

Thank you Mr. Chair,

At the outset, and on behalf of Brazil, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the delegation of Afghanistan, headed by H.E. Mr. Mohammad Khan, First Deputy Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. After 11 years of hard work and tireless negotiations, we are here today to celebrate Afghanistan joining the WTO as its 164<sup>th</sup> Member.

Mr. Chair,

When we talk about an accession to the WTO, we talk about commitments. A commitment to a rules-based organization, to the principles of liberalization and fair competition, to the resolution of trade disputes; and to a level playing field, where trade helps create new job opportunities and a better life for all.

After 20 years and more than 30 new Members, it is very clear that the WTO matters. And yet, we must do our best here in Nairobi to ensure that the organization is as valuable and attractive in the future as it has been until now. It is also the moment to recognize the enormous efforts required from acceding countries, in particular the LDC ones, like Afghanistan, in order to meet the exacting requirements set by the organization.

Mr. Chair,

Brazil has always been a close supporter of this process, and we are pleased to recognize that, with the leadership of President Ashraf Ghani, and of the Chief Negotiator, Deputy Minister Muzammil Shinwari, Afghanistan was able to overcome all challenges and become a full-fledged Member.

But, we also know that, as exhausting and defying as it can be, acceding to the WTO is not the end of the journey. It is rather the starting point for the implementation of those fiercely negotiated commitments and to harvest the fruits of the Multilateral Trading System.

In this regard, Brazil hopes that Afghanistan reaps the full benefits of WTO Membership in order to continue paving the way for a better future of its people.

Welcome, Afghanistan!

Thank you.