

Intervention by Ms. Mia Mikic, Director, Trade, Innovation and Investment Division of UN ESCAP

Thank you for inviting UN ESCAP to this Forum; I believe this is the first time we are present at the Forum for WTO Accession and we are very pleased for being given this opportunity.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. It is made up of 53 Member States and 9 Associate Members, with a geographical scope that stretches from Turkey in the west to the Pacific island nation of Kiribati in the east, and from the Russian Federation in the north to New Zealand in the south. The region is home to 4.1 billion people, or two thirds of the world's population, making ESCAP the most comprehensive and largest of the United Nation's five regional commissions.

ESCAP is committed to a resilient Asia and the Pacific founded on shared prosperity, social equity and sustainability. Our vision is to be the most comprehensive multilateral platform for promoting cooperation among member States to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific. ESCAP aims to achieve these goals through the promotion of rigorous **analysis and peer learning** in our core areas of work, translating these findings into evidence-based policy **recommendations**, and providing development best-practices, knowledge sharing and **technical assistance** to member States in the implementation of these recommendations.

In particular, ESCAP has designed a special technical assistance programme to build capacity in developing countries. These programmes are developed based on our approach of **delivering demand driven** assistance, which is also **individually tailored** to the specific institutional, regulatory, and socio-economic context of each country. The assistance that ESCAP provides is also **broadly based**, and in the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division in particular, covering issues such as trade policy and trade facilitation; developing analytical and statistical tools to better understand these issues; building capacity in trade negotiations; SME development and attracting foreign direct investment; and promoting innovation for development.

ESCAP delivers this capacity building programme through a variety of modalities: direct **training** of government officials, researchers, and policy makers to improve analytical capabilities for trade policy making and negotiation; providing **research and analysis** to assist developing countries in making informed choices; facilitating **co-operation and dialogue** among member states and other stakeholders to achieve more inclusive outcomes; through **partnerships** with many regional and international organizations such as UNCTAD, WTO, ADB and the other regional commission; and lastly assisting in **monitoring and implementation** to ensure that the capacity building programme delivered is effective and impactful. In the context of assisting countries towards smoother and faster accession to the WTO and, often more importantly, helping them being effective member of the WTO through full and fast implementation of the agreements, ESCAP and WTO have been running a technical assistance programme for capacity building since 1999. This programme caters to government officials in trade area as well as researchers engaged in trade policy applied work.

ESCAP has already provided assistance to Timor-Leste in the past: in 2013 ESCAP assisted in the mapping of institutions and government officials with responsibilities in trade, trade facilitation, and

investment. This was followed up by technical assistance in the form of building capacity in trade-related statistical analysis of Government officials from Timor-Leste.

With Timor-Leste achieving observer status at the WTO, and hearing of vast gaps in human resource and other capacity, ESCAP secretariat stands ready to provide further technical assistance and capacity building as Timor-Leste seeks accession to the WTO. Similar assistance is also available to ESCAP other members upon requests.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to introduce ESCAP's work to you.