



## WTO 1 Training: “Recent Developments in the Multilateral Trading System in the Agriculture Sector”

12–14 March 2012 • Vienna, Austria

### Welcome Remarks

Dear CAREC countries’ representatives,  
Our hosts - colleagues from the Joint Vienna Institute,  
World Bank and World Bank Institute,  
Experts and resource speakers,  
ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the first seminar of the WTO Accession Knowledge Sharing Program under the Trade Policy Coordinating Committee of CAREC. Providing assistance to WTO accession has been one of the priorities of the TPCC since its formation back in 2004. The Trade Policy Strategic Action Plan, endorsed in 2008, called for a two-year WTO accession knowledge sharing program, with the objective of better serving the interests of the countries while negotiating access to WTO; of countries gaining more knowledge of the policy options and practical strategies for managing accession, and for countries to have an opportunity to share the experiences, to build or strengthen networks among the trade officials (eg., to have both rule-based answers to questions and non-rule-based answers).

Today we start our first seminar in the series, the “**Recent Developments in the Multilateral Trading System in the Agriculture Sector**”. We are grateful to our colleagues from the World Bank Institute and the Joint Vienna Institute for organizing and sponsoring this important event, for putting together this substantive agenda for the next three days, and for engaging very distinguished experts and resource speakers for this seminar.

As you can see from the agenda, the seminar will cover a wide range of issues -- from regional and global food and agricultural trade patterns, to technical issues dealing with domestic agricultural policies and their implications, to the intricacies of the current Doha Round negotiations. I am sure that all of us present at the seminar will learn a great deal of new information and knowledge in these three days of the seminar, from our resource persons.

But most importantly, *you* yourselves as participants of the seminar, bring an amazing mass of knowledge and experiences from your own accession processes, either successfully completed (in the case of 4 CAREC WTO-member countries), or still ongoing in the case of other CAREC countries. We would certainly like you to share your questions, experiences and stories, freely with your colleagues and experts at this seminar; in fact, we would strongly encourage you to do so. In case you have a less-than-perfect command of English language, please do not let it stop you from doing so. One rule we would like to institute at these seminars is that there are no silly questions, and any intervention, query, or sharing of experiences is most welcome. Likewise, we do expect that upon return to your countries, you will share the knowledge and experienced gained during this seminar, with your respective authorities and colleagues, as widely as possible.

On the last day of the seminar we will have a separate session where we'll have an opportunity to learn about the WTO-member CAREC countries' experiences on agricultural negotiations, and I'm sure it promises to be an interesting session. In addition, at the end of the seminar we would like to discuss with you a way forward for the next 2 seminars in the series, which are tentatively scheduled to be held in Almaty and in Shanghai, in May and July, respectively.

Once again, let me warmly welcome you on behalf of ADB and the CAREC Program, our CAREC partners, the IMF and the World Bank, the World Bank Institute, and to thank again the organizers of this event and our host, the Joint Vienna Institute, for providing this excellent opportunity for all of us to learn, to exchange views and to share knowledge, and to take one more steps towards more open trade policies and competitive trade environments in our countries.

Thank you very much.