

**Opening Remark by H.E. Vice Minister WANG Shouwen
at the Fifth China Round Table**

20 March, 2017, Siem Reap, Cambodia

Honorable Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen,
Honorable Deputy Prime Ministers,
Minister Pan Sorasak,
Deputy Director-General Shark,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

First of all, on behalf of the delegation of China, I would like to express our sincere condolences to the Cambodian government and its people for the pass-away of Deputy Prime Minister Sok An.

It's a pleasure to attend this round table on behalf of Minister ZHONG Shan of China, and meet you all here in Siem Reap, a very beautiful and historic city of Cambodia. I would like to thank the Cambodian Government led by His Excellency Prime Minister Hun Sen and the WTO Secretariat for the thoughtful arrangements and the hospitality extended to me and my delegation.

The Best Practices on the Accessions of LDCs, which is the theme of this round table, illustrates the important relationship

between LDCs and the multilateral trading system.

Evidences have shown that LDCs have benefited enormously from the multilateral trading system in their economic and trade development. Multilateral trading system, as embodied by the WTO, plays an important role in the poverty alleviation, trade growth and economic development of LDCs. Since the establishment of WTO in 1995, nine LDCs have joined this Organization in accordance with Article XII of the WTO Agreement and two members (Cape Verde and Samoa) have successfully graduated from the UN-LDCs list. Between 1995 and 2015, the export of LDC WTO members increased with an annual growth rate of 11.7%, doubling the global average. Over the same period, the GDP of LDCs WTO Members grew with the annual growth rate of 10.6%, which almost tripled the global average.

Take Cambodia as an example. The export of Cambodia grew from 2.8 billion US dollars in 2004 when it joined the WTO, to 12 billion US dollars in 2015. The average annual growth rate of Cambodia's export was 14.1%, 2.8 times of the global average and almost three times of the non-WTO LDC countries. During the same period, Cambodia's GDP per capita maintained a 10% annual growth rate, nearly three times of the global average.

Nonetheless, there is still a long way to go for the LDCs

to better integrate into the multilateral trading system.

LDCs represent more than one fifth of the WTO membership, but only take up less than 1% of global trade. Meanwhile, concerns of LDCs in the Doha Development Agenda have not been fully resolved yet. For example, many special and differential treatment provisions are still non-binding and difficult to implement. We note with concern that, eight LDCs remain outside of the WTO, even though they applied for accession nearly one decade ago and the General Council of WTO specifically requires streamlining their accession procedures.

As a close friend of LDCs, China has made every effort within its capacity to support LDCs' development. On the trade front, China has provided duty-free treatment for 97% of the tariff lines originating from 35 LDCs. China has been the world largest market for LDCs' products in the last eight consecutive years. Meanwhile, Chinese outward investments to LDCs are booming, expecting an increase to 12 billion US dollars by the year 2030. More significantly, China has put forward the "Belt and Road" initiative and set up the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as well as the Silk Road Fund about three years ago. Through these efforts, China has been providing developing countries, especially the LDCs, with new

driving forces such as improved connectivity in infrastructure for their economic development.

In the WTO, China also stands firmly with the LDCs, supporting and pushing for the quick and proper solution to the LDC issues. In 2011, China established the China's LDCs and Accessions Program (the China Program), which is aimed at strengthening LDCs' participation in the WTO. This Program has sponsored annual round table meetings on WTO accessions, just like the one we are having today. The other four pillars of this Program are the WTO accession internship, increasing participation of LDCs in WTO meetings, south-south dialogue on LDCs and development; and follow-up workshops on the LDCs' trade policy reviews. We are proud to see that the Round Table has served as a useful platform to share development experiences and best practices. And we hope more acceding LDCs will benefit from this Program.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The world today is faced with anti-globalization sentiment, populism and growing protectionist forces.

As WTO members, we must continue to reiterate our strong commitments to the multilateral trading system. In the context of sluggish global trade growth and inward-looking trade policies by some major players, we should stick firmly to

the multilateralism and uphold the primacy of the WTO in trade liberalization. We must redouble our efforts to achieve positive outcomes at MC11. It will be quite encouraging to welcome more LDCs accede into the WTO at MC11.

As WTO members, we need to fully and faithfully implement outcomes of ministerial conferences especially those of interests to the LDCs. Significant progress has been made in the WTO to improve trade opportunities for LDCs, such as ministerial decisions on duty-free and quota-free market access, preferential rules of origin, the waiver concerning preferential treatment to services and service suppliers of LDCs, etc. We must work hard to ensure those outcomes bring tangible benefits to the LDCs. In this connection, China supports that Cambodia serves as the Coordinator of LDCs Group in the WTO.

As WTO members, we should further enhance capacity building to strengthen LDCs' participation in the WTO. It is important to learn and understand the difficulties confronting the LDCs during their WTO accession and afterwards. Responses should be made to their legitimate concerns positively and promptly. We should make full use of the WTO technical assistance and capacity building programs, including the China Program, to get the LDCs better understand

international trade rules, thus better securing their interests in the multilateral trade negotiations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the largest developing country, China stands ready to share its experiences of domestic reforms and opening-up. China is committed to safeguarding a multilateral trading system that is open, transparent, inclusive and beneficial to all. As a concrete step to implement the 2030 SDG, China today will again contribute half a million US dollars to the WTO to extend the China Program for another year.

Before I conclude, I sincerely hope that, all participants could have productive and stimulating discussions in the upcoming two days and I wish the meeting a great success.

Thank you very much for your attention!