

# Statement of H.E Ambassador Omar HILALE, Chair of the working group on Iraq's accession to the WTO

Second High-Level Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Arab Region  
SESSION 5 - TRADE FOR PEACE THROUGH WTO ACCESSION

Wednesday 9 February  
7:00-8:30 (EST)/13:00-14:30 (CET)

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*  
*Good morning from New York,*

I'm delighted to take part of the second High-Level Dialogue on WTO Accession for the Arab Region on my capacity as the Chair of the working group on Iraq's accession to the WTO.

I welcome the continuity of this Dialogue since its first successful organization in 2020 and I would like to congratulate and thank the WTO Secretariat, the Arab Monetary Fund, and the Islamic Development Bank for organizing this timely meeting.

Special thanks to Ms. Maika Oshikawa, Director of the Accessions Division of WTO and her team for the continuous efforts and tremendous support given to all accession working groups. I have personally witnessed the personal engagement and the remarkable enthusiasm of Ms. Maika in the processes of accession, which is helping not only the chairs of the working groups but also the concerned acceding countries and their teams.

Ms. Maika, Thank you again.

As we have witnessed in 2020, **this panel dedicated to: "Trade for Peace" remains a crucial** occasion to remind us of one of most important correlations within the multilateral trading system, which is the role

peace is also articulated in the overarching 2030 Agenda for sustainable development which confirms that there is no peace without development and no development without peace.

**In this regard, I would like to pay a special tribute and salute the progress achieved on the trade for peace within the WTO under the iconic leadership of the Director General Madame OKONJO-IWEALA. We are lucky to have a WTO DG that truly believes in this nexus and who is a strong**

**In the current context, it is timelier than never to enhance multistakeholder partnerships and cooperation, to undertake the needed reforms and institutional policies, to create the needed structures for enhancing their international trade capacity and to prepare the needed documents for the accession process to the WTO. This an important exercise that will serve these countries both internally and in their international engagement within the accession process mechanism.**

**As the Chair of the working group on Iraq's accession to the WTO, I can't stress enough the vital element of ensuring capacity building and technical assistance for Iraq and all the acceding countries in the Arab region, to succeed their accession process to WTO, and thus accelerating the peacebuilding in the fragile areas of the region.**

**It goes without saying that the acceding countries can't achieve the process alone, every acceding country needs to be tooled and technically ready to negotiate its accession.** Therefore, I reiterate the call on all our WTO member states, our partners in the World Bank and all relevant stakeholders to assist Iraq and other countries in their accession process, by engaging in sharing experiences, **providing technical assistance, training to negotiators, and scaling up trade experts' profiles.**

**A word of appreciation and congratulations to the International Trade Central and our development partners which continue to be of utmost support to acceding countries, including Iraq. I have closely witnessed the openness, availability, and the spirit of cooperation of the ITC teams which continued to make all necessary efforts, they traveled to Bagdad during the most complicated times in order to keep up the support for the Iraqi experts.**

*Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.*

**When I said that COVID-19 situation should not be an obstacle, I am clearly basing my statement on facts and factual events. During the past 2 years, I have made three working visits to Geneva in order to accelerate the negotiation process.**

Thanks to the political will of Iraq, the constructive engagement and support from partners, the continuous assistance and support of WTO accession division, I am closely witnessing, the progress and the evolution of the accession process through the submission to WTO secretariat of the pending negotiation documents. Last September 2021, Iraq has officially submitted the responses to the 267 questions from Members and the revised memorandum on the foreign trade regime among other important documents.

I'm confident that the political will joined by the acceleration of the administrative and jurisdictional reforms, Iraq and the other acceding Arab countries will be at closer steps from the accession to the organization, which will give the opportunity to engage on a process of openness on its regional and international environment and thus, ensuring sustaining peace and moving forward with the country's efforts for sustainable development in all its tree dimensions.

