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## AD REFERENDUM

In its 11th year, the Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan adopted the Accession Package of Afghanistan by consensus and *ad referendum*, at its 5th Session, on 11 November 2015. The Working Party concluded its mandate and agreed to transmit its Report to MC10 in Nairobi for formal action.

The 5th Session of the Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Roderick van Schreven (Netherlands), adopted the Draft Accession Package of Afghanistan by consensus and *ad referendum*, yesterday, 11 November. The adopted documents were the: (i) Draft Report of the Working Party; (ii) Draft Schedule of Concessions and Commitments on Goods; (iii) Draft Schedule of Specific Commitments on Trade in Services; (iv) Draft Decision on the Accession of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the WTO; and, (v) Draft Protocol of Accession of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Working Party Members agreed to transmit the Package to the Tenth Ministerial Conference in Nairobi for formal action, thus concluding the mandate of the Working Party, in its 11<sup>th</sup> year after its establishment in 2004.

H.E. Mr. Humayoon Rasaw, Minister of Commerce and Industries of Afghanistan, stated that WTO membership would be the key element for increasing economic stability, improving regional security and cooperation and, achieving peace in Afghanistan. He quoted H.E. President Ghani of Afghanistan: "WTO membership is a catalyst for implementation of reforms that will achieve the development priorities of Afghanistan, strengthen market institutions and mechanisms and promote welfare and economic growth."

H.E. Mr. Mozammil Shinwari, Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industries and Chief Negotiator for Afghanistan's WTO Accession, stated that Afghanistan looked forward to participating in the WTO as a constructive Member. Post-accession support would be needed to build technical capacity and establish institutional mechanisms for handling post-accession matters.

22 Members intervened to congratulate Afghanistan on the historic milestone of finalising its accession process. H.E. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan was roundly commended for his leadership and bold decision to proceed with WTO membership, in spite of domestic challenges. Members encouraged Afghanistan in their statements, specifically, by confirming that its WTO membership would facilitate its integration into the global economy and the rules-based multilateral trading system; provide Afghanistan with an instrument for its economic reconstruction and building of a productive market economy; and, also provide ample opportunities for leveraging development assistance. Some Members made reference to assistance being provided and which would be scaled-up. Several Members made the point that the accession of Afghanistan was yet another proof of the credibility and relevance of the WTO.

Support was expressed for the Director-General's "WTO Post-Accession Implementation and Support Strategy". Afghanistan and Members acknowledged the priority that the Director-General had accorded WTO accessions and commended his leadership to this end.

Meeting of Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and H.E. Minister Rasaw,  
5<sup>th</sup> and Final Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan, 11 November 2015.  
(WTO Secretariat Photos / Souda Tandara-Stenier)



