



Road to Nairobi

Opening Speech: Final Working Party Meeting

H.E. Axel M. Addy

Minister

Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Republic of Liberia

Geneva, Switzerland

06 October 2015

15:00 – 16:00



Salutations

1. Mr. Joakim Reiter, Chairman of the Working Party;
2. Representatives of the WTO Secretariat;
3. Excellencies, the Ambassadors, and Heads of Missions accredited to the World Trade Organization;
4. Colleagues, Friends of Liberia, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen
5. I am yet again honoured to be here today with you all once again for this very special occasion, the Final Working Party on Liberia's Accession to this Organization.
6. Colleagues, friends, on behalf of Her Excellency, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia and the people of Liberia, let me also use this occasion to thank all of you for your support, leadership, and flexibility in getting this process to where we are today.
7. I am particularly grateful for the leadership of our President whose vision and commitment to long-term reforms for economic transformation is driving this process. She is truly a visionary reformer that I am honoured to serve.
8. Mr. Chairman today am grateful for the leadership and support of Director General Roberto Azevedo who has personally taken this accession as an MC10 deliverable and has led his team in ensuring all assistance and courtesies were extended my delegation. Were it not for his commitment to this process as a value that the multilateral trading system brings to poverty alleviation in countries like mine, we would not be here today. We are truly grateful.
9. Today, Colleagues and friends, I ask that you join me in celebrating the talents of our Liberian technicians who are the reason why we are here today. I am fortunate and quite grateful to my team, and all the talented technicians with us here today and those back home in Liberia, who has steadfastly worked on this process over the last eight years to get us here today. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a round of applause for the talents of our technicians, who despite the odds, made today possible.
10. Today, I am particularly honoured to have with us again, the Honorable Senator, Jim Tornonlah, from the great county of Margibi and Chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Industry as a member of my delegation today. The Senator has been instrumental in expanding awareness to the legislature and thanks to his leadership and the leadership of the Senate through the President Pro Tempore the Honorable Armah Jallah and the leadership of the House, through the Speaker, Hon. J. Alex Tyler we are executing the targets prescribed in the Legislative Action Plan. I am also pleased to welcome to Geneva the Hon. Patrick Honnah, Deputy Director



General of the Liberia Broadcasting System and the Honorable Juah Feika, Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.

The Opening Recognition

11. The conclusion of this accession, is a result of sustained engagements with our stakeholders in Liberia, our committed and talented technicians, the Members and the dynamic leadership of our Chair, WTO Secretariat, as well as, the strong support of the Swedish Government through SIDA, and the Swedish National Board of Trade, the US and EU. I would also like to highlight the support from ITC, UNCTAD, and the World Bank.
12. Mr. Chairman, if I had to tell a story of this accession it would center around the people that made this possible. The many technicians and strategists that officials that made this possible. I have put together a collection of pictures that tells the story of our journey.

The Liberia Accession Story

13. Mr. Cheidu Osakwe/Jaokim Reiter - 10/12
14. SIDA – Per Dans and Gisela Strand/ NBT – Michael Koch, ITC –Arancha Gonzales UNCTAD – Dr. Kituyi and others including Thomas Matthew/ USAID- Ben Irvin, Katie Fahrland, King and Spalding Alejandro Jara, Overseas Development Institute John Spray, others including EIF, IDEAS Center, ACWL, Canadian Senior Lawyers Project Bill Estey; ECOWAS, AU, African Group, LDC Group and the ACP Group of the WTO.
15. China Round Table 2013 - Laos PDR Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena
16. Bali MC9 2013/EIF Aide for Trade Round Table:
17. ITC Visit to Liberia/Arancha Mtg with President
18. President's Letter to DG
19. Second Working Party Meeting
20. Bilateral Negotiations
 - a. US – USTR Ambassador Michael Froman and Ambassador Michael Punk
 - i. Mr. Mark Linscott
 - ii. Ms. Florie Liser
 - iii. Ms. Cecilia Klien
 - iv. Quentin Baird



- b. EU – Ambassador H.E. Angelos Pangratis
 - i. Mr. Paolo Garzotti
 - ii. Ms. Marie-Pierre Nicora
 - iii. Ms. Hene Leht
 - c. Canada – Ambassador Jonathan T. Fried
 - i. Mr. Evan Lewis
 - d. Japan – Ambassador Yoichi Otabe
 - i. H.E. Sakugawa Shunsuke
 - ii. Hiroki Takabayashi
 - e. Chinese Taipei
 - i. Ambassador Shin-Yuan LAI
 - ii. H.E. James S. CHU
 - iii. Mr. Leon Wu
21. China, India, Brazil, Mexico, Russia, Yemen
22. Third Working Party Meeting
23. The WTO DG Roberto Azevedo, DDG David Shark - Secretariat and the Working Sessions
- a. Mr. Cheidu Osakwe
 - b. Maika Oshikawa
 - c. Ms. Juneyoung Lee
 - d. Ms. Anna Varyanik
 - e. Samantha Evans
 - f. SoudaTandara-Stenier
 - g. Eric Ng Shing

Conclusion

24. Excellencies, colleagues and friends, we remain committed to the process because we believe in the multilateral trading system and the power of trade contribute to poverty reduction in our country. We believe domestic reforms, however painful at times; will facilitate an enabling business environment that will lead to fair and healthy competition that will drive innovation and economic diversification ensuring our economic resilience to crises.
25. Mr. Chairman, colleagues, and friends, we understand we have reached a critical milestone but remain fully aware that the work is just beginning. We stand committed to the commitments we have made in this process and know that with the same level of partnership and support for our post accession strategy, we will see those commitments translate to the commitments we made to our citizens – a more



transparent, predictable and competitive Liberia for improved livelihoods of our people.

26. Mr. Chairman, colleague and friends, let me once again, on behalf of our President, H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the government and people of Liberia, say a big thank you to all of you for your support in making today a possibility. At the end of the day, my dream is that work we have done here will pave the way for a better Liberia for all of us and our children so they too can exercise their full potential. Thank you. I am truly grateful for this experience. I am grateful to my boss for giving me such a remarkable opportunity. I am grateful the opportunity to work with the best and brightest that Liberia has to offer. I am grateful for my colleagues in government who remain steadfast in their commitment to this process. Last but not the least, I am most grateful to my wife and daughter who have had to put up with me being away for long extended periods and working through the night. This has truly been a humbling and quite remarkable experience. Thanks to all of you for this experience.

27. Thank you Mr. Chairman.