

**DEDICATED SESSION OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES –  
REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF PREFERENCES NOTIFIED  
UNDER THE LDC SERVICES WAIVER**

**29 OCTOBER 2019**

WELCOMING REMARKS BY H.E. MR GEERT MUYLLE, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM  
TO THE WTO, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this Dedicated Session of the Council for Trade in Services to review the operation of preferences notified under the LDC Services Waiver.

As you are aware, the Dedicated Session has been organized in two parts: today, as the informal part of the Dedicated Session, we will have a Workshop with the theme "Facilitating the increasing participation of Least Developed Countries in Trade in Services", and tomorrow, on 30 October, there will be a formal dedicated meeting to review the operation of preferences notified under the LDC Services Waiver.

Let me offer a particularly warm reception to WTO Director General AZEVÉDO, and to Ambassador JOHNSON, who will be addressing the workshop on behalf of Ambassador APARR, and thank them very much for taking time out of their busy schedules to be here with us today to welcome you all.

Before I invite the colleagues to open the workshop, allow me to make a few introductory remarks.

The purpose of today's workshop is to allow Members and relevant stakeholders to share information related to the participation of least-developed countries in trade in services and the expansion of their services trade. As you will have seen from the programme, Session I of the Workshop will provide an overview of LDC services exports, and discuss the factors that may explain the current performance. It will set the scene for the subsequent sessions.

In Session 2, we will hear from policy experts from LDCs, international organizations, and bilateral development agencies on their efforts to enhance service export performance. I look forward to learning about strategies and approaches, challenges, and lessons learnt in this context.

In the afternoon, in Session 3, LDC services exporters will share their experiences, describing the factors that allowed them to develop into successful exporters. They will highlight difficulties they have encountered, and provide their perspective on the most important issues that need to be addressed to improve LDC participation in services trade.

Finally, in Session 4, the Secretariat will provide an overview of current preferences notified under the Waiver. Members are invited to intervene to provide insights how these preferences have been used to date and share their ideas on how their use could be optimized.

We have with us an array of distinguished speakers, emanating from governments, the private sector, academia and international organisations. Allow me, on my own behalf and on behalf of all WTO Members, to thank them for agreeing to contribute to today's workshop. We have provided time for questions and answers in each session after presentations; I would encourage you to make the most of the opportunity to interact and engage with our presenters.

With their permission, our speakers presentations will be posted on the public WTO public website, to facilitate the dissemination of the information presented to capital-based representatives and delegations that could not attend today's event."

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