

04/12/2013

LITHUANIA

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We are here today to celebrate the enlargement of the WTO family and my warmest welcome goes to Yemen. The accession process of Yemen started 13 years ago and is successfully finalized today. With this accession of another least-developed country to the WTO becomes even more diversified and universal.

Having gone through the same road itself, Lithuania can testify that while the process of the accession to the WTO may be long and demanding, sometimes requiring tough political decisions, the vital lessons learned brings huge benefits to the acceding country.

The acceding country goes through domestic reforms, which are necessary for all countries to grow, develop and prosper. The accession process can also be seen as a development tool and an opportunity to mainstream the gains from international trade in the acceding country's development programs, to build trade capacity, and to provide a better economic environment for investment and growth.

I believe that Yemen's membership in the WTO will be an important step in its economic development, ensuring the integration into the multilateral trading system and the continuation of the economic reforms. The implementation of accession's commitments is as important as negotiating them, therefore, Yemen can count on the support of the WTO members in this process.

Finally, I hope that Yemen's accession is a good omen for more countries of the region and least-developed countries to join the WTO in the near future.