

Statement at Forum to provide a platform to discuss on accession-related technical assistance needs and support between the acceding governments and developments partners

Thank you, Mr. Chainman,

Allow me first to express my deep gratitude and thanks to the Secretariat for organizing this important Forum to provide a platform for discussion between the acceding governments and development partners on the accession-related technical assistance needs and support. The timing is perfect and is rightly chosen because eight out of the 21 on accession including my country Ethiopia are LDCs who are seeking more technical assistance and support for the process.

I also would like to thank Minister Addy, Minister of Commerce and Industry of Liberia and former Chief Negotiator for his country's WTO Accession, H.E Minister Hatim Alsir Ali, Minister of Trade of the Sudan and representatives of the Union of Comoros for sharing us their recent experience in the process of the accession.

Mr. Chainman, in Ethiopia, the accession process is on the right track, of course, it is an African culture to make the house in order before the guest comes into the house that may require some time. Ms. Maika during her trip back from Khartoum has made a stopover in Addis and witnessed the preparation at all levels to reinstate the process. There is a full political commitment from the Government side.

As the speakers before me indicated, the increasing appetite and demand for a wider market access combined with other constraints associated with limitations of development, human, institutional and infrastructural capacities are a real challenge for LDCs in the process of accession, we have witnessed that six out of nine LDCs who did accede to the system since its establishment have done so only during the last five years.

We would like to appreciate the understanding, increased flexibility and keen solidarity of Members in supporting and strengthening LDCs integration into the global trading system which is very encouraging for those of us in the process. We specially commend the flexibilities exercised on the recent LDCs accession and hope these flexibilities will continue to be exercised until the last LDC crosses the finishing line.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, as all acceding countries are in this room, with the principle of not to leave anyone behind in benefiting from the global trading system and the recently experienced accession practice to help LDCs to meeting their obligations on balanced terms after accession, we want this forum as part of its final report to include two points,

- i. urging Members to continue considering the specific level of development of LDCs and strictly follow the sprits of the 2012 General Council Decision on LDCs Accession by implementing the set benchmarks in goods and services, and restraint in seeking concessions that they are not ready to take any commitment and are beyond their level of development and regulatory capacities.
- ii. to urge multilateral organizations and other donors to increase and continue their need based technical and other supports to ease and facilitate the accession process.

I thank you