

Speaking Points
Deputy Director-General Yi
World Trade Organization

14th CAREC Ministerial Conference
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Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Excellencies,
Representatives of International and Regional organizations,
Representatives of CAREC and ADB Secretariats,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of Director-General Roberto Azevêdo, I would like to express the WTO's appreciation for the invitation to attend this 14th CAREC Ministerial Conference. I also would like to convey the WTO Director-General's sincere regret for not being able to attend this Conference due to prior commitments in this critical countdown phase to the 10th Ministerial Conference, which will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15-18 December 2015.
2. We are happy to note that, through the *Trade Policy Strategic Action Plan 2014-2017*, CAREC seeks to boost trade by helping its member countries take tangible steps to dismantle trade barriers and achieve WTO Membership.
3. It is exciting to note that the WTO and CAREC are heading in the same direction along a shared dynamic and coherent path. Five CAREC Members, namely, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Tajikistan are already WTO Members, while Kazakhstan is slated to become the 162nd WTO Member in October. Azerbaijan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan are at various stages of the accession process; and Turkmenistan is a potential candidate for WTO accession. We warmly anticipate welcoming the remaining Members of CAREC into the WTO family.
4. As you may be aware, the WTO is marking its 20th anniversary this year. When the WTO was launched 20 years ago, it was seen as the key pillar of a new kind of global economic order – open, inclusive, cooperative where countries were turning to open markets and economic integration. So far the WTO has lived up to these expectations. Thirty-three new Members have joined over those two decades, including giants like China and Russia, meaning that almost all of the world's economies are now part of a single trading system. International rules govern trade relations, and conflicts are settled by the WTO's dispute settlement system – which serves as a global trade court.
5. While progress in the Doha Development Agenda has proved difficult, a growing list of new WTO agreements is opening up new trade opportunities. Among them, the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) is the first multilateral trade agreement concluded since 1995 and is also the subject of the forthcoming WTO World Trade Report. By way of reducing fixed and variable trade costs, the benefits of the TFA will be magnified and extended to exporters in Central Asia. I urge CAREC Members who are already WTO Members to deposit their instrument of acceptance of the Trade Facilitation Agreement as soon as possible.

6. The July 2015 agreement to expand the scope of the WTO Information Technology Agreement (ITA), promises to eliminate tariffs on high tech products. These represent 7 per cent of global trade and the benefits apply to all.
7. The WTO is ultimately the result, not the cause, of Members' willingness to cooperate on trade. Its creation and subsequent success reflects the growing realization among more and more countries that trade opening can lead to growth and development, that agreed rules strengthen, not weaken, sovereignty, and that advancing our national interests increasingly depends on advancing our collective interests.
8. In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our support and how much we look forward to continuing our fruitful collaboration in the years to come. I would like to reaffirm that the WTO is prepared to provide support and technical assistance; and to work together with CAREC. Furthermore, we look forward to providing all necessary support in order to accelerate and facilitate the accession of the three CAREC countries currently in the process of acceding to the WTO (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan) and work with the Recently Acceded Members in the post-accessions stage to implement their commitments..
9. On behalf of the WTO Director-General, I would like to thank you once again for the opportunity to be here with you today.

Thank you.