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Page: 1/2

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

I would like to start by thanking the government of Argentina for hosting MC11, and Minister Malcorra, Director General Azevêdo, and their staffs for their excellent work. We appreciate all the effort over many months that go into creating a conference of this magnitude.

In the brief time I have, I would like to make a few basic points.

First, the WTO is obviously an important institution. It does an enormous amount of good, and provides a helpful negotiating forum for Contracting Parties.

But, in our opinion, serious challenges exist.

Second, many are concerned that the WTO is losing its essential focus on negotiation and becoming a litigation-centered organization. Too often members seem to believe they can gain concessions through lawsuits that they could never get at the negotiating table. We have to ask ourselves whether this is good for the institution and whether the current litigation structure makes sense.

Third, we need to clarify our understanding of development within the WTO. We cannot sustain a situation in which new rules can only apply to the few, and that others will be given a pass in the name of self-proclaimed development status. There is something wrong, in our view, when five of the six richest countries in the world presently claim developing country status. Indeed, we should all be troubled that so many Members appear to believe that they would be better off with exemptions to the rules. If in the opinion of a vast majority of Members playing by current WTO rules makes it harder to achieve economic growth, then clearly serious reflection is needed.

Fourth, it is impossible to negotiate new rules when many of the current ones are not being followed. This is why the United States is leading a discussion on the need to correct the sad performance of many Members in notifications and transparency. Some Members are intentionally circumventing these obligations, and addressing these lapses will remain a top U.S. priority.

Fifth, the United States believes that much can and should be done at the WTO to help make markets more efficient. We are interested in revitalizing the standing bodies to ensure they are focused on new challenges, such as chronic overcapacity and the influence of state-owned enterprises. Further, we are working closely with many Members in committee and elsewhere to address real-world problems such as SPS barriers.

We believe that all of us are here primarily to represent our own citizens to secure rules that will best help them. As President Trump said in his U.N. speech, institutions like this function best when all sovereign nations acting in their own best interest pull together and find ways that permit us all to prosper.

Finally, the United States looks forward to working with all Members who share our goal of using the WTO to create rules that will lead to more efficient markets, more trade and greater wealth for our citizens. Such outcomes will build public support not only for open markets, but for the WTO itself.

I'd like to end where I began and thank the Director General for all his work, and Minister Malcorra for their incredible work to produce a successful MC11.
