

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION
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Statement by H.E. Mr. Andrei Yeudachenka,
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(Speaking as an Observer)

Distinguished Madame Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Belarus I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Argentine Republic for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements in hosting this 11th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization as well as to the WTO Secretariat for smooth and efficient handling of the preparatory process.

The MC-11 has a very important role in preserving multilateral trading system and building up a truly universal, inclusive and beneficial to all stakeholders set of international trade rules.

In our view, there is a good potential for achieving concrete results during MC-11 in a number of areas of the current WTO agenda. Among such areas we would like to highlight proposals on work programmes on electronic commerce and on micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME). Belarus in its capacity as a WTO observer would like to express our support to the relevant proposals of the Group of Friends of the MSME and of the Russian Federation.

As an acceding country we would like to emphasize again the importance of a rules-based and fair accession process. The terms of accession should be appropriate to the economic situation and development needs of the acceding countries. The accessions concluded under Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement resulted in comprehensive commitments that enrich the WTO and set new benchmarks, yet to be met by original Members.

Taking this opportunity let me to reiterate Belarus's pledge to an early conclusion of the WTO accession and becoming a full-fledged WTO Member.

The year 2017 was remarkable for Belarus' accession since we believe we moved into a final stage of negotiations having produced an advanced version of a

draft Working Party Report and having concluded 6 bilateral negotiations with the WTO Members. The Government of Belarus is continuing WTO accession efforts and is currently working on a new set of documents with the view to schedule next round of negotiations in early spring 2018.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our partners in the WTO whose efforts and goodwill were essential to secure substantial results in Belarus's accession track. Let me assure you that the Government of Belarus is looking forward to demonstrate our commitment to the WTO and to contribute to strengthening of the rules-based multilateral trade system. We call upon the WTO Members to accelerate the Belarus' accession process with the view to its conclusion before the next Ministerial Conference.

Meantime, being a proud Member of the Eurasian Economic Union, Belarus continues to play an active role in trade liberalization by concluding preferential trade agreements. In 2017 we continued the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement with Vietnam and negotiations on FTAs with Israel, Serbia, Singapore, India, Egypt and Iran. A good progress is achieved in preparation of the comprehensive Trade and Economic Agreement with the People's Republic of China. In total, around 40 countries have already expressed their interest to start free trade negotiations with the EAEU.

Let me conclude by once again wishing the MC-11 a much needed success.

Thank you for your attention.