

ACCESSION OF TIMOR-LESTE: 2ND MEETING OF THE WORKING PARTY

29 July 2021, 10:00 A.M.

Venue: Centre William Rappard, Room W / Interpretif

DDG ZHANG'S STATEMENT

I would like to join you in welcoming the impressive delegation from Timor-Leste to this meeting. I have been told by the Accessions Division that this is one of the largest delegations to a Working Party meeting which WTO membership has witnessed from an acceding government. This is not only a testament of the high-level commitment by the Government of Timor-Leste to WTO accession, but also the smart use of the virtual platform to bring domestic stakeholders together, which is a key ingredient to drive the accession process.

This is the second Working Party meeting of an LDC accession which I am attending this week, following Sudan on Monday. I have been told that the next one after the summer break is Comoros, another LDC. I have been impressed by the hard work, dedication and enthusiasm brought by these LDCs, despite the difficulties and challenges to prepare documentation during the pandemic.

Among the eight remaining LDC accessions, Timor-Leste is one of the most recent ones which started the process only in 2016 but is now moving at a full speed following the first Working Party meeting last October. My recommendation as former accession negotiator and former Chairperson of an LDC accession Working Party, is to sustain your efforts and keep up with your good work, not to stop or take a break.

Let me also use this opportunity to thank Members which have been providing technical assistance to LDC acceding governments. The Secretariat is ready to coordinate with TA providers, so that LDCs technical assistance and capacity building needs are responded in a timely manner.

With this short remark, I wish you a successful meeting.
