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**SECOND REGIONAL DIALOGUE ON WTO ACCESSIONS
FOR THE GREATER HORN OF AFRICA**

DJIBOUTI OUTCOME: TRADE FOR PEACE THROUGH WTO ACCESSIONS

Djibouti, Djibouti City, 3-6 December 2018

The following communication, dated 14 December 2018, addressed to the Director-General, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Djibouti.

Communication from Ambassador Kadra Ahmed Hassan, Permanent Representative of Djibouti in Geneva, addressed to Mr. Roberto Azevêdo, WTO Director-General, on 11 December 2018

I have the honour to inform you that the Second Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa was successfully held on 3-6 December 2018 in Djibouti.

The discussions at the Regional Dialogue enabled participants to engage in informative and interactive discussions on the contributions of trade and WTO Accessions to peace-building. The Dialogue also discussed various aspects of the WTO accession process, including its interface with the AfCFTA, emerging best-practices in the preparatory and the negotiating phases of the process, the role of the Accession Chief Negotiator, the inclusiveness of the private sector and other stakeholders in the process.

Participants welcomed the recent progress registered in the accessions of Comoros, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. They pledged their collective support for the conclusion of the accession of Comoros in 2019, the resumption of the accession Working Parties of Ethiopia and Sudan in early 2019, and the holding of the first Working Party meetings of the accessions of Somalia and South Sudan in 2019 following the submission of their respective MFTRs.

Participants also pledged their strong support for the fundamental values and principles of the Multilateral Trading System and expressed their concerns about recent protectionism and unilateralism. In this context, they acknowledged the ongoing discussions on WTO reform, which provided an opportunity for the WTO to update its rules and modernize its function, in order to respond to the requirements of the 21st Century.

Please find enclosed herewith the Report of Djibouti Dialogue "Trade for Peace through WTO Accessions". At the request of the Dialogue participants, I would be grateful if you could circulate this report as a WTO document of the Sub-Committee for Least Developed Countries and the General Council.

I commend your Secretariat Team for its excellent work in ensuring the success of the Second Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Djibouti, I would like to support the continuation of the Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions on an annual basis, until the completion of the remaining accessions in the region.

Please accept, Director-General, the assurances of my highest considerations.

1 INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa took place in Djibouti from 3 to 6 December 2018. The event was organized by the WTO Secretariat in partnership with the Government of Djibouti and the International Trade Centre (ITC). The Dialogue was opened by H.E. Mr. Abdoukader Kamil Mohamed, Prime Minister of Djibouti; H.E. Mr. Hassan Houmed Ibrahim, Minister for Trade, SMEs, Crafts, Tourism and Formalization (Djibouti); Ambassador Alan Wm. Wolff, WTO Deputy Director-General; and Mr. Rajesh Aggarwal, Chief, Trade Facilitation and Policy for Business, ITC.

2. The opening statements¹ acknowledged the timely nature of the Dialogue's 'Trade for Peace' theme at a time when the Greater Horn of Africa is experiencing positive social, political and economic developments. Additionally, the opening remarks highlighted the significance of the Greater Horn of Africa as the region with the largest concentration of Acceding Governments in Africa and in the world, with Comoros (located south to the region), Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan engaged in the process of WTO accession.

3. Participants and speakers from the Acceding Governments expressed their appreciation for the new 'Trade for Peace' initiative. They emphasized that the WTO accession process was an important component of the post-conflict recovery plans of fragile states, since the WTO Accession process enabled states to establish credible economic and trade policy frameworks, and to promote transparency and good governance as part of accession related reforms. The participants also expressed their appreciation for the continuous efforts of the Government of Djibouti towards peace-building and stability in the Greater Horn of Africa, highlighted through hosting the Second Regional Dialogue.²

4. Over 80 participants took part in the Regional Dialogue. They included ministers and senior officials from the African Acceding Governments,³ representatives of the Government of Djibouti, representatives from WTO Article XII Members (Afghanistan, Montenegro and Yemen), and private sector participants from the aforementioned Acceding Governments. Several development organizations have also joined the event, including representatives of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the Trade Policy Training Centre in Africa (TRAPCA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the World Bank Group (WBG). External experts from various backgrounds were also present, including Ambassador Chiedu Osakwe, Nigeria's Chief Trade Negotiator and Director General of the Nigerian Office for Trade Negotiations; Ms Cecilia Klein, Consultant for WTO Accessions and Compliance; and former USTR Director for WTO Accessions; and Ms Emilia Malavoloneque, Corporate Communications Strategist, Grupo Neosol.

5. Participants engaged in a rich, informative and interactive dialogue over several sessions that spanned four days. The engagements were based on presentations made by representatives of the major stakeholders, followed by open discussions.⁴

2 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GREATER HORN OF AFRICA

6. Session 1 was moderated by Ambassador Kadra Ahmed Hassan, Permanent Representative of Djibouti to the WTO. The session provided a platform to discuss recent developments in the Greater Horn of Africa with a presentation by Mr. Joseph Rwanshote, Program Manager Trade, Industry and Tourism, IGAD, and reports by the representatives of the five Acceding Governments on recent developments in their respective accession processes.

¹ All statements and presentations are made publicly available on the WTO website (https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/2ndreginaldialogu18_e.htm).

² The first Regional Dialogue was held in Nairobi, Kenya in August 2017, and its theme was "fostering synergies and coherence between regional integration and the multilateral trading system through WTO accessions". The outcome document from the first Regional Dialogue is contained in WTO document WT/ACC/30.

³ In addition, Equatorial Guinea, also an Acceding Government, sent three officials to the Dialogue on a self-funded basis.

⁴ The Regional Dialogue was followed by a specialized training on 'Launching a National Brand' on 6 December 2018 (see Annex 1 for full report).

7. Mr. Rwanshote's presentation highlighted that the region was one of the fastest growing in Africa, experiencing large inflows of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The region also witnessed significant infrastructural developments that have strengthened deeper regional integration, such as the establishment of the Djibouti Free Trade Zone and the liberalisation of the services sectors in Ethiopia. He further emphasized that regional integration complemented domestic reforms by fostering synergies in trade relations. Recalling the correlation between trade and peace, he noted that this significantly reduced the likelihood of inter-state armed conflicts.

8. Ambassador Assoumani Youssef Mondoha, Permanent Representative of the Union of the Comoros to the African Union, conveyed Comoros' objective to conclude its accession negotiations in 2019. Since the last Regional Dialogue in Nairobi, Kenya, Comoros had held a Working Party meeting in March 2018. Regionally, Comoros signed the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), in March 2018 and officially joined the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in August 2018.

9. Mr. Geremew Ayalew Haile, Minister Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the WTO, stated that although the Working Party on the accession of Ethiopia had not met since 2012, the Government had been implementing significant reforms aimed at aligning its domestic practices and policies with WTO requirements. Further, he revealed that Mr. Mamo Mihretu had been appointed as the Chief Negotiator for Ethiopia's accession and that the National Steering Committee had been re-organized with the specific objective of resuming the accession process as soon as possible.

10. H.E. Mr. Dahir Adan Abdullahi, State Minister for Commerce and Industry of Somalia, expressed the Government's strong commitment to its accession process. He stated that since the establishment of its accession Working Party in 2016, Somalia had appointed a Chief Negotiator and was finalizing its Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR). He further added that Somalia had been undertaking reforms focused on the extraction of natural resources with a view to increasing state revenues; and had been enacting laws on trade licensing, intellectual property rights, investment, and government procurement. Regionally, Somalia had joined the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in July 2018 and was acceding to the East African Community (EAC).

11. H.E. Mr. Agak Achuil Lual Manok, Undersecretary of Trade of South Sudan, noted that the Working Party on the accession of South Sudan had been established in Buenos Aires as a direct outcome of the first Regional Dialogue. Since then, the Government has signed the AfCFTA in March 2018, and a revitalized peace agreement in September 2018. He added that South Sudan was in the process of implementing its EAC obligations, which complements the requisite reforms being undertaken for the WTO accession process. South Sudan was finalizing its MFTR, and had commenced the process of forming a national steering committee and appointing a Chief Negotiator.

12. H.E. Mr. Musa Mohamed Karama, Minister of Industry and Trade of Sudan, stated that trade played a key role in fostering peace and stability, and that, in particular, the accession to the rule-based multilateral trading system was considered as a catalyst for the Government's efforts to undertake the necessary economic reform and to promote the rule of law and good governance. He added that Sudan was establishing a National Committee to ensure that all domestic laws and regulations in the country were WTO-compliant.

3 PEACE-BUILDING THROUGH WTO ACCESSION AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

13. Session 2, entitled "From Fragility to Resilience: WTO Accession as a Pathway to Peace", was moderated by Ambassador Alan Wm. Wolff, WTO Deputy Director-General. The session began with presentations by Mr. Michael Ferrantino (World Bank) and Mr. Caiphaz Chekwoti (TRAPCA) that provided empirical evidence on the relationship between trade and peace.⁵ This was followed by a discussion regarding the impact of WTO membership on peace-building. The discussion was led by Ambassador Mohammad Qurban Haqjo (Afghanistan); Ambassador Zorica Marić-Djordjević (Montenegro); Mr. Nagib Hamim (Yemen); and Ms. Emilia Malavoloneque (Grupo Neosol).

14. The panellists acknowledged that mutual economic interdependence could be a mechanism for peace. A trade-dependent state was less likely to go to war with a trade partner because of the

⁵ Mr. Ferrantino's presentation was based on the World Bank's publication on "Trading Away From Conflict: Using Trade as Resilience in Fragile States" by Massimiliano Cali.

larger opportunity cost associated with the loss of trade. Internally, changes in real incomes affected incentives to participate in conflict. Empirical evidence shows that the likelihood of conflict tends to be reduced when prices of exportable goods go up and/or prices of consumer goods go down. However, the same theory does not apply to point source resources such as oil and minerals. Increases in the prices of exported oil and minerals substantially raise the risk of conflict.

15. Additionally, the panellists recognized that while trade and economic integration played a crucial role in fostering peace, this possibility was only enhanced when the pre-requisites for peace were in place. These include (i) good infrastructure that facilitates trade; (ii) good governance underpinned by the involvement of all stakeholders in decision making and effective enforcement of laws and regulations; and (iii) mechanisms that integrate the informal sector into the formal economy. Other accompanying policies that can support the role of trade in fostering peace included: (i) promoting labor-intensive exports; (ii) promoting transparency about the revenues from point-source commodities; (iii) protecting the incomes of the poorest from changes in trade flows; and (iv) paying special attention to trade with neighbors and addressing the underlying sources of conflict, i.e. ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts. etc.

16. Lastly, the panellists provided their perspectives on the linkages between trade, WTO membership and conflicts. They emphasised that while WTO accession provided an important vehicle to drive domestic reforms, reform efforts did not end with WTO membership. Continuous reforms would need to be made in the post-accession phase to realize the benefits of WTO membership. It was noted that although the WTO had traditionally not been a player in peace-building, serious consideration ought to be given to greater engagement of the Organisation in peace-building. The "Trade for Peace" Initiative was cited as a way in which the WTO could contribute to on-going peace-building efforts in the Greater Horn of Africa.

17. On Day 3, Ms Hikaru Ouchi (Japan) – speaking on behalf of Mr. Katsuro Nagai, Chairperson of the Working Party on the accession of Sudan – delivered a statement on the "trade for peace" experience of Japan following World War II.

Trade for Peace: The Experience of Japan

Japan is known today as a highly advanced country (the third largest economy in the world). However, seventy years ago, this was not the case. In the aftermath of World War II, most of Japan had been obliterated. It had suffered millions of casualties and the economy was in shambles. Against this backdrop, Japan's policy makers decided that the country's focus would be trade.

Japan chose to pursue prosperity under the global free trade system. In 1955, 10 years after the end of World War II, Japan joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (the GATT). Taking advantage of the free and open global trading and economic system, Japan focused on increasing its exports and subsequently enjoyed remarkable growth. In 20 years, Japan increased its GDP twenty-fold, significantly improving the lives of its nationals. By 1968, Japan had become the second largest economy in the world with an average GDP growth rate of 7%. Such economic growth and development enabled Japan to foster and maintain peace. Japan has continued to be a peace-loving nation since the war ended. Considering its own path to development underlined by trade, Japan has firmly been committed to maintaining and strengthening the multilateral trading system as well as peace-building.

The Government of Japan believes that accession to the WTO provides a great opportunity to frame and reform national strategies and relevant policies, even beyond economic and trade policies. These policies contribute to improving transparency and predictability, leading, in turn, to increased trade, investment, industrialization, etc. Jobs and other economic opportunities created through the above are crucial elements for peace-building.

4 WTO ACCESSION AND THE AFCFTA

18. Session 3, entitled "WTO Accession and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)", was moderated by Mr. Micheal Ferrantino (World Bank). The panellists included Ambassador Chiedu Osakwe, former Chairperson of the Negotiating Forum of the AfCFTA; Dr. Mag-Teerey (Djibouti); Ms. Maika Oshikawa (WTO); and Ms. Mariam Soumaré (WTO). They provided insights on the current

architecture, challenges and benefits of the AfCFTA. For the nine African Acceding Governments,⁶ the panellists recognized that synergies could be built around their respective regional, continental and multilateral interests.

19. The panellists recognized that the AfCFTA was an agreement which could modernize African economies through its unique institutional framework which had been adapted to accommodate African realities. At the same time, the AfCFTA contained several provisions that mirrored WTO provisions. The WTO accession process, through its rigorous reform processes could support the Acceding African Governments in creating the enabling environment to effectively implement provisions under the AfCFTA in relation to core trade issues like: customs co-operation, technical barriers to trade (TBT), sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, trade facilitation etc. The binding commitments undertaken by the Acceding Governments during their accession processes, for which they bear accountability at the multilateral level — through Trade Policy Reviews, the Dispute Settlement System and transparency mechanisms — are also fundamental in creating the enabling environment for implementing the AfCFTA provisions.

20. While the WTO accession process could complement the reforms envisaged for AfCFTA purposes, African Acceding Governments were advised to pay special attention to the sequencing of their respective regional and multilateral negotiations. It was acknowledged that the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) played an important role in the AfCFTA and the WTO accession process since they could act as benchmarks or building-blocks towards further trade liberalization.

21. Finally, Mr. Rajesh Aggarwal (ITC) provided insights into the business implications of the AfCFTA, highlighting the need for private sector involvement in the negotiations by: (i) using existing national and regional business organizational structures to engage with national trade negotiators; (ii) collaborating with other stakeholders involved on trade and integration issues; (iii) fostering business level consensus by sharing data on challenges and successes of implementation. Commentators of this session included private sector representatives from Comoros, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.

5 EVOLVING BEST-PRACTICES IN THE WTO ACCESSION PROCESS

22. Session 4, entitled "Capacity Building through Peer-Learning", was moderated by Ms. Maika Oshikawa, Director, Accessions Division, WTO. It focused on the best-practices in the intertwined preparatory and negotiation phases of the accession process. The objective of the session was to facilitate peer learning among those states that have gone through various stages of the accession process. The participants acknowledged that the preparatory phase was crucial for laying down the necessary roadmap for the negotiation phase. The participants engaged in a constructive experience-sharing session that culminated into the formulation of a list of best-practices for WTO accession negotiations:

Best-practices in the preparatory and negotiation phases of the accession process

1. **A high level of political commitment** remained a *sine qua non* in all accessions and at all stages of the accession process.
2. **Ensuring effective internal coordination at the state level** by establishing a national steering committee composed of technical persons from relevant line ministries. The negotiation team should have a clear mandate and be led by a dedicated and qualified Chief Negotiator. The importance of gender considerations in the composition of the team was acknowledged.
3. **Establishing a national capacity building programme** to train the core negotiating team on: (i) relevant WTO Agreements; (ii) consolidation of accession documentation (MFTR, initial offers, etc.). The Acceding Governments were encouraged to utilize technical assistance and capacity building opportunities throughout the accession process. These include workshops, e-learning courses and the provision of literature on WTO accession, such as the legal texts and handbooks on WTO Accession.
4. **Undertaking sensitization and outreach programmes** to raise awareness on WTO accession and its benefits to relevant stakeholders, i.e. private sector, parliamentarians, civil

⁶ In addition to the five Acceding Governments in the Greater Horn of Africa, Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, and Sao Tome and Principe signed the AfCFTA.

society, etc. The above-mentioned programmes can also be used to establish consultative and inclusive mechanisms relevant for the accession process.

5. **Conducting data and statistics based studies and research** are vital for identifying the gains and losses from trade liberalization as well as ways to mitigate the costs of liberalisation. Such these studies and research would later form the empirical basis for the intricate negotiations on bilateral market access.
6. **Balancing the rights and obligations of the state** in order to obtain mutually beneficial outcomes during accession negotiations.
7. **Keeping the accession process active** to avoid lags which slow down the accession process.
8. **Using the good offices of the WTO Director-General** towards the end of the accession negotiations to solve outstanding issues.

The Role of the Chief Negotiator

23. During a session led by Ambassador Chiedu Osakwe, Nigeria's Chief Trade Negotiator and former Chairperson of the Negotiating Forum for the AfCFTA, the participants engaged in a constructive discussion on the role and responsibility of a Chief Negotiator in the WTO accession process.

24. As a crucial prerequisite for successful negotiations, the participants emphasized that the Chief Negotiator must have access to the highest authority in the government and the Cabinet of Ministers. This was imperative for consultative purposes and for the harmonization of national positions during the negotiations. Additionally, the Chief negotiator needed to possess the adequate technical knowledge to enable him/her to spearhead the accession process. The relevance of establishing a dedicated office of trade negotiations for coherent policy making and strategic planning at the national, regional and multilateral levels was heavily stressed.

25. The participants identified the following as fundamental qualities and attributes for a Chief Negotiator during the accession process:

Qualities and Attributes of a Chief Negotiator

✓ **Political mandate**

The accession process should be led by a Chief Negotiator appointed with a political mandate. He/she needs to have political authority, supported by a dedicated institutional framework to smoothly steer the accession process on behalf of the Government.

✓ **In depth knowledge and understanding of the economy**

A Chief Negotiator should possess profound insights, knowledge and understanding of the economy of the state, as well as its relationship and interactions with local, regional and international actors. It is of critical importance that he/she has a deep understanding of the key sectors of the economy in order to craft a negotiating strategy.

✓ **Clear negotiating strategy**

A Chief Negotiator should drive the accession process with a clear negotiating strategy. This strategy should entail a clear objective (maximum, minimum and minimax objectives) as well as a negotiation calendar. The negotiating approach should focus on solving negotiation complexities technically and avoid politicizing technical issues.

✓ **Leadership and managerial skills**

A Chief Negotiator should possess leadership and managerial skills of the highest levels in order to constitute and oversee a highly qualified negotiating team composed of technical experts of various backgrounds. The above skills are vital for providing the required environment for maximum professional output from each of the team members, retaining core members of the negotiating team, and for ensuring the guaranteed continuity of the accession process until its completion.

✓ **Ability to secure domestic buy-in**

The Chief Negotiator should have the ability to involve key domestic stakeholders (i.e., civil society, parliamentarians, other line ministries, private sector, major industry associations, etc.) from the beginning of the accession process. These stakeholders should be adequately consulted throughout the accession process.

✓ **Ability to network and establish strong connections**

The Chief Negotiator should have the ability to develop a network of support, as WTO accession is costly and requires support, particularly for LDCs. The Chief Negotiator should be able to mobilize financial, technical and political support for the accession, by building connections with key WTO Members, the WTO Secretariat, former accession negotiators, and development partners.

✓ **Good public relations skills**

The Chief Negotiator must use every platform to promote the accession process and reach out to key stakeholders and the wider non-trade audience domestically and internationally. This is key in mobilizing domestic and international support.

✓ **Ability to take risks**

It was recognized that being a Chief Negotiator was a high-risk job. Thus he/she should be able to accept risks, and stand ready to offer resignation, if necessary.

✓ **Personality traits**

Participants identified several personality traits as important in leading an accession negotiating team. An accession Chief Negotiator should be: determined, transparent, a good communicator, patient, a trusted person, an injector of enthusiasm, a team-player, a conciliator, open to receiving criticism, and versatile.

6 CAPACITY BUILDING AND STAKEHOLDER INCLUSIVENESS THROUGH WTO ACCESSION

26. The final day of the Regional Dialogue focused on stakeholder inclusiveness in trade and WTO Accession. The discussion was moderated by Mr. Rajesh Aggarwal (ITC) and included inputs from private sector participants from the acceding countries, Article XII Members (Afghanistan and Montenegro), and development organizations (UNECA and the World Bank). The private sector participants shared their unique perspectives and unanimously expressed their optimism in the WTO accession process as a stimulator for growth in business activities in the region.

27. Mr. Youssouf Abdoulhalik Fakriddine (Comoros), Secretary General of the Union of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, emphasized all the stakeholders' preparedness for competition. He emphasized the need for investment in trade infrastructure for Comoros to realize its economic potentials in the fishing, tourism and oil sectors. He also highlighted the importance of upgrading standards for fishery commodities to maximize export potential.

28. Mr. Melaku Ezezew (Ethiopia), President of the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations, welcomed the new Ethiopian Prime Minister's vision for: (i) domestic reforms through WTO accession, and (ii) repositioning Ethiopia as a hub for regional integration, for example, under the co-operation of ports with Djibouti and Eritrea. In his view, WTO accession was necessary to create an enabling environment and framework for increased business activity in the country.

29. Mr. Hashim Ismail Duale, Deputy Director of the Somali Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Osman Abdullahi Nur, Secretary General of the Somali Business Council (Somalia), highlighted the resilience of the Somali business sector, which thrived despite enduring two decades of conflict. They noted the country's readiness for development and encouraged investors to see beyond the headlines. As an important trading partner of many countries in the Horn of Africa and beyond, Somalia's accession would be of great benefit to the region. In this regard, the Government has been drafting bills to align its laws and regulations with those of the WTO and other international institutions.

30. Mr. Yowa Asholy Dia Soso (South Sudan), Chairman of the Shippers' Council, highlighted that South Sudan's economy was driven by oil, which constituted roughly 60% of GDP. He noted the necessity of economic diversification, as depending on one commodity which had led to conflicts may lead to another conflict. He emphasized the fundamental importance of good governance, as well as rules and regulations for the private sector. In this context, he noted the importance of the WTO accession process and hoped that a clear roadmap of the accession process would be shared with the private sector.

31. Dr. Babiker M. Tom (Sudan), a senior Parliamentarian, noted that Sudan's private sector had been constantly involved in the WTO accession process through workshops, seminars, and outreach activities supported by international donors. He encouraged the continuation of private sector involvement.

32. Ambassador Mohammad Qurban Haqjo (Afghanistan), as a commentator, emphasized the importance of the private sector's proactive involvement throughout the accession process as they knew the specific pinch points and challenges of the economy. He urged the private sector to reach out to the Government during the process of formulating or revising the laws and regulations that needed to be compatible with the WTO rules (notably, TBT, SPS, TRIPS, TFA). He reiterated the importance of creating one voice for the private sector in formulating ideas for trade policy makers. These ideas should be inclusive of the issues of concern to SMEs, women and youth. Finally, he urged the private sector to view the WTO accession process with positivity and as an enabler of business opportunities.

33. Ambassador Zorica Marić-Djordjević (Montenegro), former Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the WTO, noted that the pace of the accession process was determined by the commitment of the Acceding Governments themselves and not the number of Working Party meetings. A fundamental prerequisite was a strong political will to bring all stakeholders together in a prepared and inclusive manner. In the case of Montenegro, the biggest rationale for WTO accession was to launch domestic reforms and to transition from fragility and instability to prosperity and development. As there was no shortcut in the accession process, she encouraged Acceding Governments to continuously educate themselves by participating in technical assistance and capacity building activities supported by development partners.

34. On the role and contributions of partner institutions, Mr. Michael Ferrantino, Lead Economist of World Bank, noted the three main areas of work the World Bank could assist with during the WTO accession process. These include: (i) tariffs, tariff strategy and revenue implications; (ii) services liberalization; and (iii) trade facilitation. Mr. Melaku Geboye Desta, Principal Regional Advisor of UNECA, stated that the Regional Integration and Trade Division of UNECA could provide any trade policy related technical assistance for the Acceding Governments in the region.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

35. Participants welcomed the Djibouti Regional Dialogue and its focus on the contributions of trade and WTO Accessions to peace-building in the Greater Horn of Africa, as well as the exchange of experiences, views and perspectives. Various aspects of the WTO accession process were discussed, including its interface with the AfCFTA, emerging best-practices in the preparatory and the negotiating phases of the process, the role of the Accession Chief Negotiator, and the participation of the private sector and other stakeholders.

36. Participants appreciated experience sharing as one of the most effective ways to build accession knowledge and negotiating capacity. In this regard, they welcomed the continuation of the Regional Dialogue until all accessions in the Greater Horn of Africa are completed. It was also suggested that Eritrea may consider joining its neighbors' efforts to pursue WTO accession, as this would support the region's on-going efforts for deeper economic integration and would help consolidate the recent peace initiatives.

37. In this regard, the WTO was invited to explore greater co-operation and engagement with the peace community, building on the recent "Trade for Peace" Initiative, and to define its role in how trade and the WTO could contribute to on-going peace-building efforts around the world. There was a clear recognition that economic and trade aspects should be given a greater role in peace-building.

38. Participants welcomed the recent progress registered in the accessions of Comoros, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. In particular, they pledged their collective support for the conclusion of the accession of Comoros in 2019, the resumption of the work of the Working Parties for the accessions of Ethiopia and Sudan in early 2019, and the holding of the first Working Party meetings of the accessions of Somalia and South Sudan in 2019 following the submission of their respective MFTRs.

39. Dialogue participants reiterated strong appreciation to Djibouti, as the only WTO Member in the Horn of Africa, for supporting the accession efforts of its neighboring countries, and requested Djibouti to use its position to actively participate in the work of the WTO to promote the interests of the Region.

40. Acknowledging the importance of stakeholder inclusiveness in the accession process, participants expressed appreciation to the ITC for ensuring the participation of private sector representatives in the Second Regional Dialogue, and requested their continuing participation in future Dialogues. They also acknowledged the importance of gender considerations in both capacity-building and the composition of the accession negotiation team.

41. Participants acknowledged the ongoing support provided by development partners for technical assistance, training, capacity building, and trade infrastructure, in order to enable African countries realize the full benefits of the AfCFTA and the WTO. They also agreed on the urgent need to enhance trade policy knowledge and capacity, including for analysis, strategies and negotiations, covering both the legal and economic aspects, especially for countries which are emerging from conflicts. In this regard, they appealed to development partners, especially AfDB, IGAD, IMF, ITC, TRAPCA, UNECA, WBG and the WTO, to increase support for the accession process and subsequent implementation.

42. Participants recommended that consideration be given to the establishment of the Office of Trade Negotiations by each African country, in order to promote coherence and effectiveness in policy making and strategic planning in trade, at the national, regional and multilateral levels.

43. Participants also pledged their strong support for the fundamental values and principles of the Multilateral Trading System and expressed their concerns about recent protectionism and unilateralism. In this context, they acknowledged the ongoing discussions on WTO reform, which provided an opportunity for the WTO to update its rules and modernize its function, in order to respond to the requirements of the 21st Century.

44. Participants expressed their appreciation to the Government of Djibouti for hosting the Second Regional Dialogue and the warm hospitality provided to the participants, as well as the invitation to participate in the Second International Trade Fair of Djibouti, opened by H.E. Ismaïl Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti. They also expressed their appreciation to the WTO Secretariat and the ITC for the excellent arrangements.

45. Dialogue participants requested Djibouti to report on the outcome of the Second Regional Dialogue to the WTO membership at the upcoming General Council meeting on 12 December, and to the AU Trade Ministers at the upcoming meeting on 12 to 13 December in Cairo, Egypt. The Participants also requested that this Report of the Djibouti Dialogue be circulated as a WTO document of the Sub-Committee for Least Developed Countries and the General Council.

ANNEX 1**SPECIALIZED TRAINING BY THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE****'Launching a National Brand'**

On 6 December, the ITC provided a specialized training for the participants. The first session began with two presentations by Mr. Rajesh Aggarwal, Chief, Trade Facilitation and Policy for Business, ITC. The first presentation "A Resilient Private Sector for a Resilient Country" built on the previous day's discussions on the importance of involving the private sector throughout the decision-making and implementation processes. As such, public-private dialogues (PPDs) are an important tool to raise the importance of issues on a government's agenda and build a constituency for reform, thus increasing the feasibility of these reforms and also the quality of their content. The second presentation, "Export and Investment Promotion Strategies" reviewed ITC's framework on the Interface between Competitiveness and the Trade Policy. This framework illustrates how each stage of the trading supply chain is impacted by the implementation of trade policies by the government. As such, this framework links the business cycle to government policy instruments, which are governed by the legal rules of the WTO, and are therefore relevant to the commitments made by governments upon their accession to the WTO.

In the second session, Mr. Giles Chappell, Trade Policy Advisor, TFPB, ITC provided a comparative analysis of a business-friendly agenda for countries. He considered how cross-border inefficiencies impact negatively on the business environment, and highlighted that trade costs are a key decision criterion used by multinational corporations when relocating in global value chains. He then used the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business indicators to illustrate the relatively poor performance of some countries that were not yet members of the WTO. Following the analysis, Mr. Rajesh Aggarwal moderated a panel discussion on how to create a business-friendly agenda, among the private sector representatives of Acceding Governments.

The third session focused on "Championing a National Branding Agenda". First, Mr. Giles Chappell provided insight on how trade can play an important role in driving economic empowerment of women and youth. He also explained how being in the WTO can help build a more inclusive trading system that will allow more women and youth to participate in trade and to reap the economic benefits of global trading. Ms. Rahma Omar, Doing Business reforms, National Investment Promotion Agency (NIPA) then provided a perspective on how Djibouti promotes national branding. Finally, Ms. Victoria Tuomisto, Associate Expert, ITC gave a presentation on national brands, in particular, why brands are important, their objectives, how to design a national brand, and understanding how branding is a long-term process.
