

**Statement by the Separate Customs Territory of  
Taiwan, Penghu, Kinman and Matsu on the  
Accession of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan  
at the 10th Ministerial Conference of the WTO in  
Nairobi, Kenya, on Thursday, 17 December at 16h30**

Thank you, Madam Chair,

His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Khan, distinguished delegations, fellow members, on behalf of the government of the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinman and Matsu, I wish to extend a very warm welcome to Afghanistan to the WTO family. It has been a long journey, but one, I'm sure, that you will feel has been worthwhile.

I think we all hold the government of Afghanistan in the greatest of respect, particularly for its determination and commitment in pursuing the goal of accession – even at times when the national politics have been difficult.

Economic integration through international trade has proved to be a successful formula for development in many economies around the world. I am confident that Afghanistan will reap the benefits that are bound to come with WTO membership, and we stand ready to provide support, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis. Afghanistan's accession is also an important indicator of

the faith that exists in a strong multilateral rules-based trading system, with the WTO at its core. We are pleased to see how many other countries, including the LDCs, are keen to take the path towards accession to the WTO in the future.

And, finally, I must say, we shall enjoy having Afghanistan's active participation as a fully-fledged Member in the WTO, and we look forward to working closely with you.

Thank you.