

STATEMENT OF KOREA: AFGHANISTAN'S ACCESSION TO THE WTO

THE 10TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
(16:30, 17 DECEMBER 2015)

1. First of all, I would like to extend a warm welcome to H.E. Mohammad Khan Rahmani, First Deputy Chief Executive of the Government of Afghanistan and the delegation of Afghanistan to the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference. I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Afghanistan on the successful completion of its accession negotiations that have spanned 11 years.
2. Since the application of Afghanistan for WTO membership in 2004, Korea has actively supported the accession of Afghanistan to this Organization. We believe that WTO accession will be a significant boost for Afghanistan's economic growth and development as it will open new opportunities for trade expansion and help Afghanistan consolidate its competitiveness-enhancing reforms. Korea is confident that Afghanistan will make the best of its WTO membership in fostering sustainable economic growth and prosperity.
3. The official adoption of a comprehensive, high-level accession package in the areas of goods and services at this meeting, which has been carried out thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Afghan Government, is also meaningful for the WTO and its Members in that it will greatly contribute to strengthening the multilateral trading system and to creating mutually beneficial trade relationships with WTO Members. From Korea's standpoint, we very much hope that Afghanistan's accession will serve as a catalyst for further strengthening the bilateral relations between Korea and Afghanistan in the years to come.
4. It is our hope that Afghanistan will successfully complete its domestic ratification procedures as a final step of the WTO accession process in as timely of a manner as possible.
5. Korea also hopes that Afghanistan's accession to the WTO as an LDC will help accelerate the accession process of other LDCs. Thank you.