

**Statement by H.E. Ms Anne Ruth Herkes
Federal Minister of Economics and Technology**

Mr Chairman, Excellencies,

I am overjoyed that Yemen is about to become a member of the WTO.

I would like to pass on the heartfelt congratulations of the German government.

The accession ends a long and difficult process. There were 13 years of intensive negotiations, and 11 sessions of the accession working group, before the accession package was finally ready.

The accession will strengthen the universal role of the multilateral trading system.

The accession will help Yemen to achieve stable economic growth and to make progress on its social development.

The EU has also concluded a bilateral agreement with Yemen on market access for trade in goods.

This will boost trade in goods between our regions.

We all owe the government of Yemen in particular the greatest respect for its determination and commitment in pursuing the goal of accession – even at times when national politics have been difficult.

We all know how great the challenge posed by such a process is – particularly for an LDC.

This is true of the necessary, often very painful national adjustment processes and of the need to develop into an efficient negotiator capable of speaking as an equal with other WTO member states, many of which can draw on long years of experience.

The WTO countries have already promised Yemen that technical assistance will continue to be provided.

I am particularly glad that an official from my ministry, Mr. Hartmut Röben, was able to help steer and support this accession process right from the start in his role as chair of the accession working group.

This reflects the great significance attached by Germany to Yemen's membership of the WTO.

And not least, this is the first accession to take place under the leadership of our new Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo.

I wish us all, and the Republic of Yemen, a successful ministerial conference!