I will focus on 4 key issues which are all of importance to the LLDCS and are of particular relevance to the work of the WTO. These are: Accession Trade facilitation Aid for Trade And Elements for Future Consideration.

Accession of non-members is a priority for the WTO secretariat and our Members. Increasing the membership around the table and ensuring we realize universality of membership is important for ensuring continued legitimacy of international trade rules and regulations. 22 LLDCs are members of the WTO with 6 having acceded since the establishment of the organization in 1994. On our schedule we have 26 countries waiting to accede- all at various levels of readiness. Of these, 8 or 30%, are LLDCs. The accession division has developed a priority list for accessions based on the maturity of the process in each acceding government. This is not by any means cast in stone but does provide some indication of what we are collectively working towards. For 2012, I am particularly happy to note that Kazakhstan is one of the forerunners for ‘early accession’. Laos is even more immediate as if all goes according to plan we could be welcoming Laos as early as next month. Tajikistan is also a 2012 priority while careful note has been taken of the progress that has been made in Ethiopia and Afghanistan. Any just yesterday there was a news report indicating that Azerbaijan We are often asked- what are the benefits of accession and I suspect that as senior government representatives you are also asked this questions- maybe even on a weekly basis. There is the somewhat intangible benefit of simply belonging to THE global organization which negotiates and monitors international trade rules. It is an opportunity to be at the table. On the domestic front, and based on our internal analyses and that undertaken by and on countries that have acceded we see that accession is an instrument to promote and lock in domestic reforms, a platform for creating a transparent and predictable trade regime and a mechanism to enhance private sector competitiveness.

For investors, the certainty and predictability of doing business with a country that holds itself accountable to agreed rules, regulations and procedures is a priceless commodity. For LLDCs who are already structurally disadvantaged and to whom FDI and insertion in GVCs is key, this is even more invaluable. We have noted that countries that have joined the WTO since 1995 have actually in many respects fared comparatively better than other members. This is obviously not the case for every country but taken as an aggregate we have noted that these countries have performed better, grown faster and coped better with the external shocks of the economic crisis.

As with many impact assessments it is often challenging to show direct attribution but our analysis of 25 members that have acceded post 1995 shows that in the period from 1995 to 2009 the value of merchandise trade and trade in commercial services grew at average annual rates of 13% and 11 % respectively- faster than the growth of world merchandise and services trade at
7% and 8% respectively. In the period between 1995 and 2008 the value of merchandise trade of these 25 members rose by approximately 500% in contrast to world trade which increased by 200%.

Since 2002 following the most active period of WTO accessions where 9 members joined between April 2000 and January 2002- including China- these 9 countries maintained an average annual growth rate of over 20% in the 5 years following their accessions. In all cases merchandise exports of these members outpaced world exports. Even in the recent global financial crisis the decline in the value of merchandise exports of these 25 members was smaller than that of world exports- in 2009 total export value of these members dropped by 21% vs the 23% drop in world exports.

In the period between 1995 and 2009 the share of world merchandise trade of these members doubled from 6 to 12%. A quick assessment of the trade performance of Macedonia, Armenia, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia and Nepal shows a positive trend for at least three of these countries- Macedonia, Armenia and Nepal- since their respective accessions. Of course this is also due to a number of other factors but it is instructive to consider the role that accession may have played. All of that said, accession remains a member driven process based on negotiations at the level of members. The Secretariat remains as always ready to assist where we can. I will quickly address trade facilitation as this will benefit from a more in depth discussion tomorrow. As the DDG intimated this morning, TF is a sine qua non for LLDCs. It is at the heart of the LLDC trading reality and is at the heart of finding solutions to some of the constraints you face. The negotiations in Geneva re focused on 3 elements of the wider TF library- fundamentally the soft infrastructure components of TF. Article V Article VIII Article X Transit matters are an important element of the negotiations and one which the LLDCs have been particularly focused.

In addition the SDT pillar is a new and dynamic approach to addressing special treatment for DCs in trade rules. It focuses not on exemptions but on building capacity to implement. If there is general agreement that stronger and more transparent TF rules are good for all countries, are good for importing and exporting processes, aligns the priorities of the private sector and investors then having exemptions defeats the purpose- the key is to ensure all can implement and all can benefit.

Moving briefly to AfT which is also an issue that will be expanded upon tomorrow, we can see that AfT to LLDCs has risen steadily since the baseline date of 2002-2005 reaching 9.1 B in 2010 with the majority of this going to LDCs and the LLLDCs in SSA. Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Nepal and Burkina Faso were the top LLDC recipients and a full table is provided here on the screen.

AfT however is not just about the numbers- in fact with the squeeze on donor budgets as a result of the crisis, AfT will organically have to broaden its horizons to look at how traditional development assistance can leverage additional non-concessional resources and investment, and
how new emerging actors—such as in the area of S-S assistance—can be better captured. The flip side to this issue of RM is what recipient countries themselves are doing at the national and regional level. Through the aft WP and the excellent work of the EIF for LDCs, we have seen trade being better mainstreamed in sectoral, national and regional development strategies and have seen processes institutionalized and improved at the national level to better harness the potential of trade for economic and social development.

There has been a better articulation of trade priorities and better collaboration with the private sector and aft has become mainstreamed in the work of many International and regional organizations including the RDBs, the UN family and the RECs. The 4GR which will be held in July 2013 will build on all of these successes and the challenges which remain— for there are still many elements which demand improvement— and focus on value chains and on the private sector. The overarching theme will be connecting value chains, a focus which is of relevance to the priorities of the LLDCs. There will also be a specific focus on RI in Africa through the monitoring questionnaire process which the WTO and the OECD will conduct. This will build on and support the January 2012 decision of the AU on boosting intra-African trade. Now, what recommendations can I leave you with for your consideration at this meeting on these 3 areas:

On accession it is important to accelerate the domestic processes: analysis, information gathering and sharing, including the private sector as part of the dialogue. In the LLDC group you have countries that have been founding members of the WTO, those who acceded after 1995, those who have participated in accession processes and working party meetings, those in the process of accession, those whose accession processes may have stalled for whatever reason, and even those who are yet to consider accession. The potential for information sharing and crafting an LLDC accession manual so to speak, is there. Is there a role for an LLDC WG to share these experiences?

On TF the overriding recommendation is to continue to actively engage in the negotiations and work towards a resolution that meets your interests. There is a role for a stronger and more coordinated LLDC voice on TF particularly on matters related to transit. The WTO Sec is embarking on a stage 2 of the needs assessment process and those LLDCs—especially LDCs— that believe they can benefit from a clearer elaboration of needs and costs should inform the WTO sec of their interest. On AfT engagement by the LLDCs in the preparatory process for the 4GR is key. Completing the questionnaires, engaging your private sector and supporting the work of the EIF. The WTO and OECD Secs intend to respond to your call to specifically highlight the amount an type of AfT going to the LLDCs. On new issues to consider and for your careful consideration for reflection in the outcome declaration from this Ministerial I would to recommend the following: A strong statement from the LLDCs against protectionism A focus on GVCs and how these can form important components of your economic and trade strategies Addressing climate change and food security especially in light of rising food and energy prices Focusing on AfT but also on how you can better leverage traditional AfT resources to gain
additional FDI Using RI as a tool to address your landlockedness including confronting TF barriers and NTMs

And finally but politically of great importance- ensuring the LLDCs have a voice in the WTO DG’s stakeholder panel on You can do this by ensuring a few clear outcomes encapsulating LLDC views on the barriers to trade you believe need to be addressed today and in the future emanate from this meeting and are transmitted to the panel through the LLDC coordinator in Geneva, and by having a reference to this in your outcome declaration from this meeting. Thank you very much for your attention and I am eager to now show you a short film that the WTO has developed on TF. You may recognize one or two faces from the audience on the screen as well.