



WTO TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY ACCESSIONS PROGRAMME

SECOND GLOBAL SEMINAR ON WTO ACCESSIONS SAUDI ARABIA 10-YEAR WTO ACCESSION SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY SESSION ACCESSIONS BOOK LAUNCH BY WTO DIRECTOR-GENERAL ROBERTO AZEVEDO

*Statement by H.E. Ms. Amina Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs
and International Trade, Kenya*

Accessions Book Launch: The Systemic and Domestic Importance of WTO Accessions

Geneva, Wednesday, 30 September 2015, 12:15 – 12:25, Room W

Director-General Roberto Azevêdo,

Distinguished panellists,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. Good afternoon. I am very pleased to have been associated with this book launch and to be here with you at this very special occasion today. This is indeed very special for me, and for the WTO. It is an event that supports and enhances the system.
2. And for me, in several ways, it is about my previous work here in Geneva. In 2005, I had the great honour of gavelling the adoption of the Accession of Saudi Arabia, as the Chairman of the General Council. Ten years later, today, I am honoured to be part of the 10th anniversary celebration of Saudi Arabia's accession to the WTO. In 2005, when I welcomed Saudi Arabia's entry, to recall my remarks then, I underlined it as a signal of greater "universality, depth and diversity" of the Organization. Today, I can see clearly the realisation of this signal: Saudi Arabia's membership has enriched the organization over the last ten years, and it has helped spread and deepen the organization's core values in a wider new world.
3. Now, as host minister of MC10 in December, I look forward to gavelling the formal adoption of the accession of Liberia in Nairobi. I have been truly impressed by the fast pace and rapid progress of this African and LDC accession, led by a dynamic Chief Negotiator Axel Addy, under strong political guidance and leadership of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, despite huge challenges faced by the consequences of a long civil war and the Ebola crisis.
4. I am convinced that the accession of Liberia, like that of Saudi Arabia 10 years ago, will send yet another signal to the multilateral trading system; that there is a new, dynamic, "rising" and, growing Africa, which is ready to contribute to strengthening the Multilateral Trading System.
5. As we celebrate the launch of this Accession Book with enormous rich content, this gives recognition and appreciation for how 33 accessions, over 20 years, have contributed to systemically strengthening and deepening the rules of the multilateral trading system, along with its credibility and relevance in the global economic governance. The results from accessions demonstrate that the WTO delivers. But it should deliver more.
6. The results from 33 accessions are instrumental in understanding the values of WTO membership and its organisation. Roberto has shown in his Annual Reports on Accessions that



those Members that had negotiated their terms and conditions of membership, overall, have grown faster, have been more successful in attracting FDI and have shown greater resilience in recovery from external shocks.

7. In particular, I am pleased to note that the trade performance of seven Article XII LDC Members was higher than that of the original WTO Members, and all other Article XII Members, except China. As I always believe, our system must deliver, first and foremost, economic development for the most vulnerable Members of our community.

8. The evidence of their success, from accession-related domestic reforms, is reflected in the fact that two of them have graduated from LDC status after their accessions, although there is no causality - if there was, I should recommend that all Members should go through accessions!

9. Nonetheless, the lessons from 33 accessions are clear: the Multilateral Trade System, including through accessions, provides a platform for domestic reforms to improve competitiveness, diversification, modernization and integration into value chains. We must continue to use trade and trade negotiations as an instrument for economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction. This is why again, as I have done in the past, strongly appeal to Members to support the efforts of our Director-General in the preparatory process and substance for the Nairobi Ministerial.

10. Let me congratulate the 33 Members, and Kazakhstan and, the 21 others still in queue, for choosing the path of domestic reforms to join this indispensable organization. They have not only expanded the reach of multilateral trade rules and their values, they have expanded and deepened these rules which are more progressive, contemporary and meaningful, in tune with the 21st century commercial agenda and reality.

11. Finally, let me congratulate Roberto for supporting the preparation of this book, commend Uri and Chiedu the Co-Editors and, all the Contributors to this impressive collection of stories and analysis on WTO Accession negotiations and results. This book is replete with wisdom and lessons from practice which from which the rest of the membership could draw as practice as, collectively, we re-commit to the eternal work of building, adapting and modernizing the rules-based Multilateral Trading System.

Thank you.
