Honourable Deputy Prime Minister Dossayev,
Honourable Director General Azevêdo,
Honourable Ministers,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to meet you in the beautiful city of Astana, which is the birth place of the Silk Road Economic Belt Initiative, to discuss with the WTO community the important topics of development and cooperation.

Let me begin by extending warm congratulations to Kazakhstan, on behalf of the Chinese Government, on successfully hosting the China Round Table. I also want to thank the Government of Kazakhstan and the WTO Secretariat for the hard work and thoughtful arrangements for this Round Table.

Over the past two days, delegates had positive and constructive communication on topics like the contribution of joining the WTO to the multilateral trading system.

In this connection, I would like to share with you my observations on three points.

First, the successful Round Table meeting demonstrates the sense of responsibility of all sides for the multilateral trading system. Economic globalization is facing tremendous impacts from unilateralism and protectionism, and the multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core is faced with severe challenges.

Against this background, the broad consensus forged at this Round Table on a series of issues on WTO accession is a full recognition of the WTO’s role as well as strong evidence of the real actions taken by Members to uphold the authority and efficacy of the multilateral trading system.

Second, we still have a long way to go to help developing countries, especially, the LDCs to integrate in the multilateral trading system. As the uncertainty of the international economy is on the rise, developing countries, especially the LDCs, have a more imminent demand for a more predictable and transparent external environment for growth. So this Round Table meeting discussed the concrete issues and challenges in terms of accession process, and relevant countries expressed their willingness to join the WTO as soon as possible. These are the requirements and hopes for our work in the future.

Third, China always commits to supporting the LDCs to integrate into the multilateral trading system. China has offered zero tariff treatment for 97% of tariff lines of products imported
from the LDCs. We also helped six LDCs to join the WTO through the China Programme. Last year, China donated US$ 1 mln to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Fund. And under the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund, China has expanded cooperation with the WTO, helping other developing countries to enhance their ability to benefit from the Global Value Chains. And, in the same vein, China will continue, as always, with such efforts and practices.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends,

In order to better help developing countries, especially the least developed ones to merge into the multilateral trading system, I want to put forth three proposals:

First, we should strengthen unity and firmly uphold the authority and the efficacy of the multilateral trading system. The survival and the development of the multilateral trading system is relevant to how far WTO Members, especially the developing and the least-developed ones will go. At this particular time, we need to work in unity for the same goal and continue to send a message of supporting the multilateral trading system and opposing protectionism and unilateralism.

Second, we should provide support and help to move faster with the accession process of new Members, including the LDCs. More countries in the multilateral trading system can enhance the representation and inclusiveness of this system. We should use the WTO’s technical assistance and capacity building programmes to move faster with the accession process and help those countries fulfil their commitments.

Last but not the least, we need to deepen cooperation and inject more momentum in the economic globalisation through platforms like the Belt and Road Initiative. The core of the Silk Road spirit is peaceful cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefits. This is similar to the WTO’s commitments. Eurasia is at the heart of the Silk Road Economic Belt, and major developing economies have enjoyed good potential and foundation for cooperation. We hope to further deepen practical cooperation with relevant countries, so as to set a good example of multilateral and bilateral trade and economic cooperation, as well as to inject a new impetus to sound and stable economic growth.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends,

China is fully committed to the multilateral trading system and a mutually beneficial opening up strategy. This year marks the fortieth anniversary of China’s reform and opening up, and we are translating the spirit of the important speech made by President Xi Jinping at the Boao Forum into a series of new measures to deepen reform and open up further. We welcome all the countries to participate in the first China International Import Expo in November in Shanghai to explore the China market and share China’s development dividend.

Thank you.