsidies that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity;

We accordingly have reached the following shared understandings:

1. We will seek to reinvigorate work in the WTO aimed at achieving ambitious and effective disciplines on fisheries subsidies, which should include, but not be limited to, prohibitions on subsidies:

- (a) for fishing that negatively affect overfished fish stocks; and

- (b) provided to vessels or operators engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing,

and we commit not to provide any such subsidies.

2. We reaffirm the Rio+20 commitment to refrain from introducing, extending or enhancing subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and reaffirm the commitment in Target 14.6 of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals to prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies.

3. We will seek to achieve additional ambitious and effective WTO disciplines beyond those described in paragraph 1 with the goal of eliminating all subsidies that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity and enhancing transparency.

4. We recognize that special and differential treatment is integral to the work on any new disciplines described in paragraph 3, but must be appropriate and not undermine their effectiveness. Basic disciplines of the type described in paragraph 1 should apply equally to all Members.

5. We will continue to seek appropriate enhanced WTO transparency and reporting to enable the evaluation of the trade and resource effects of fisheries subsidies programmes.

Nairobi, December 2015
