

**Statement by H.E. Mrs Khemmani Pholsena
Minister of Industry and Commerce
of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference
Buenos Aires, 10-13 December 2017**

Madame Chairperson, (H.E. Ms. Susana Malcorra)
Director-General Mr. Roberto Azevedo,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Let me first express my sincere thanks to the Government and people of Argentina for the excellent hosting of this important conference and for the warm welcome accorded to my Delegation.
2. I also express my deep appreciation for the Director-General of the WTO, Mr. Roberto Azevêdo, and his leadership and efforts in preparing the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference.
3. Lao PDR welcomes the progress in the implementation of Nairobi Package and encourages the Buenos Aires Ministerial Conference to continue implementing the Nairobi Package to preserve the credibility of the WTO as the central organization that gives hope to all its members, specifically its least developed countries that trade is fair and promotes development.
4. However, we also need to find ways to discuss new issues like e-commerce, investment facilitation and to address them in a global context. We believe that the e-commerce can help MSMEs to sell goods online more efficiently as well as to connect to the big businesses and to participate in the regional and global value chains more effectively. However, these issues should not overshadow the need to find solutions to the unfinished business of the DDA.

5. Madame Chairperson, Lao PDR recognizes that a strengthened rules-based multilateral trading system is important for free and fair trade. We will work closely together with Members to strengthen the rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading system as embodied in the WTO and to further promote its objectives for the benefit of all. We all have a responsibility and we all have to contribute to this objective each one according to its abilities.
6. Lao PDR is committed to working together for a successful Buenos Aires Ministerial Meeting that produces a balanced set of outcomes and provides clear guidance to post-Buenos Aires work. To achieve these outcomes, we will provide the necessary political impetus and instruct our negotiators to engage actively and constructively in the discussions, with the objective of achieving concrete, meaningful, balanced and development-oriented outcomes. Our negotiators need clear political guidance to be successful in their work.
7. Let me discuss some of the issues to which we attach great importance and hope to be able to have a commercially meaningful outcome for the LDCs as follows:
 - On goods: Lao PDR would like to express our sincere thanks to Members that have submitted the notifications on preferential rules of origin. To be able to effectively enjoy the benefits of the duty-free quota-free schemes, the preferential rules of origin must be simple and workable for micro, small and medium enterprises. We are concerned that the Bali Ministerial decision providing guidelines for preferential rules of origin for LDCs has not yet led to much improvement of rules of origin under Members' preference schemes, and we hope that we can continue working in future to further

improve the conditions for accessing good markets, conditions mainly related to customs procedures and documentation requirements. We hope to be able to organize transparency sessions with Members and obtain assistance aimed at helping our exporters to utilize opportunities under the duty-free quota-free schemes.

- On services: Lao PDR would like to welcome the notifications on services preferences for LDCs that Members have so far submitted under the waiver. We would like to express gratitude to Members and hope that we can continue working in future to further improve the conditions for accessing services markets, conditions mainly related to administrative procedures and documentation requirements. We hope to be able to organize transparency sessions with members and obtain assistance aimed at helping our service suppliers to utilize opportunities under the granted preferences. On our side, we are willing to take on commitments of good governance in the definition and implementation of domestic regulations, provided they are in line with our development needs and capacities.

Thank you