



ASEAN Joint Statement

By

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to the United States Office, the World Trade Organization
and other International Organizations at Geneva

At

General Council Meeting

(25 July 2012, Geneva)

**ASEAN Statement by Cambodia (Coordinator/Chair of ASEAN)
At the General Council Meeting
25 -26 July 2012**

Item 2. Report by TNC Chair

I am speaking on behalf of ASEAN. First of all, permit to join other previous speakers in extending our warm welcome to the new colleagues/ambassadors accredited to the WTO. We also take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the three colleagues who will be leaving (amb. of Switzerland, amb. of Canada, and amb. of Egypt) and wish them well in their future endeavours.

ASEAN extend its congratulations to the Russian Federation and Vanuatu for their completion of ratification process that will pave the way for their accession to the WTO this year.

Now I would like to turn to the issue under the agenda Item 2. We would like to sincerely thank DG Pascal Lamy for his comprehensive report on the activities that he has undertaken including his participation in G20 and Rio Summits and the state of play of the DDA negotiations.

On DDA, ASEAN is encouraged by the DG's report that although the DDA remains at impasse, members' negotiating activities and consultations in various formats are still going on. This is a positive sign that members are trying to move where possible, while waiting the opportune window for a more comprehensive negotiation to resume.

In line with the call by our Ministers at MC8, we should intensify and advance the negotiations in the areas where convergence and progress can be made. In this connection, we recognize the momentum in the area of trade facilitation as well as the good work of in the CTDSS on the monitoring mechanism, the Cancun proposals and the 6 agreement-specific proposals. ASEAN stands ready to actively engage and make its contribution towards a successful outcome in these areas. ASEAN also wishes to emphasize that agriculture is at the heart of the DDA and that trade distorting domestic support and all forms of export subsidies should be addressed.

ASEAN is of the view that all LDC issues contained in the political guidance of MC8 should be taken up as a matter of priority for our organization. We the members have the responsibility to assist our poorest members to integrate their economies meaningfully into the multilateral trading system. Opening up more market access on goods and services are crucial to help LDCs for their trade and economic development and poverty alleviation.

In my national capacity, Cambodia associated itself with the statement made by Haiti on behalf of LDCs grouping.

Item 4. Accession of LDCs

A. Recommendations by the Sub-Committee on LDCs to Further Strengthen, Streamline and Operationalize the 2002 LDC Accession Guidelines

ASEAN is pleased to join other members to formally approve the draft decision to further strengthen, streamline and operationalize the 2002 LDC Accession Guidelines as submitted by the Sub-Committee on LDCs.

ASEAN wishes to thank Ambassador Steffen Smidt, Chairman of the Sub-Committee on LDCs and other involved members for their tireless efforts and hard work done over the past 6 months, which have finally produced this important document for the approval by the General Council today.

The guidelines will provide acceding LDCs with greater clarity and flexibility in their accession negotiations and facilitate a smoother accession to the WTO as mandated by our Ministers at MC8. ASEAN congratulates the membership for this important achievement.

B. Accession of Lao PDR and Yemen

ASEAN thanks all the three Chairs, Ambassador Yi of PR of China, Chairman of the WP on the accession of Lao PDR, Amb. Smidt, Chairman of the Sub committee of LDCs and Ambassador Roben of Germany, Chairman of the WP on the accession of Yemen for their progress reports.

ASEAN congratulates our fellow member of ASEAN, Lao PDR and also Yemen for successfully concluding all bilateral negotiations with their negotiating partners, in particular most recently with Ukraine. The signing of the bilateral market access agreements between Lao PDR and Ukraine and between Yemen and Ukraine should be expedited in order to allow the secretariat to consolidate the goods and services schedules to be circulated to members for verification, which will pave the way for their membership within this year. ASEAN wishes to thank all the negotiating partners for their flexibility and good cooperation extended to the two acceding LDCs.

ASEAN takes notes with appreciation of the progress that the two LDCs have made on their multilateral tracks. The Lao PDR's 9th WP and the Yemen's 10th WP were held successfully on 12 and 23 of July respectively to review the remaining technical work with the view that their final WP meetings will be held after the summer break to finalize and approve the WP reports.

ASEAN is pleased to note that the accession of Lao PDR and Yemen are on track to become members of the WTO within this year as our set priority. We urge members to cooperate closely with the Secretariat to pave the way for the formal accession of Lao PDR and Yemen by this year.

To conclude, once again ASEAN wishes to extend its sincere thanks to the three chairs, namely Ambassador Smidt, Chairman of the Sub-Committee on LDCs, Ambassador Yi and Ambassador Roben for their tireless efforts in facilitating and steering the accession negotiations of the two LDCs towards their successful conclusion. This is certainly another important achievement for our organization this year.

Item 8. Guidelines for the Appointment of Officers to WTO Bodies-Statement by Chair

ASEAN appreciates the statement made by the General Council Chair and the consultations that she has undertaken with members over the past 6 months in order to find solutions to address the matter related to the delay of appointment of officers that we

experienced at the beginning of this year.

ASEAN expresses its full support for the chair's statement outlining the necessary steps to improve the implementation of the Guidelines. ASEAN believes that this approach is a good and acceptable solution to all members.

The outlined steps together with the Guidelines provide greater clarity and are good enough to deal with the problems that we have encountered so far. ASEAN wishes to stress that faithful implementation of the Guidelines and good spirit of cooperation is required if we want to avoid chair selection problems in the future.