

**STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT THE SESSION
ON THE ACCESSION OF YEMEN, AT THE 9TH WTO MINISTERIAL
CONFERENCE**

4, DECEMBER 2013, BALI

ARANCHA GONZALEZ

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Honourable Minister

I would like to join others in welcoming Yemen to the family of WTO Members. It has been a long journey which began in 2000. Now you have the fruits of your endurance and commitment to this process. It gives me a special sense of satisfaction, that the ITC has contributed in a modest way to Yemen's efforts to seek WTO membership.

ITC was pleased to collaborate with WTO in reaching out to stakeholders including the private sector in Yemen to help them understand the business implications of WTO Membership. In several dedicated sessions conducted over the last 3 years, ITC assisted the Government of Yemen to build stakeholder confidence in their negotiated accession package. The ITC also facilitated participation of parliamentarians and the private sector representatives in Yemeni negotiating teams to enable them to appreciate the significance and opportunities of WTO membership.

The dedicated sessions with the private sector stakeholders provided an opportunity to discuss Yemen's accession related commitments and the business implications in an open and transparent manner, while also addressing specific concerns and clarifying misunderstandings. Any successful accession process has to place communication and collaboration with the business

community at the heart of the internal in-country process and it was clear that the Government of Yemen recognised the importance of this. I thank the Honorable Minister Mr. Saadaldeen Ali Salim TALIB, for successfully steering this process.

I must also congratulate the Yemini private sector represented by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for supporting their Government's efforts. I recognise their foresight in appreciating the promise held by WTO membership in securing their country's economic development in the long term. Without their constructive engagement with the government in this process, national consensus would not have been easy to achieve.

We know that the Government of Yemen is already thinking ahead in terms of ensuring their businesses, especially the SMEs, can benefit from the opportunities which accession provides. I can assure you, Minister that the ITC stands ready to continue to assist Yemen to enable you to adjust to the new environment and use this accession as a path to growth and development.

Thank you