



ASEAN Joint Statement

By

His Excellency Mr. Sun Suon

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Cambodia  
to the United States Office, the World Trade Organization  
and other International Organizations at Geneva

At

9<sup>th</sup> Working Party Meeting

on the Accession of Lao People's Democratic Republic to  
the World Trade Organization

(12 July 2012, Geneva)

**Mr Chairman,**

1. I am speaking on behalf of ASEAN. At the outset, allow me thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening the 9<sup>th</sup> working party meeting on the Accession of Lao PDR to the WTO. Let me also thank the WTO Secretariat's staff for the documentation and the arrangements they have done for the meeting.
2. I would like to warmly welcome His Excellency Dr. Nam Viyaketh, Minister of Commerce and Industry and all members of his delegation to the 9<sup>th</sup> Working Party Meeting and to Geneva. I wish to offer our sincere appreciation to the Honorable Minister for his comprehensive report highlighting the substantive progress both on bilateral and multilateral tracks since the Working Party last met in March this year.
3. ASEAN congratulates Lao PDR for successfully concluding all bilateral negotiations with its negotiating partners, in particular most recently with Ukraine. ASEAN wishes to warmly thank Ukraine for its flexibility and good cooperation extended to Lao PDR, which has led to the conclusion of Lao PDR's long 15-year journey to WTO accession. We hope that all members will extend the same flexibility and good spirit of cooperation towards all other acceding LDCs. ASEAN recognizes the hard work of Lao PDR and its negotiating partners in this regard.
4. ASEAN wishes to express our deep appreciation of the facilitator-led process jointly undertaken by chair of the Sub Committee on LDCs, chair of the Lao PDR working party and chair of the Yemen Working Party. This has been indeed very helpful in moving bilateral negotiations for Lao PDR to a successful conclusion. As a strong supporter of LDC accessions, ASEAN wishes to see the continuation of such facilitation in the case of other acceding LDCs, where appropriate.

**Mr Chairman,**

5. On the multilateral track, , Lao PDR has also made further significant progress in many areas since the 8<sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting in March, especially in the area of passing legislations aimed at bringing them in line with the WTO rules and requirements. A number of new Decrees and Regulations related to customs

valuations, SPS, TBT Licensing and some other areas have been adopted. Some others are in the pipelines for consideration and adoption. One important development that should be noted is that Lao PDR became the signatory of the Bern Convention for the protection of Literary and Artistic Works. This signifies the commitment of Lao PDR to implementing its obligations under the TRIPS agreement. ASEAN welcomes this important development.

6. ASEAN wishes also to take this opportunity to welcome the agreement reached in the Sub-Committee on LDCs on strengthening, streamlining and operationalizing the 2002 LDC Accession Guidelines on 29 June 2012, which will be formally approved by the General Council in July. These revised guidelines provide acceding LDCs with greater clarity and flexibility in their accession negotiations and facilitate a smoother accession to the WTO.

**Mr Chairman,**

7. Experiences of some ASEAN members in accessions and implementation of their commitments have shown that in order to carry out necessary reforms successfully, an adequate technical and financial support should be provided on a sustained basis. In this regard, ASEAN calls upon WTO members, development partners and international organizations to provide their support for Lao PDR in this direction for implementing its future accession package and its obligations under the WTO agreements. ASEAN stands ready to do its part to support Lao PDR under our regional cooperation framework.
8. In conclusion, Lao PDR has invested a great amount of time and energy in its accession process and indeed has made enormous progress in its domestic reforms both on trade policy and legislative framework. ASEAN commends Lao PDR for its efforts and commitments and looks forward to the completion of the draft accession package at the next working party meeting tentatively scheduled in September 2012. ASEAN remains firmly committed to working with you, Mr.Chairman, and other members to help Lao PDR join the WTO as a full-fledged member within this year.

Thank you