

Remarks by the
President of the Republic of Kazakhstan HE Mr. Nursultan A. Nazarbayev
at the meeting of the WTO General Council
Geneva, 27 July 2015

Mr. Chairperson of the General Council,
Distinguished representatives of the
WTO Member States,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Today is a truly historic day for us.

By signing the Protocol of Accession to *the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization*, **Kazakhstan will complete the process of accession.**

Overall, it has **lasted for some 19 years.**

During that period, together **we have done quite an impressive job.**

We are sincerely grateful to **each of the WTO Member States** for their constructive approach and support throughout a very tough negotiation process.

I would also like to thank **the Secretariat of the World Trade Organization, represented by Director-General Roberto Azevêdo**, for high professionalism and important contribution to the successful outcome of the negotiations.

I would also like to address words of gratitude to **the Government of Finland**, which for all these years has chaired the Working Party on the Accession of Kazakhstan to the WTO.

During the negotiations on our accession to the WTO, **the configuration of the Kazakhstan's economy has changed dramatically.**

First, it has become more robust and open.

GDP per capita has registered an actual **18-fold increase** and reached the level of Central and Eastern European countries.

The volume of foreign trade has reached **120 billion US dollars.**

The WTO Member States account for over **90 per cent of our foreign trade turnover.**

We have significantly broadened the geographic reach of our trade relations.

Whereas in the mid-1990s Kazakhstan had trade ties only with post-Soviet countries, today **we are doing business with 185 States of the world.**

The European Union countries are the main economic partners of Kazakhstan.

They account for over **40 per cent of our trade**.

Commercial business with Russia, China, the United States, Canada and some other countries makes up a significant share of Kazakhstan's trade volume.

Second, **the structure of Kazakhstan's economy** has undergone significant changes.

Today, **the service sector**, whose development is a top priority for us, accounts for some 54 per cent of the country's GDP.

It covers the financial, telecommunication, construction and energy transportation sectors.

The liberalization of financial services within the framework of the WTO will take place concurrently with **the establishment of an international financial center "Astana"**.

We expect it to become a pillar of the financial infrastructure in Kazakhstan and, in the future, **a financial hub of the whole region**.

Kazakhstan invites all countries to participate in that project.

Within the framework of the WTO, we will also liberalize an access to **telecommunication**, one of the highest-yielding sectors.

We invite foreign investors to enter this market.

We hope that their work will help to bring down rates and improve the quality of services.

Kazakhstan is the largest landlocked country in the world.

Thus, for us it is vitally important to **develop transport infrastructure and transport and logistics services**.

We are working hard to become part of global communications networks.

To this end, we have been establishing **strategic transport corridors linking the largest markets**.

Building a highway linking **Western Europe and Western China** is an example of these efforts.

Its total length is more than **8,000 kilometers**, of which **2,800 kilometers** run through the **territory of Kazakhstan**.

Already at this stage, transit traffic in that direction has **more than doubled**.

In addition, last year Kazakhstan adopted a **new economic policy "Nurly Zhol"**.

Its objective is to put in place **a modern transport and energy infrastructure**.

It provides for building and upgrading of more than **7,000 kilometers of roads**.

By 2019, we intend to **cut by a third the travel time between major cities**.

As a whole, our infrastructure projects will help to **tap a unique transit potential**, for the benefit of the domestic economy and international markets.

Third, Kazakhstan has significantly enhanced its **investment capacity**.

Over the past 10 years, the country's economy has attracted **foreign investments worth more than 200 billion US dollars**.

The biggest investors come from the Netherlands, the United States, Switzerland, France, Great Britain, Canada, Japan, and the Republic of Korea.

In our efforts to improve the investment climate, we have made **diversification of our economy** a priority.

We have gone at great lengths to make sure that the investments are channeled not only to the oil and gas and mining sectors but also to **the processing sectors of the economy**.

Investors in priority sectors **are exempt from corporate income tax and land tax for a period of 10 years** and *from the property tax - for 8 years*.

The state is ready to reimburse up to **30 per cent of capital expenses** once a business is up and running.

Investors have an opportunity to **attract foreign labor** without any quotas and permits.

Besides, a **visa-free regime** has been established **for investors from 20 countries** (*the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Australia, Hungary, Monaco, Belgium, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Singapore, Finland, Switzerland*).

Kazakhstan is open to mutually beneficial cooperation.

This has been shown yet again by the fact that we have been **the first among the post-Soviet countries** to earn the right to host **an international specialized exposition EXPO-2017**.

Its theme "*Future Energy*" reflects the most pressing challenge facing the human race – the issue of **efficient use of energy resources**.

For the international community, there is no alternative to *the green economy* and the transition to the principles of sustainable development.

In this context, **the holding of EXPO-2017 is important for the whole world**.

As of today, dozens of States have already confirmed their interest in the work within the framework of the exposition.

I take this opportunity to invite your countries to take part in EXPO-2017 in Astana.

Thus, over the past years, we have come a long way to integrate Kazakhstan's economy into the global market.

We do not intend to stop there.

We have proceeded to implement **ambitious institutional reforms on 5 tracks**.

It provides for a modern public service, the rule of law, economic diversification, the shaping of a “Nation of Common Future” and increasing transparency and accountability of the State.

We have worked out specific steps to implement all these reforms.

They include **further development of international economic cooperation**.

Effective implementation of the reforms will help to shape a **brand new institutional environment**.

Our next step will be to intensify cooperation with ***the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)***, primarily within the framework of a country program of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the OECD, launched early this year.

I hope that your countries will support Kazakhstan's efforts in that direction.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Kazakhstan will soon start working under the WTO rules.

Yet **for a long time now, we have been shaping our economic policies, in the spirit of the WTO, by removing barriers, acting as an engine of regional integration and promoting the principles of open collaboration**.

Once again, I want to thank you for the joint effort and assure you that we stand ready to continue working in the WTO, **in the interests of all Members of the Organization and for the benefit of our economies and nations**.

Let me wish you all continued success in addressing strategic issues facing the WTO, as well as in the negotiations at the upcoming **Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi**.

Thank you for your attention.