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KAZAKSTAN

Statement Circulated by Mr. Kasymzhomart K. Tokayev,
Minister of Foreign Affairs
(As An Observer)

The Republic of Kazakstan is acceding to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in accordance with the official application of its Government submitted early 1996 and on the basis of the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime of Kazakstan, as well as its observer status in the WTO.

The results of two meetings of The Working Party on Kazakstan's Accession, held so far, as well as the activities of the WTO bodies, including the first Ministerial Conference at Singapore in December 1996 and meetings of the General Council, and work done within the Kazakstan's Inter-Agency Commission on the WTO have shown the necessity for a continuation of work on the adaptation of Kazakstan's trade-related legislation to the multilateral rules and disciplines, and for an intensification of negotiations with the WTO Members.

In the process of accession to the WTO, the Republic of Kazakstan, while adopting and observing WTO rules and disciplines, will nevertheless pursue and defend its national interests.

At the present, the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of Kazakstan has coordinated and approved the Plan of Action for WTO Accession (in accordance with the Government's Decree No. 211 dated 19 February 1996), and also formed a new composition of the Inter-Agency Commission on the WTO resulting from the reorganization of the Government.

The Government of Kazakstan fully understands that the WTO accession involves: first, conformity with the WTO requirements and therefore it is in the process of adapting its legislation as appropriate; and second, bilateral negotiations with WTO Members on market access in goods and services which should be a reasonable compromise between national interests and concerns of Kazakstan and requests of the respective WTO Members. In this context, we hope that such requests would not be excessive.

The process of accession and eventually participation in the WTO as its fully fledged member require professionally trained national experts. In this context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakstan jointly with the Ministry of Energy, Industry and Trade have accepted the proposal of the WTO secretariat on the provision of technical assistance in the course of WTO accession covering the following issues:

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- Training of national experts, organization of seminars and workshops on the multilateral trading system, including dispute settlement, anti-dumping measures, subsidies and countervailing measures, intellectual property rights protection, rules of origin, etc;
- active participation of Kazakhstan's officials in the WTO Special Trade Policy Course.

We also intend to actively use technical assistance provided by other relevant international organizations.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to those WTO Members and international organizations which are providing valuable technical assistance in our accession to the WTO.

Bearing in mind the results of bilateral negotiations and outcome of the second meeting of the WTO Working Party on Kazakhstan's Accession, as well as taking into account the changes in the national legislation and Kazakhstan's offers on market access in goods and services, the Government of Kazakhstan aims at intensifying multilateral and bilateral negotiations, including:

- With the European Union and the United States on tariffs and services;
- with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Pakistan, Cuba, Canada and Australia on tariffs.

Taking into account the negative influence of Section 402, Title IV of the United States Trade Act of 1974, alias the "Jackson-Vanik Amendment", on the Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO, the Government of Kazakhstan deems extremely important that the United States grants our country an unconditional most-favoured-nation treatment, in other words Kazakhstan should be graduated from this provision of the United States trade law. Another important problem, which is directly linked with Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO, is a decision by the relevant WTO Members to consider Kazakhstan as a "market-economy country".

The Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan in its accession to the WTO will thus pay special importance to the following considerations:

- All WTO Members should take into account the complexity of economic situation in Kazakhstan linked with comprehensive reforms and structural adjustment.
 - We hope that the WTO Members would refrain from requesting the acceding countries, including Kazakhstan, too rigid and overly excessive commitments, as compared to the obligations of the existing WTO membership.
 - Negotiating partners of Kazakhstan should duly take into account the difficult situation in Kazakhstan, particularly when negotiating import tariff concessions in agriculture and industry, as well as market access in services, bearing in mind the nascent services sectors in our country.
 - In the accession negotiations, it is imperative not to "politicize" the issues under discussion.
 - There is also an urgent need to stimulate the accession process by different forms of assistance.
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