



WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU COMMERCE  
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL COMERCIO

24 10 2013

**Statement by the World Trade Organization  
12<sup>th</sup> CAREC Ministerial Conference**

Excellencies,  
Ministers,  
Representatives of international and regional organizations,  
Representatives of CAREC and ADB Secretariats,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

*The WTO and CAREC*

On behalf of the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Mr. Roberto Azevêdo, I would like to begin by expressing our sincere gratitude for your kind invitation to this 12<sup>th</sup> CAREC Ministerial Conference.

The WTO attaches great importance to this region and, in particular, to the extensive and constructive work undertaken by CAREC. Such fora furnish an outstanding opportunity to enhance interagency coordination. This allows bilateral and multilateral donors to coordinate and marshal scarce financial and human resources optimally, avoiding overlaps and duplications in the deployment of these resources for maximum benefit.

The WTO's presence here with you this week further attests to our collective firm belief in building the necessary human capacity of developing countries and LDCs in order for them to reap the benefits of the Multilateral Trading System. We are grateful to be involved in this forum and look forward to continuing our fruitful collaboration in the years to come.

*WTO/CAREC collaboration*

It is exciting to highlight that the WTO and CAREC are travelling in the same direction along a shared dynamic and coherent path. This is particularly apparent in the areas of trade policy and trade facilitation. It will certainly come as no surprise to any of us that the WTO's trade-related technical assistance strategy has multiple powerful intersects and synergies with CAREC's *Trade Policy Strategic Action Plan 2014-2017* which is before you today. These include the four elements highlighted in the *Strategic Action Plan*: WTO accession and implementation of commitments; increasing trade openness, including in the area of non-tariff barriers; trade in services; and building trade-related capacity and sharing knowledge on trade issues.

The WTO is fully prepared to provide support and technical assistance generally and to work with CAREC to tailor-make and design programmes in line with CAREC's *Trade Policy Strategic Action Plan 2014-2017*. The WTO looks forward to providing all necessary support in order to accelerate and facilitate the accession of the four CAREC countries currently in the process of acceding to the WTO (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan). We warmly anticipate welcoming them into the WTO family, which already included Pakistan as a founding Member. We are also firmly engaged in supporting those CAREC countries that have recently become WTO Members in terms of building their capacity and assisting them in their post-accession process (China, Krygyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan). Another CAREC country, Turkmenistan, is a potential candidate for WTO accession.

*The Bali Ministerial Conference*

As you are aware, the ninth WTO Ministerial Conference will be held in Bali, Indonesia from 3-6 December 2013. Trade facilitation is one of three areas that Members are working on for Bali. The other two are: some elements in agriculture and development/LDC issues. Intense consultations have been carried out in recent weeks on all three areas. Moreover, the WTO Director-General has been undertaking a number of outreach activities with Ministers to request for their urgent personal and direct engagement in this critical countdown phase to Bali.

The responses from Ministers have been unanimously positive. There is a strong determination and commitment to work constructively towards a successful outcome in Bali and Ministers fully

understand what is at stake. Therefore the resolve and determination are very strong, not only to safeguard and preserve the credibility of the organization, but also to advance the DDA. The first necessary step is concrete outcomes at MC9.

The Director-General recently expressed appreciation that the World Bank, the IMF and a number of regional development banks delivered a joint statement earlier this month in which they offered their strong support for the Bali Ministerial meeting, particularly in the area of trade facilitation. The statement recognises that concerns persist in the trade facilitation negotiations about access to and the coherence of assistance. As such, the World Bank and its partners have committed to work with us to help ensure that the new trade facilitation commitments are supported, and that such backing will be properly coordinated with the support that they are providing for complementary infrastructure development. The WTO Director-General underlined that this is an extremely encouraging message that should help the trade facilitation Section II discussions where capacity to implement remains a key area of concern. Indeed, the joint statement also calls for a more coordinated and effective response to requests for support on implementation — this is something on which he indicated that we need ideas from Members.

On behalf of my Director-General, I would like to thank you once again for the opportunity to be here with you today.

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Samer Seif El Yazal  
World Trade Organization