

Mr Chair,

Today is a day of celebration. And it is with great pleasure that Brazil takes the floor to congratulate the distinguished Delegation of Liberia, headed by H.E. Madame Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia for becoming the 163rd Member of the WTO, a clear signal that this organization is moving steadily towards universality.

As we all know, the accession process to the WTO is a long and complex one. It is even more challenging when it comes to a Least Developing Country, requiring not only a long term commitment of political will, but also an intense technical work and expertise.

And yet, throughout these eight years of accession process, Liberia proved that it had enough of both. Many important domestic reforms were undertaken in order to comply with the WTO rules. They encompassed areas such as the Foreign Investment Regime, Competition Policy, TBT and SPS regulations, among various other topics negotiated by Liberia with all Members.

Mr Chair,

In normal circumstances, this range of reforms alone would suffice to show the determination of an acceding country, but in this case, it wouldn't do justice to Liberia.

Liberia was able to fulfill all of the requirements for accession amidst one of the most challenging moments in its history, struggling to fight a deadly disease that deeply affected the lives of millions, with a considerable impact in the economy of the country. In this regard, I cannot help but remember the words of Minister Axel Addy, the main negotiator in this process, when he recalled the importance of the accession to the WTO as a catalyzer for the future Liberia. A future we all here wish to be bright and prosperous.

This 10th Ministerial Conference is being held at a critical moment for the future of this organization. Liberia's example of endurance and determination is a good reminder that a strengthened Multilateral Trading System can work to improve the lives of millions of the people, which should be the ultimate goal in the WTO.

I thank you very much.