SECOND CHINA ROUND TABLE ON WTO ACCESSION FOR LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCS)

THE FUTURE OF THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM: PERSPECTIVES OF LDCS AND ARTICLE XII MEMBERS

Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, 15 October - 18 October 2013

Draft Programme

[Quote to be added]

- WTO Director-General

[Quote to be added]

- H.E. Dr Nam Viyaket, Minister of Industry and Commerce of Lao PDR

[Quote to be added]

- H.E. Mr. Gao Hucheng, Minister of Commerce of China

In July 2011, the Government of the People's Republic of China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the "China's LDCs and Accessions Programme ("The China Programme"). This MOU has been renewed by China and the WTO for 2012-2013. The China Programme created a fund for an internship programme and an annual Round Table on Accessions to build capacity and technical skills in trade policy, including on accession negotiations, for Least-Developed Countries.

The "Second China Round Table on WTO Accession for LDCs" will take place on 15 - 18 October 2013, in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. The theme is "the Future of the World Trading System: Perspectives of LDCs and Article XII Members". This Round Table is sponsored by the Government of China, hosted by the Government of Lao PDR, and organized by the WTO Secretariat, as part of the agreed activities in the China/WTO MOU.

1 Final Programme, presentations and Guidelines for Participants are posted on the Second China Round Table webpage: http://www.wto.org/chinaroundtable2013.
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| **10:00** | Coffee Break |
| **10:15** | **Session 1: Contemporary Development of the World Trading System** |
|           | The reality faced by the World Trading System has been changing in the past decade. The emergence of developing countries, the evolution of regionalization, the economic and financial crisis, and the impasse of the Doha Round trade negotiations have significantly shifted the international trade pattern. Trade policies of individual countries have gone through adjustments and change. This session will start with a description of the economic transformation in the past decade, and then provide an analysis of contemporary developments of the World Trading System, including the recurrence and emerge of plurilateral negotiations; surge of preferential/regional trade agreements; industrial policies; global production/value chains; food security and natural resources policies; and continuation of the Doha Development Agenda. A policy relevant perspective on these issues would provide the background for this Round Table and set the stage for meaningful policy discussions/debates among the participants in the following sessions. |

| **Moderator:** | Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, Director, Accessions Division |
| **Speaker:**   | Uri Dadush, Senior Associate and Director of the "International Economics Program", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [TBC] |
| **Commentator:** | Richard Baldwin, Professor of International Economics and Co-Director, CTEI, Graduate Institute, Geneva [TBC] |
| **Open Discussion:** | All participants |
| **13:00** | Lunch |
Session 2: Contributions of WTO Accessions to the Multilateral Trading System

Since the WTO was established in 1995, 31 countries or separate customs territories have acceded to the WTO, pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement. These Article XII Members account for about one fifth of the entirety of 159 Membership and their trade volume corresponds to 16% of the total world trade. The WTO accessions have not only brought direct economic benefits to WTO Members, include these Article XII Members themselves, but also, maybe more importantly, made important contributions to the evolution of the rules-based Multilateral Trading System. In this session, the speakers will summarize the achievements of the WTO accessions; identify the areas where the WTO rules have been strengthened through the accession process; and discuss the implications of WTO accessions to individual economies.

Moderator:
H.E. Dr Nam Viyaket, Minister of Industry and Commerce of Lao PDR

Speakers:

Safeguarding and Strengthening the Rules-Based World Trading System:
- Overview of the Concluded and Ongoing WTO Accessions
- Pattern and Range of Specific Commitments by Article XII WTO Members
- Rule-making Process through WTO Accessions

Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, Director, Accessions Division

How LDCs and Low-income Economies Can Benefit from WTO Accessions
Lao PDR and Tajikistan

Non-LDC Perspectives: Challenges and Opportunities
The Russian Federation, Ukraine and Viet Nam

Commentator:
H.E. Mr. Xiaozhun Yi (China), Former Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Lao PDR to the WTO
Ms Selina Jackson, Special Representative of the World Bank to the UN and the WTO [TBC]

Open Discussion: All participants

17:00 End of Day One

18:00 Official Dinner
Hosted by the Government of Lao PDR [TBC]
Attendance: All participants
This session will build on a recent study on the effects of WTO accessions by Mr. Alexei Kireyev, Economist of the IMF. Mr. Kireyev's empirical research provides a thorough economic analysis of the post-accession effects: WTO accessions lead to greater openness of economies and better allocation of limited resources, which in itself improves economic efficiency. Greater efficiency in resource allocation leads to higher growth, competition reduces costs and prices, and market access increases consumption. So consumers generally gain. At the same time, certain producers may be affected by increased competition and will face the need for adjustment, in particular in the short run, which in the long term will still lead to improved efficiency. Public policies should be targeted to help countries cope with the adjustment costs by way of providing targeted support to the most vulnerable, while rebalancing the tax system from external to domestic taxes to preserve fiscal revenue.

Moderator:
H.E. Mr. Xiaozhun Yi (China), Former Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Lao PDR to the WTO

Speaker:
Mr. Alexei Kireyev, Economist, International Monetary Fund (IMF) [TBC]

Commentator:
Cape Verde, Cambodia, Nepal, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Viet Nam

Open Discussion: All participants

13:00 Lunch
14:00 **Session 4: The Future of the Multilateral Trading System**

In this session, a summary report will be provided on the ADBI/CTEI Conference "The Future of the World Trading System: Asian Perspectives". Although labelled as "Asian Perspectives", this important Conference brought many valuable and diverse thoughts, ideas, and recommendations for further strengthening and reforming the Multilateral Trading System to address the current dynamics in the international trade arena. The Report will provide a basis for the participants to formulate their own perspectives on the future of the Multilateral Trading System, which will be of the great importance for every WTO Member and acceding government.

Based on this Report, other speakers and participants will touch upon issues important to reshaping the Multilateral Trading System. Discussion will revolve around the implications of global/regional value chains; the effects of preferential/regional trade; trade and investment; and the importance of a rule-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive Multilateral Trading System. The future of the WTO is particularly important for the 31 Article XII Members, who have devoted tremendous efforts to join the Organization; and, for the 24 acceding governments, who have counted on the membership to support their economic development.

**Moderator:**
Richard Baldwin, Professor of International Economics and Co-Director, CTEI, Graduate Institute, Geneva [TBC]

**Speakers:**
  Ms Maika Oshikawa, Chief, Asia and Pacific Desk, ITTC, WTO Secretariat
- **China's Perspectives on Doha Round and the Future of the WTO**
  H.E. Mr. Xiaozhun Yi, Permanent Representative of China to the WTO
- **New Factors Shaping International Trade: Global/Region Value Chains, Preferential Trade, Changing Pattern of FDI**
  Selina Jackson, Special Representative of the World Bank to the UN and the WTO [TBC]
- **The Relevance of the Multilateral Trading System and Reform Perspectives**
  Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, Director, Accessions Division

**Commentator:**
Uri Dadush, Senior Associate and Director of the "International Economics Program", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [TBC]

**Open Discussion:** All participants

17:00 **End of Day Two**
DAY THREE - 17 OCTOBER 2013

09:00  **Session 5: Effective Participation of Article XII Members and Acceding Governments**

There could be different views on the road ahead for the Multilateral Trading System, but there is no doubt that the future of the system will depend on the active participation of its membership. This is particularly true for Article XII Members and acceding governments, since one of the most important objectives to become a WTO Member is to participate in the process of implementing the existing rules and improving the system through the development of new rules. In this session, the roles of Article XII Members, LDCs and acceding governments would be explored. The perspectives and views to be expressed will help all participants to better understand the spectrum of priorities of different Member Groupings and individual Members, and assist everyone to rethink its own priorities and strategy for their participation.

**Moderator:**
Ms Selina Jackson, Special Representative of the World Bank to the UN and the WTO [TBC]

**Speakers:**

**Priorities for LDC Acceding Governments**
Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Liberia and Yemen

**Participation as a New WTO Member - Challenges and Constrains**
LDC Perspectives: Lao PDR, Nepal and Tajikistan
Non-LDC Perspectives: the Russian Federation and Ukraine

**Priorities for LDC Article XII Members**
Cambodia, Samoa and Vanuatu

**Package for MC9**
Indonesia

**Commentator:**
H.E. Mr. Steffen Smidt (Denmark), Chairperson of the Sub-Committee for LDCs and Working Party Chairperson on the Accession of Ethiopia to the WTO;
H.E. Mr. Xiaozhun Yi (China), Former Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Lao PDR to the WTO;

**Open Discussion:** All participants

13:00 Lunch
Session 6: Technical Assistance for the LDC Accessing Governments

Capacity-building provides the foundation of knowledge for the accession process. Knowledge of the rules-based Multilateral Trading System and the application of WTO principles and agreements to the national legal framework are prior conditions for WTO membership. Over the past years, the Accessions Division of the WTO Secretariat has developed an Accessions Toolbox to facilitate the accession processes. Various technical assistance programmes are available from the WTO, ITC, UNCTAD, World Bank, IMF, ADB (CAREC) and other international organizations, as well as individual Members. Better coordination is required; more timely delivery and stronger partnership are of urgent necessities. This session will discuss both the demand and supply sides of technical assistance to explore a strategy for addressing the real demand of LDCs in achieving their accession goals. The session will also explore strategies for intensifying outreach efforts with both domestic stakeholders and external partners so as to ensure a smoother and faster accession process. Issues to be discussed could include:

- technical assistance and capacity-building programmes by international agencies;
- technical assistance by individual Members;
- "Geneva Week" platform;
- WTO Reference Centre;
- external and domestic outreach in supporting acceding LDCs;
- visits of Chairpersons to acceding LDCs;
- the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF); and
- Accessions Toolbox: ACDB; Accessions Newsletter; Accessions FAQ; Accession Fact Sheet; Legislation Database; AIMS (Accession Information Management System) Database; Register of Bilateral Market Access Agreements; and DG's Annual Report on Accessions.

Moderator:
H.E. Mr. Steffen Smidt (Denmark), Chairperson of the Sub-Committee for LDCs and Working Party Chairperson on the Accession of Ethiopia to the WTO;

Speakers:
Ms Maika Oshikawa, Chief, Asia and Pacific Desk, ITTC, WTO Secretariat
Mr. Emil P. Bolongaita, Unit Head, Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), ADB [TBC]
Ms Mona Haddad, Sector Manager, International Trade Department, the World Bank [TBC]
Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, Director, Accessions Division

Commentator:
Bhutan, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe and Sudan

Open Discussion: All participants

Closing Session:
- Remarks by Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, Director, Accessions Division, WTO Secretariat
- Remarks by LDC Coordinator
- Remarks by the Representative of China
- Closing of Round Table by Representative of Lao PDR

End of Day 3

DAY FOUR - 18 OCTOBER 2013

9:00 Official visit to factories or economic zones (TBC, 3 hours)
## PARTICIPANTS

### Chief Negotiators of [Participating] LDC Acceding Governments:
Afghanistan, Bhutan, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Sudan and Yemen

### Representatives of Article XII LDC Members:
Cambodia, Cape Verde, Lao PDR, Nepal, Samoa and Vanuatu

### Representatives of Article XII Non-LDC Members:
China, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Viet Nam

### Coordinator of the LDCs' Consultative Group:
Nepal

### Representatives of Other Member:
Indonesia

### Chairpersons of LDC Accession Working Parties:
- H.E. Mr. Steffen Smidt (Denmark), Chairperson of the Sub-Committee for LDCs and Working Party Chairperson on the Accession of Ethiopia to the WTO
- H.E. Mr. Xiaozhun Yi (China), Former Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Lao PDR to the WTO

### Representatives of International Organizations:
Asian Development Bank, IMF and World Bank

### External Speakers
- Long Yongtu, Former Chief Accession Negotiator of China
- Uri Dadush, Senior Associate and Director of the "International Economics Program" at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Richard Baldwin, Professor of International Economics and Co-Director, CTEI, Graduate Institute, Geneva

### Representatives of the WTO:
- Director-General, WTO;
- Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, Director, Accessions Division;
- Ms Maika Oshikawa, Chief, Asia and Pacific Desk, ITTC;
- Mr. Dayong Yu, Counsellor, Accessions Division; and
WORKSHOP MATERIALS

- A Handbook on Accession to the WTO;
- The Director-General's Annual Report on Accessions, 2009-2012 (WT/ACC/13, 14, 15 and 19);
- WTO Accession Commitments Database (http://acdb.wto.org/);
- The 2002/2012 Guidelines on LDCs’ accessions (WT/L/508 and addendum 1);
- Procedures for Negotiations under Article XII - Note by the Secretariat (WT/ACC/1);
- Technical Note on the Accession Process - Note by the Secretariat (WT/ACC/10/Rev.4);
- Technical Note on the Accession Process - Information on Current Accessions (WT/ACC/11/Rev.10);
- WTO Accession-related FAQs; and
- Pattern and Range of Specific Commitments by Article XII Members; and
- Fact Sheet on WTO Accessions: Least-developed countries - Range of Specific Commitments Undertaken by Article XII LDC Members.

WORKSHOP FOCAL POINTS

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