

**5<sup>th</sup> China Round Table on WTO Accession:  
Best Practices on the Accessions of LDCs**

On 20-23 March 2017

**Venue:** Hotel Sokha Siem Reap Resort and Convention Center,  
Siem Reap, Cambodia

**Priorities for WTO LDC Group at the 11<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference**  
(22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017 at 14:30'to 15:30')

By Rithi Pich  
Cambodia Ambassador to the WTO  
Under Secretary of State  
Ministry of Commerce of Cambodia

Good Afternoon,  
Excellencies Ministers and Heads of Delegation,  
Excellency Mr. David Shark, Deputy Director General of the  
WTO,  
Excellencies Ambassadors,  
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the  
WTO, the Government of the People's Republic of China and the  
Royal Government of Cambodia for inviting me to participate  
for the first time in this important China Round Table  
Discussion on **WTO Accession "Best Practices and the  
Accessions of LDCs"**.

I also wish to sincerely thank H.E. Hector Marcelo Cima,  
Ambassador from Argentina for his briefing on the preparation  
and arrangement for the upcoming WTO MC in Argentina.

As the first Cambodia Ambassador to WTO who is appointed  
earlier this month, I am very pleased and honored today to

speaking about **“Priorities for WTO LDC Group at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference”**.

In this connection, as you may be aware, Cambodia has assumed the role of the LDC Coordinator on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017 for the first time after becoming WTO Member in 2004. To lead this important LDC Group is a huge responsibility because the Group activities have increased manifold since its establishment in 2001 and we can only carry them out with the cooperation and support from the Group members as well as development partners in order to advance the LDC causes and continue to work for our common LDCs' interest and success of the WTO and the important Multilateral Trading System, especially the upcoming 11<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

As **“Priorities for WTO LDC Group at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference”**, I am of view that the followings are important for LDCs to work on:

**1) WTO Accession for LDCs:**

We are having now 8 LDC Acceding Countries: Bhutan, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Sudan and Timor-Leste. The LDC Group has requested and will continue to request for a more flexible accession process for LDCs to the WTO. We want to see LDCs to accede to the WTO sooner. We don't want to see a prolong accession process that takes many years. With an early accession, acceding LDCs can benefit earlier from trade preferences and technical assistance and support provided under the WTO to promote economic

growth and alleviate poverty. A prolonged accession process will cost a lot of resources which were constraints by LDCs. You could think about the budget for a big delegation attending each negotiation session in WTO Secretariat in Geneva;

## **2) Duty Free Quota Free (DFQF) Market Access:**

- Under paragraphs (a)(i), (ii) and (b) of Decision 36 on Measures in Favour of Least Developed Countries, contained in Annex F of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration of 2005: "Members should provide duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis, for all products originating from all LDCs by 2008 or no later than the start of the implementation period in a manner that ensures stability, security and predictability.
- Members facing difficulties at this time to provide market access as set out above shall provide duty-free and quota-free market access for at least 97% of products originating from LDCs, defined at the tariff line level, by 2008 or no later than the start of the implementation period. In addition, these Members shall take steps to progressively achieve compliance with the obligations set out above, ....., by incrementally building on the initial list of covered products.
- DFQF have played a significant role in reducing poverty in beneficiary countries by increasing and diversifying trade, encouraging inclusive economic growth, and creating new employment opportunities that directly benefit the poor and contribute to the reduction of hunger in many beneficiary countries.
- The LDC Group will therefore call for the implementation of the Hong-Kong ministerial mandate.

### **3) Agriculture:**

- Substantially reduce trade-distorting domestic support for agricultural products, including cotton, while putting in place an effective notification, control and supervision system for the various categories of support. Given that an outcome on domestic support in agriculture, *including cotton*, is eagerly awaited, the Group will submit concrete proposals in this regard and attach great importance to having agreement in Buenos Aires.

### **4) Special and Differential Treatment (S&D):**

- The concept of special and differential treatment was conceived in the multilateral trading system in acknowledgement of the fact that developing countries are at very different stages of economic, social, financial and technological developments. It was recognized that developing countries have entirely different capacities as compared to developed countries in undertaking commitments and obligations and in taking advantage of the multilateral trading system. This recognition led to adoption of Article XVIII of GATT, Part IV of GATT bringing the principle of non-reciprocity in undertaking commitments and obligations and restraint on the introduction of measures on products of export interest to developing countries and the enabling clause in 1979. Up through the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, these provisions were invoked by GATT contracting Parties. Non-reciprocity was maintained in undertaking commitment by developing countries; and generalized system of

preferences were introduced by developed countries in order to create export opportunities for developing countries. Thus, the S&DT provisions were implemented in letter and spirit of those provisions. The flexible treatment was also to enable the progressive integration of countries into the multilateral rules based trading system.

- The LDC Group will be submitting a S&D proposal, which seeks to address the industrialization process in LDC countries and wishes to have provisions which would support industrialization and diversification. The objective is to help LDCs to graduate from their status;

#### **5) Fisheries Subsidies:**

- With regard to negotiations on Fisheries Subsidies, LDCs remain committed to disciplines on fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing and to the elimination of subsidies for illegal unreported and unregulated fishing in accordance with the Doha and Hong Kong Mandate and Goal 14.6 of the 2030 Development Agenda. Given the importance of this sector as a source of income and its direct contribution to the food and nutrition security of LDC populations, the disciplines discussed should take into account the level of development of individual members and appropriate special and differential treatment, including the exemption of LDCs on certain disciplines, in particular capacity enhancing subsidies, longer transitional periods if necessary, flexibilities on transparency and the need for technical assistance.

- The LDC Group is working on the text based proposal and wishes to have positive results in that regard in Buenos Aires;

6) **Aide for Trade:**

- LDC Group thanks the development partners that have continued to provide funding to the EIF. In addition, we would call upon Members to heed the instruction of Ministers as enshrined in Para 15 of the Nairobi Ministerial Declaration to secure the necessary level of financial contributions to the EIF program Phase II, with the view to enabling the delivery of predictable trade-related support to LDCs.
- Aide for Trade has been very valuable in assisting WTO LDC Members to implement their commitments and building capacities; and LDC Acceding Countries are also in even greater need for it in order to accede WTO sooner.

7) **E-Commerce:**

- The LDC Group is working on a draft position paper to express its concerns vis-à-vis of Electronic Commerce.

Last but not least, I call up all WTO LDC Members to work closely together with Cambodia as LDC Coordinator to have all the suggested LDC priorities for MC 11 done.

Thank You!