



SIXTH CHINA ROUND TABLE

STRENGTHENING THE RULES-BASED MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM

AND

BUILDING A NETWORK TO PROMOTE ACCESSIONS

Outcome Document

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 9 December 2017

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Sixth China Round Table on WTO Accessions and the Multilateral Trading System was held in Buenos Aires on 9 December 2017 (hereinafter: the Round Table). This Round Table was organised by the WTO Secretariat in partnership with the Government of China under the framework of the China LDC's and Accessions Programme ("The China Programme"). The Round Table was jointly opened by WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo; Ms. Susana Malcorra, MC11 Chair; Mr. Zhong Shan, Commerce Minister of China; and Mr. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce of Ca

Belarus; Mr. Carlos Gimeno, Senior Adviser, European Commission; and Ms. Khadra Ahmed Dualeh, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Somalia.

9. The first speaker, Ambassador Saleh Al-Husseini, laid out how much Saudi Arabia valued the

**SESSION 2: BUILDING A NETWORK TO PROMOTE ACCESSION S: CONNECT SHARE LEARN**

14. The second session, moderated by Ambassador Chiedu Osakwe of Nigeria, was entitled "Building a Network to Promote Accessions: Connect - Share - Learn". The session officially launched a Network of WTO Accession Negotiators. Over 80 former negotiators, former Working Party Chairpersons and other accession experts have become members of this Network.

15. Contributions were made by experts and former accession negotiators, including, Mr. Axel Addy, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Former Chief Negotiator for the Accession of Liberia; Ms. Khemmani Pholsena, Minister of Industry and Commerce and Former Chief Negotiator for the Accession of Lao PDR; Ambassador Zhanar Aitzhanova, Permanent Representative to the WTO and Former Chief Negotiator for the Accession of Kazakhstan; Mr. Maxim Medvedkov, Director of Trade Negotiations Department at the Ministry of Economic Development and Former Chief Negotiator for the Accession of the Russian Federation; Ms. Hilda Ali Al-Hinai, Deputy Permanent Representative of Oman to the WTO and Former Working Party Chairperson on the Accession of Seychelles; and Mr. Farhat Farhat, Independent Trade Policy Advisor.

16. In recognizing the value of transferring accession-related knowledge and experience, the panellists in this session shared perspectives on key elements that impacted their accessions and provided first-hand information on how prominent issues in their accessions were tackled. Discussions revolved around three main topics: (i) securing domestic buy-in; (ii) managing the geopolitical and technical aspects of accession negotiations; and (iii) recognizing accession as an instrument for reforms.

**(i) Securing domestic buy-in**

17. Recalling his experience from Liberia's accession, Minister Addy noted that sending a clear message to the public was instrumental in the accession process. In the case of Liberia, it was important to show that the country was ready to do business despite the challenges the economy was facing. On this premise, the negotiating team analysed the economy by meeting with key stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and challenges of WTO accession and draw up a plan that would lead the economy in the right direction.

18. The discussions acknowledged that securing domestic buy-in started at the highest level of the government. In the case of Lao PDR, Ms. Pholsena noted that, in addition to challenges related to internal coordination, one of the most difficult aspects of Lao PDR's accession was convincing Ministers on the importance of undertaking accession-related legislative reforms. In her experience, the political will and commitment were the driving force of Lao PDR's accession negotiations.

19. Similarly, Mr. -

(iii) Recognizing accession as an instrument for reforms

23. The session recognized that acceding governments we