



## NAIROBI FOURTH CHINA ROUND TABLE

### WTO ACCESSIONS AND THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM

#### OFFICIAL OPENING

MR. DAVID SHARK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL, WTO

*Sunday, 13 December 2015, 9:00, Intercontinental Hotel (Loita Room)*

Minister Amina Mohamed,

Vice Minister Wang Shouwen,

First Deputy Minister Saidrahmon Nazriev,

Honourable Ministers,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Director General, I am honoured to welcome you all to this Opening of the Fourth China Round Table, here in Nairobi.

I would like to join previous speakers in thanking the Government of China for its continuous support for acceding LDCs and recently acceded LDCs through the China



Programme. This is the Fourth China Round Table and the first to be held in Africa. These Round Tables have contributed concretely to supporting the most vulnerable group in the global trade community, through its five pillars.

I am sure that I speak for the Members and the WTO Secretariat in expressing appreciation to the Government of China for its generous support.

Amongst the five pillars of "The China Programme", the Round Table process stands out. Its significance is that it has emerged as an instrument for policy dialogue to foster domestic reforms for growth and integration, in a non-controversial way and outside of the setting of negotiations. As the dialogue process rotates from one region to another, it raises to the fore issues of interests that reflect regional priorities.

The first three Round Tables were held in different parts of Asia – Beijing China in 2012; Luang Prabang, Lao PDR in 2013; and, Dushanbe, Tajikistan in May this year. In Asia, the Round Table process provided a platform for an exchange of views on best practices in accessions negotiations. It drew attention to the urgent need for post-accession. It marked the start of



underscoring the value of trade facilitation particularly in the context of Central Asia. Above all, the Round Table process highlighted the value of gathering the perspectives of Article XII members on the future of the multilateral trading system, aside of the coalition of these members as a negotiating group.

This Fourth China Round Table on the African continent, here in Nairobi, is being held on the eve of the first Ministerial Conference in Africa. Hence, there is additional significance. Over the next one day and a half, the Round Table will address two areas of importance for Africa and the Multilateral Trading System.

First, immediately after this Opening Ceremony will be the Special Session focused on the Accessions of LDCs. It is focused, *inter alia*, on fostering trade and development opportunities on the platform of a "Post-Accession Support Plan". For this session, the Round Table is honoured to have representatives from Liberia and Afghanistan, whose accessions are "deliverables" at this MC10. We look forward to listening to their account of their WTO accession journey, and the opportunities and challenges associated with their accession process.



Second, this afternoon and tomorrow at the High Level Session, the focus will be on Africa. These sessions will be dedicated to improving understanding on African policy perspectives on the future of the rules-based Multilateral Trading System. Improved understanding will better facilitate the constant work in progress on how to strengthen the rules-based Multilateral Trading System. I believe that discussions will be enriched by the papers which have been prepared by trade experts, as well as views and perspectives to be provided by key African policy makers. Members are keen to sustain the dialogue on Africa's ideas and priorities for the future.

We are privileged to have very high level distinguished guests and participants at this Round Table. It is the highest level and the most substantive of the China Round Tables which the WTO has organised. Let me take this opportunity to express deep appreciation to the Government of Kenya and the Government of China, as well as the Secretariat Team, for the impressive organization. We now have to ensure that the outcome matches the preparatory work.

On behalf of the WTO, we look forward to your ideas and insights today and tomorrow.



With this short remark, ***I OFFICIALLY OPEN THE FOURTH CHINA ROUND TABLE!***