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**Ministerial Conference
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DEPUTY MINISTER**

CZECH REPUBLIC

First of all, let me express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Argentina for hosting the MC11 in this beautiful country and for the hospitality of Argentine people. I would particularly like to thank you, Madame Chair, for all your efforts in the lead-up to the conference and for your tireless advocacy of the multilateral trading system.

At the beginning, the Czech Republic would like to associate itself with the statement of the European Union presented earlier by Commissioner Malmström.

My delegation came to Buenos Aires with one basic message: we are here to defend and foster multilateral trading system with WTO at its centre.

For more than two decades, it has served as a foundation for trading relations. And while it has certainly not been perfect, it has served its main purpose.

It has:

- raised prosperity through trade and investment;
- prevented trade conflicts due to trust that members have put in the common rules and the unique dispute settlement system;
- withstood the test of global economic crisis nine years ago;
- demonstrated its capability to deliver on its negotiating mandate in Bali and Nairobi. In this context, we welcome coming into force of the Trade Facilitation Agreement this year.

However, we can no longer take the WTO for granted. It is indeed a paradox – as the current global economic outlook improves, the WTO seems to be challenged by forces other than economic.

The Czech Republic remains committed to the system; we are ready to work on its improvement. We can start by seizing the opportunity this Conference offers. My delegation will support all realistic and meaningful initiatives and decisions to be finalized here in the coming few days.

The latest development suggests a limited scope of possible outcomes in fisheries subsidies, public stockholding and export restrictions in Agriculture. These would be important, but not sufficient. We should clearly define orientation of our future work, taking on board challenges of the 21st century, such as services and e-commerce.

Only a rules-based, predictable and transparent trading system can further contribute to growth and investment, boost new jobs, and have positive impacts on the well-being of all nations in the world and especially those less privileged ones.

I would like to finish by one Argentine proverb – the larger the ship, the larger the storm. I truly believe the WTO is large enough to navigate through any storm.
