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1. Mr Deputy Director General of the WTO \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Mr. Deputy Director General of UNCTAD, \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Madam Executive Director of ITC, \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Excellencies,
  5. Distinguished Colleagues,
  6. Ladies and Gentlemen
  7. Good morning.
8. Let me first of all extend warm greetings to all of you on behalf of Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia.
  9. Being back in Nairobi to speak on the WTO Accession brings back fond memories: On June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Liberia deposited its Instrument of Acceptance of the Accession Package to the WTO thus meeting the final requirement for WTO Membership. We are pleased to note that Liberia is the 163<sup>rd</sup> member of the WTO.
  10. This remarkable achievement is a direct result of eight years of intensive technical work and multilateral trade negotiations led by the Liberian negotiating team and technicians based in Liberia from various ministries and agencies. Let me once again use this opportunity to congratulate our civil servants for this collective achievement. Without you, we would not be here today.
  11. I would also like to again recognize several partners whose support made this possible. They include the US, EU, China, Sweden, the WTO Secretariat, SIDA/NBT, ITC, UNCTAD, ACWL, World Bank, EIF, and King and Spalding Law Firm, and ISLP. Particularly, I would like to thank the WTO Secretariat for having recently organized a timely National Workshop on Post-Accession under the sponsorship of the China Programme

### Liberia's Accession Process

12. Ladies and Gentlemen, WTO Membership lays the foundation for the establishment of a system that promotes inclusive economic growth, attracts foreign investment, and creates an environment focused on increasing international trade. Today we are proud to be an official member of the WTO and subscribe to its rules and values.
13. Our eight years journey to become a full-fledged WTO member has not been an easy one, but today we are proud that despite the many challenges, we succeeded in gaining our rightful place in the multilateral trading system. As we all know, Liberia indicated its interest in WTO membership for the first time in 2007. The following years until formal approval at WTO Tenth Ministerial Conference in December 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya were spent with technical assistance for the accession process, building capacity for the Liberian negotiating team, conducting stakeholder awareness, and drafting the actual negotiation inputs. The work did not stop there. The team made multiple trips to Geneva. I





26. Recognizing the challenges of sourcing ~~scare~~ ~~resources~~ from aid for trade program