Closing Remarks by H.E. Ambassador

Dr. ZHANG Xiangchen at the 8th China Round Table

5 December 2019, Moscow

Distinguished Ms Ekaterina Mayorova, distinguished Ms Maika Oshikawa, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon!

At the outset, please allow me, on behalf of the government of China, to warmly congratulate and sincerely thank the government of Russia Federation for successfully hosting this Roundtable.

Also, my congratulations and thanks go to the WTO Secretariat for their great efforts and thoughtful organization to make this meeting a great success. We appreciate our already-sound cooperation with the Secretariat and look forward to renewing it in the future.

In the past two-day discussions, participants have conducted interactive and fruitful exchanges of views on the important topics of accessions and WTO reform. At this point of time, I would like to further share some of my views.

First, the great success of this meeting strongly demonstrates members’ and acceding countries’ commitment and
determination to safeguard and strengthen the multilateral trading system.

Currently, the system is undergoing severe challenges and world trade is slowing down. It is extremely crucial that all WTO members and countries that are interested in joining the family uphold multilateral solutions, avoiding unilateral and protectionist measures, which run counter to the spirit and rules of the WTO.

Against this backdrop, the 8th China Roundtable has drawn great attention from WTO members and acceding governments, by such a presence at high levels and broad participation, as well as profound and extensive discussions, including joint initiatives, accessions’ state of play, regional integration, and further, the organization of the possible first Ministerial meeting of WTO acceding governments at the margin of MC12. This proves that most members of the WTO, still, attach great importance to developing countries’ accessions to the Organization, LDCs in particular. We can also clearly feel people’s recognition to the great role of WTO. Indeed, what we have been doing in the past two days is our pragmatic actions to uphold the effectiveness and authority of the WTO.

Second, acceding developing countries especially LDCs to the WTO is of great significance, yet of immense difficulties at the same time.

Based on my experiences in the past decades, the WTO is like a door to international market and acceding to the WTO is like a
key that is ready to open the door. Last 17 years’ rapid economic growth of China after its accession owes much to the hard-working Chinese people, and meanwhile, is also benefiting from China’s integration into the multilateral trading system. The WTO accession has created a stable and transparent legal system and external environment to achieve rapid economic growth, raising competitiveness and lifting people’s livelihood.

Nevertheless, having gone through 15 years’ negotiation of accessions, plus currently the increasingly unstable and unpredictable elements in global economy, we are fully aware of the enormous difficulties to accede to the WTO. In this regard, participants discussed the difficulties such as domestic coordination, capacity gaps, lengthy process, as well as demanding WTO members.

It then comes to my third point: China has always attached great importance to LDC’s accession to the WTO. We remain the only member that promises not to ask market access requests for LDCs’ application of the membership. In addition, China is more than willing to offer all possible and necessary help by furthering our public goods to the world:

Within three years starting from 2018, China will provide RMB60 billion worth of aid to the developing countries and international organizations participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, with a view to developing more projects to improve people’s lives.

The China International Import Expo (CIIE) has become an annual event. In the coming 15 years starting from 2018, China is
expected to import USD24 trillion worth of goods. During the 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition of CIIE, 40 LDCs continued to have two free standard booths each. We have seen honey from Zambia, handicrafts from Burkina Faso, cashews from Tanzania, vanilla from Madagascar, etc.

On November 18, I signed the \textit{China Programme} MoU with DG Azevedo in Geneva, renewing China’s contribution of USD 500,000 for the coming 12 months. Since its inception in 2011, the China Programme has provided tangible assistance to LDCs and acceding countries, by holding seven Accession Roundtables across seven countries in three continents and helping 6 LDCs join the WTO, convening three South-South Dialogues near Geneva, providing WTO internship opportunities to more than 30 officials from developing members and observers, and annually funding officials from Cotton-4 countries (C4) to participate cotton-related meetings in Geneva, etc.

\textit{China’s Foreign Aid Project for Human Resource Development Cooperation} used to be a bilateral thing. Starting from 2018, we introduced it into the multilateral front at the WTO, and have invited Ministers, Ambassadors and other officials from developing and least developed members for 4 workshops on WTO reform, IP protection and development, e-commerce and development, and investment facilitation for development. We will continue this practice to help developing and least developed members enhance their capacity building and better integrate into the system and participate in the WTO reform process.

Having said that, I call upon all WTO members to offer more
targeted and effective assistance to address capacity constraints of the acceding governments, like today’s Roundtable. By doing so, I’m certain that we can significantly reduce the average 12 years needed to bring on board a new member into the WTO family.

Lastly, let me thank our speakers, commentators and moderators for their excellent contribution over the two days. I look forward to seeing you all at the 9th China Roundtable.

Thank you!