

Statement by

regulations of the multilateral trade regime. These compliance requirements itself poses a real challenge to Least Developed Countries.

Least Developed countries (LDCs) could learn from Afghanistan and other LDC Members of the WTO in different ways to manage to achieve their objectives of joining WTO and overcome the challenges:

First, by reflecting their continued commitment to trade reforms through new policies in the trade sector; these policies should be liberal, competitive and market oriented in accordance with the global trade regime;

Second, by seeking

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Afghanistan has embraced and is committed to uphold WTO values and principles including the rule of law, good governance, transparency, and non – discrimination. The WTO accession required focused efforts on the part of both executive and legislative bodies that resulted in the enactment of 27 laws and regulations.

We are implementing reforms step by step and wisely to further smoothen our way toward economic growth and development. By accession to the multilateral trading system we believe our economy will be able to secure 2.5% GDP growth annually and rise of 10% employment in three to four years of its accession.

We have identified key elements for our post accession strategy and I am pleased to share some of its elements.

First: to build on achieved reforms for further modernization of the business environment in Afghanistan;

Second: to attract foreign investment in our country;

Third: human capacity building within the public sector and private sector;

We have also started the development of an export promotion strategy in cooperation with the International Trade Centre to implement during the next five years. In the meantime, we are increasing awareness of our private sector about opportunities and challenges resulting from WTO membership. This includes capacity building to meet import requirements in WTO markets, particularly those related to products and food safety standards.

Excellencies!

We plan to actively participate in the work of the WTO. We are in the process of establishing a representative office in Geneva. We Plan to regularly participate in the work of various technical committees and councils. We are keen to play an important role in the work of Least Developed Countries subcommittee and Landlocked Developing Countries group and support the development of reasonable proposals for consideration in multilateral trading rounds to increase exports of LDCs and strengthen their participation in global economy.

As a landlocked country in the region we had trade relating issues with our neighbouring countries in the past and we still face them. In a recent border closure, Pakistan sealed Torkham and Chaman crossings on February 19 and instituted prohibitions and restrictions other than

duties, taxes and other charges – basically violating Article V of the GATT 1947 (Freedom of Transit). We hope our neighbouring country complies with the multilateral trading regime's rules and regulations and see trade and transport integration as an important driver for economic growth.

As part of my concluding remarks I would like to reiterate that improving cooperation on trade, legal and economic and structural reforms for Least Developed Countries should be tackled and addressed at all levels from an organization to country and to global levels. I believe that the only way to achieve this goal is to separate trade and economic cooperation from political agendas.

I hope our today's discussion and elaborations contribute to further improvement of global trading system and promoting economic growth and sustainable development in our countries.

Thank you for your time and attention!