



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE  
**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
GENEVA

**Remarks 3<sup>Rd</sup> EDITION OF the Trade for Peace Week:**

**fragility and conflict: building peace through trade and economic  
integration 14 to 18 November 2022**

Distinguished panellists,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to join this distinguished panel in the opening of the Trade for Peace Week, with the champions of the Trade for Peace. I am speaking on behalf of my Minister Hon. Mawine G Diggs, co-coordinator of the g7+ WTO Accessions Group, who unfortunately was unable to join the session due to schedule conflict. On her behalf, I would like to start by thanking the g7+ and the WTO for the continuous support extended to the Group in realising our vision for Trade for Peace in the WTO especially through accession. The Group is also grateful for the support and encouragement from a large number of partners in the international community, including those on this panel.

Esteemed colleagues,

The g7+ WTO Accessions Group welcomes the 3<sup>rd</sup> Trade for Peace Week, which focuses on an issue at the very core of our vision, the role of trade and economic integration in addressing fragility and conflict. As Secretary General Da Costa and Deputy Director-General Gonzalez mentioned, our Group – which was established in December 2017 and consists of 9 pre and post fragile or conflict-affected LDCs associated with WTO accession. This group has been championing the Trade for Peace agenda, based on peer-to-peer support and knowledge sharing. I should add that the Group's work could not have been advanced without the WTO Trade for Peace programme which has brought together partners to enhance our understanding on the trade and peace nexus.

Soon the trade for peace agenda will be reaching its 5 year mark on the agenda of the WTO. It is our belief that this agenda has now become more relevant than ever. We live in a time of unprecedented challenges that demands the global community to urgently look for new approaches and solutions, especially for FCS which have been disproportionately affected, first by the pandemic and now by the geopolitical tensions. Trade can and must be an integrate part of these urgently needed solutions. As my Minister has signalled to the WTO Membership on several occasions, ***"[W]e urgently need effective support in accessing the international trade tools provided by the WTO, for the benefit of our people," especially in promoting durable peace.***

I believe that the experience of my country, Liberia, can serve as a good example of use of the WTO membership as a vector of the trade for peace agenda. Liberia's membership in the WTO, achieved in 2016, was a critical step in locking in domestic reforms and achieving better governance, which have advanced the country to strive for a cohesive trade policy positively affecting its regional and global standing. Liberia came out of the FCS list of the World Bank in 2021. This milestone must be seen as a fruit of the successful implementation of the strategy by the government led by Hon. President George Manneh Weah.

Liberia's story has been good one, but this is not always the case for others. Looking around the globe, we are constantly reminded how fragile peace can be, as conflict can suddenly shut down the opportunity for trade and economic integration and lock FCS into a vicious cycle of fragility, conflict. Many other members of our Group are also facing serious humanitarian situation, while sustaining their heroic effort to engage in accession and participation in the WTO.

It is against this background, the Group's Ministers, who met in June during MC12, appealed to the WTO membership to develop a dedicated Work Programme on Trade for Peace for FCS, so that our specific challenges can be addressed through various pillars of the WTO work. The Group, supported by a number of other WTO Members and Observers, strongly believes that this Work Programme would be essential for the multilateral trading system to be more sensitive and responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable population. The Group's proposal was first circulated in document WT/GC/W/830, in October 2021, and then reinforced in its second Ministerial Declaration, circulated in document WT/MIN(22)/23.

The Group's proposal essentially calls on WTO members to explicitly recognise and encourage the WTO to play an active role in promoting peace and stability. As a first step, the Group's intention has been to submit an information note on FCS to the WTO Committee on Trade and Development to start discussion with Members. Consultations on the information note are currently ongoing within the Group and with some others, so that it could be submitted to the CTD in early 2023. I trust that this Trade for Peace Week will provide a timely opportunity to learn and exchange about the concept, definition and category of FCS, as well as approaches adopted to FCS by different international players. Following discussions at the CTD, it is our hope that a decision could be taken on the Group's proposal at the 13<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference.

Please allow me to inform you that tomorrow the Group will hold its first gathering in the broader g7+, which has a total of 20 member states, going beyond the original 9 LDCs in the Group. In addition, we will be joined by other FCS, as classified by the World Bank.

I would like to conclude With these remarks, the Group looks forward to productive discussions for the next week, learning from the participants' insights and expertise. Once again, we thank you all for your support.