





3. Ladies and gentlemen, this Forum is symbolic in many ways. First, last December, in this same city, and indeed, in this very same room TSAVO 2, the Protocols on the Accession of Liberia and Afghanistan were formally approved by WTO Ministers during the Tenth Ministerial Conference held in KICC. As many of you may recall, the decisions on the two LDC accessions provided inspiration, and generated positive momentum for the historic outcomes which were achieved at the Nairobi WTO Ministerial Conference.

4. Second, today, seven months after, we are again gathered here in this same room, to celebrate the membership of Liberia, which became the 163rd Member of the WTO, on July 14, just five days ago. Afghanistan will also become the 164th Member of the WTO on 29 July. All this would not have been possible but for the intensive hard work undertaken by these governments and their parliaments, especially with respect to the enactment of one remaining legislation; and one ratification and submission of the Accession Protocols within the set timelines.

5. On behalf of the WTO Director General, I would like to congratulate Liberia and Afghanistan for their achievements in using WTO accessions to pursue their domestic reforms, based on the WTO core values of non-discrimination, market opening, the rule of law and good governance. Their achievements were particularly remarkable, given the very challenging

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Livestock; Public Health, as well as the Afghanistan National Standards Authority and the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan.

11. The objective of these post-accession training activities is to prepare the two LDCs for their WTO membership, including the preparation of initial notifications to be submitted to the WTO regular committees, the identification of priority areas for their participation in the work of the WTO as Member, and the exchange of post-accession experiences with Article XII Members. On behalf of the WTO Secretariat, let me express special appreciation to the Government of China for their financial support under the China Programme, which has recently increased its focus on Post-Accession support for LDCs.

12. Today's Post-Accession Forum builds on the outcomes from the two post-accession activities for Liberia and Afghanistan. And on that note, it is useful to recall what an accession negotiator said to an acceding government: "if you think that accession is tough, you don't understand how tough WTO Membership can be". Let me therefore, underscore that, notwithstanding your LDC status and the associated challenges as WTO Members, you have become important players in the global trade arena. As Members, you enjoy all the benefits conferred by the covered agreements,

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