

**Statement by H.E Dr. Bekele Bulalo, Minister of Trade of the FDRE**  
**at Session 3 of the Regional Dialogue on WTO Accession Targeted for the Greater**  
**Horn of Africa Countries**

As I clearly indicated in my intervention yesterday, the Government of Ethiopia believes that accession to the WTO will support the current rapid and sustainable economic performance of the country, which has been continuous and one of the fastest growing economy in the world. With clear vision, strategy, priority and a continuous structural reform measures, the Government is working to become a middle-income country by 2025. My government is also committed to achieving the United Nations' 2030 SDGs and the African Union's Agenda of 2063, which states that "enhancing the productivity Agenda for Africa, as an essential engine for industrialization, progressively enhancing the competitiveness of the continent in the global economy; and promoting macro-economic policies that facilitate growth, employment creation, investments and industrialization".

Therefore, it is our firm commitment that accession to the WTO will support our effort in making the domestic reforms, improving transparency and good governance and reducing poverty by achieving both the 2030 SDG and the 2063 Agenda of the African Union.

To materialize the accession and its positive impact thereafter, we need a technical assistance and financial support from our development partners in the following areas.

- 1) Technical document preparation:** though the most of technical documents for the negotiation are ready and under review using our own inhouse capacity, we still need the usual technical assistance and financial support of the development partners, including the Secretariat and UNCTAD. This includes support in the preparation, revision and analysis of more technical documents. Moreover, translating the WTO's legal text into the local language we believe will massify and deepen the understandability of the functioning of the global trading system by experts, practitioners, parliamentarians and all

other stakeholders. This has been witnessed from the experiences of other Article XII countries such as China, Saudi Arabia and others. We, therefore, require support of our development partners in these regards.

## **2) Capacity Building:**

We need both human and institutional capability development.

- i) **HR development:** as an acceding LDC, one of the constraints during the process of accession and thereafter is having trained personnel who can understand the WTO Rules and Agreements. We need to train our young professionals both in WTO rules and agreements as well as in the negotiation skills. This can be done both online and face-to-face at different levels. Such a capacity building support can be obtained from the WTO, UNCTAD, ITC, Member States and other developmental partners.
- ii) **Institutional Capability Development:** as a part of the institutional capability development, we are required to establish an Inquiry Point and Notification Authority. To this end we expect the support of the Secretariat, Member States and the developmental partners.

## **3) Trade Facilitation:**

In implementing the Trade Facilitation Agreement, we need to modernize our customs system in line with our customs law. This includes;

- revisit our customs automation, electronic processing of transactions and payments and, replace paper documents with electronic ones, while providing accurate and timely metrics on clearance and logistics time to the stakeholders,

- fully implement multimodal cargo transport system by upgrading the dry ports to facilitate the supply of raw materials for the manufactures of exportable items and strengthen capacity of the private sector operators to enhancing international competitiveness.

**4) Enhance marketing links across the international value chains:** targeted support to those firms that are participating in the Global Value Chain with the aim of making them competent across the value chain and support other firms that have a potential to succeed in niche markets and outside of the GVC in view of expanding market access for domestic products.

**5) Enforce quality standards to enhance competitiveness:** to ensure product conformity, introduce a product safety and quality control and standardization system to implement standards, regulations and certification schemes we need to the support of our development partners.

In conclusion, we would like to bring to the attention of the Secretariat, Member States and the development partners to share a burden of financing technical assistance and institutional capability development initiatives prior to, during and after the accession process, in line with our needs.

**Thank you for the attention!**