

## Accession of Yemen

Distinguished Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Good afternoon.

It gives me great pleasure to offer my congratulations...

- ...first to Ministers on the decision you have just taken to approve the terms and conditions for the membership of the Republic of Yemen.
- ...and, moreover, to the Government of Yemen on what is an important day for you, and for the WTO.

I know I convey the sentiment of all Members, and LDCs members in particular, when I say: welcome – our organization is stronger for your presence.

In congratulating the Government of Yemen, we should take note of the far-reaching domestic reforms that it has taken over a 13-year period to bring us to this point. I know that at times the process has been hard, and circumstances have been challenging.

But I think leadership is about vision, and sometimes this means having the courage to take hard decisions for the public good.

Yemen's accession demonstrates that you have shown this vision – you have taken those hard decisions which are necessary to secure growth, development, trade integration and the extension of the rule of law.

On behalf of the WTO, I would like to pay special tribute to Minister Saadalden Talib, who, as Chief Negotiator, guided Yemen through the accession process.

We celebrate accessions both because of what it means for the individual country, but also because of what it means for this organization.

Accessions help to safeguard and strengthen the multilateral system by:

- spreading trade liberalization and adherence to common rules and standards;
- building capacity;
- improving market access opportunities;
- and fostering international cooperation.

And, of course, each accession takes the WTO closer to its goal of universality.

This work is a strategic priority for the WTO – particularly the accession of LDCs.

The Republic of Yemen will be our 35<sup>th</sup> LDC Member.

This group makes up a fifth of the whole WTO membership. It is an important constituency – and, as we have seen in recent days, it is one that is increasingly making its voice heard.

This is something that I strongly welcome.

It is a defining characteristic of the WTO that all members have an equal say – it ensures that the interests of the smallest economies are taken into account.

So, I urge Yemen to use the platform that the WTO provides - make your voice heard.

To close: once again, on behalf of the Membership and the organization as a whole, I warmly welcome the Government and the People of the Republic of Yemen to the WTO.

Thank you.