

**Remarks by H.E. Ambassador LI Chenggang
at the 10th China Round Table on WTO Accessions
January 20th, 2022**

Thank you Ali,
Excellencies and audiences around the World.

Before talking about today's topic, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for their continuous hard efforts on implementing the China Program in the past 10 years, and also to the Secretariat and experts for drafting the report of Accession of LDCs to the WTO, which I think is of great help in summarizing the past, assessing the present and enlightening the future work of the China Program.

One month ago, China just celebrated its 20th anniversary of accession to the WTO. It is well-known that China achieved great economic development by integrating into the multilateral trading system. Today, China has become the world's second largest economy and major trading partner of over 120 countries and regions. However, it is also well-known that China experienced 15 years of painful negotiations before acceding the WTO. After its accession, China struggled to clean up more than 2,000 laws, regulations and departmental rules at the central

level, and over 190,000 local policies and regulations at subnational levels to meet its commitments.

Therefore, China fully understands the significance of acceding the WTO for developing countries, particularly the LDCs, and the difficulties faced by them in the accession and post-accession period. So, China is always willing to provide help within its capability to developing countries and LDCs to facilitate their accession process and integration into the WTO.

In 2002, the WTO adopted the “Guiding Principles for LDC Accession” to encourage LDCs to better participate into the accession work and other WTO configurations. However, at the same time, the financial difficulties of participating in WTO activities faced by LDC officials became increasingly prominent. In order to further expand the sources of GTF funding, at the 2005 Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, WTO members launched the Aid for Trade Initiative which aims to help developing countries, especially the LDCs, better implement the WTO Agreement and obtain benefits from it.

China actively responded to this initiative. From 2008 to 2010, China contributed 200,000 USD to the initiative each year. In 2011, the 10th year of its accession to the WTO, China doubled

the annual fund to 400,000 USD and established China's LDCs and Accession Program under the Aid for Trade Initiative. Up to date, China has contributed over 7.8 million USD to the various WTO trust funds since 2008. Different from the GTF fund, the China Program is clearly under the framework of Aid for Trade Initiative, focusing on helping LDCs better accede and integrate into the WTO and multilateral trading system.

Over the past 10 years, the China Program demonstrated its unique value through targeted assistance to LDCs on accession and other aspects through sustaining capacity building and experience sharing. Just like Minister Wang Wentao said in his opening remarks, we are pleased to see that 6 LDCs have acceded to the WTO with the help of China Program.

During the 10 years, a total of 39 young **interns** from more than 25 developing countries, including 13 from LDCs, have been funded by the Program. As is indicated by the Accession Report, many of the former interns have become part of accession negotiating teams or the WTO team, or joined institutions as trade professionals engaged in WTO-related affairs. So far, 10 **China Round Tables** have been held, including today's meeting. The Round Table provides a platform for high-level exchanges between acceding governments and WTO members on

accession and post-accession themes and experiences. The pillar of **funding participation of LDCs in WTO meetings** has funded 31 events, of which 16 activities were directly related to Director-General's Consultative Framework Mechanism on Cotton. The **South-South Dialogue** has been held 4 times and greatly contributed to the coordination among LDCs and their South-South partners on topics of mutual interest in the multilateral negotiations. The pillar of **funding follow-up workshops to LDCs' Trade Policy Reviews** has supported 6 such workshops, and a Regional Trade Policy Review Roundtable workshop for 5 Asian LDCs was organized in 2017 in Myanmar.

For the future work, I would like to share 3 points.

First, China will keep hearing the LDCs' demands. China always believes that if we want to build a community with a shared future for mankind, no one should be left behind. By receiving and analyzing their demands, we hope China Program could provide more targeted help which I think is the key of the China Program's success in the past 10 years.

Second, joint efforts are needed on addressing difficulties and problems faced by LDCs in their accessions. It is worrisome that

there has been no LDC finishing accession negotiation since 2016. In recent years, the LDCs' challenges on economic development have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, making accession process even more stagnant. Therefore, on one hand, I encourage other WTO members to voluntarily join us in helping developing countries, particularly LDCs on targeted capacity-building in various areas. The commitments expected from LDCs should be commensurate to their capacities and development level. On the other hand, LDCs should also try their best to maintain the political patience and continue their momentum in accession through actively participating in relevant meetings and capacity-building activities.

Third, China believes extra budgetary funds, like China Program, should be encouraged by members as they are making great contributions to helping developing countries, especially LDCs integrate into the WTO. We strongly urge beneficiaries of WTO capacity building to actively participate in the discussion in Committee of Financial and Budget Administration. On the establishment and improvement of these funds, it is important for us who care capacity building, care the mobilization of resources to ensure such discussion and further steps to stay in the right direction.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you that, as a staunch supporter of the WTO and multilateral trading system and the largest developing country, China is always willing to shoulder international responsibility commensurate to its capacity by providing public goods and helping the LDCs through WTO framework and other channels like Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Belt and Road Initiative and bilateral channels. LDCs can count on China's continuous support in this regard.

I will stop here. Thank you.