

Your excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank to the Government of PR of China and WTO Secretariat for invitation to participate in such important meeting. I hope that Montenegrin experience in Domestic preparation and coordination will help LDCs to accelerate and finish their accession negotiations.

At the beginning I want to remind you on some main facts related to WTO accession of Montenegro. Namely, we submitted Letter of application in December 2004. Working Party was established on 15 February 2005. Montenegro submitted Memorandum on Foreign Trade Regime in March 2005, Initial Services Offer was submitted in July the same year, and Initial Goods Offer in June next year. During negotiation process eight WP meetings were held, and bilateral negotiations were concluded with eleven Members. Our accession negotiations were formally concluded during the 8<sup>th</sup> MC in December 2011. On 29 April 2012 Montenegro became the 154<sup>th</sup> Member of WTO.

When it comes to cost and benefits of accession, I would like to point out that Montenegrin commitment to WTO was evident, as it was GATT Member from 1966, as part of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, then State Union of Serbia and Montenegro applied for membership in 2001, and separate accession process of two member states started at February 2005. With reference to previous mentioned, it can be concluded that certain level of knowledge and experience in reference to WTO has already existed.

Even though, preparation of Memorandum on foreign trade regime indicated number of areas which needed improvement. The most important were: low level of privatization as in that time MNE was economy in transition, customs rates were not enough transparent as some of them were combined, number of products were on Import licenses regime, and there were lack of legislation in the areas of TBT, SPS and Intellectual property rights. Identification of these areas was important in order to form negotiating team at later stage.

The first Commission for coordinating accession negotiations was established by Montenegrin Government in August 2003. The Commission contained 11 members, high officials from the most important institutions for country's economy such as Ministry for Economic Relations and European Integration, which coordinated the whole process, Cabinet of Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Policy and Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Transport And Maritime Affairs, Ministry of Sustainable development, Ministry of Justice, Secretariat for Legislation, Customs administration and Ministry of Tourism.

Due to Government reconstructions during accession process the commission has being changed. Presently Government counts 16 ministries. Ministry of Economy with its Department for

multilateral and regional trade cooperation is in charge for WTO issues. Also, some new institutions were established such as: Institute for Standardization, Accreditation Body, Bureau of Metrology and Intellectual Property Office.

Montenegro had three chief negotiators: Ms. Gordana Djurovic, Minister for Economic relations and EU integration, and later Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Igor Luksic, at that time he was Deputy Prime Minister too, and Mr. Vladimir Kavacic, Minister of Economy. All of them were high politically positioned, what was one of essential elements of whole process. High political support makes the process more efficient.

One of very important institutions for efficiency of the process is Permanent Mission in Geneva. The Mission is the contact point between WTO and Capital and it communicates directly with WTO Secretariat and Members. Also, it has important role in post-accession period, if Member wants to be the active one.

At this point I would like to make reference to Director-General's 2011 Annual Report on Accessions, part V. Namely, Director General mentions "Steering Committee", "Technical Committee" and a core negotiating team responsible for the day-to-day running of the accession negotiations. This model can be applied to Montenegrin case. The Steering Committee can be compared to afore mentioned Commission. When it comes to the Technical Committee, I would like to note that we had contact point in every Ministry in charge for different WTO issues, and the WTO Department was running the accession negotiations, and it was contact point between all institutions involved in accession negotiations. Mentioned committees had different level of responsibilities, but borders between them were not completely clear, as the real time information were necessary to everybody.

Also, cooperation and communication between the executive and legislative branches of government is very important. In the previous period, in Montenegro, around fifty pieces of different types of legislation were adopted.

Inputs for negotiations were received from different business associations, as at the end of the day they will be the one who will apply agreements. In that order we have organized round tables and meetings to present status of negotiations. We have also cooperated with media representatives to inform the public, and with University, too.

Ministry of Economy in 2010 published book with translated WTO Agreements. The whole project was financed by Delegation of EU in Montenegro. The book was submitted to different associations, universities and NGOs (apart from government institutions), with aim to make them familiar them to WTO as much as possible.

After seven years of negotiations, it can be said that WTO network has been established in Montenegro. Even though, I would like to point out that establishing of network is the process

which lasts, and it is never completed. The network is important because of post-accession commitments and obligations, too, as well as the continuity of negotiation team.

Thank you for your attention.

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