

Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference, Nairobi, Kenya,
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Nigeria

***Statement by H.E. Dr. Okechukwu Enelamah,
Honorable Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment***

Accession of the Republic of Liberia

Madam Chairperson,

1. Nigeria would like to congratulate the people of the Republic of Liberia, particularly the President, Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her team, for this milestone achievement, and we welcome Liberia to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Family. Liberia's membership would no doubt enhance her capacity to be more competitive in line with her enhanced trade policies and legislative reforms. We commend the Director-General Roberto Azevedo for his leadership and the WTO Secretariat, particularly Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, Director of the Accession Division, for the hard work and for facilitating the process to a successful conclusion. We are also grateful to Ambassador Joakim Reiter, the Chair of the Working Party, for his relentless effort and commitment as well as the entire Membership for their constructive engagement throughout the accession process.

2. Nigeria and Liberia have a long-standing relationship anchored on the promotion of African unity, democracy, regional security and development. At the sub-regional level, Nigeria and Liberia worked together with other West African countries to establish the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) commission in 1975. This Commission has fostered the harmonization of macroeconomic policies, trade liberalization and promotion of favorable industrial policy across the West Africa region. Nigeria has stood by Liberia through difficult times and we are delighted to see the remarkable turn around and landmark strides, such as this. We are confident that Liberia has a bright future ahead.

3. This Accession is truly an important moment for Liberia and the WTO, as the organization advances toward the goal of universality of the multilateral trading system. We believe Liberia's membership of the WTO will enable her participate fully in the global economy and will offer the country tremendous opportunity with a predictable and stable environment for growth and development.

4. I have followed the significant reform agenda undertaken by Liberia and the sound economic policies enumerated by Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. We have no doubt that the accession of Liberia to WTO would provide major benefits in terms of protection from discriminatory treatment, protection of intellectual property rights, transparency and consistency in government policies. This

will invariably lead to long-term economic gains and increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows.

5. In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to working closely with Liberia and assures Liberia of our continued support and collaboration.

6. I thank you.