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Working Party on the Accession of the Russian Federation

ACCESSION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Summary of the Thirty-First Meeting of the Working Party

The present document contains the record of the discussion which took place during the Thirty-First Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of the Russian Federation held on 10 November 2011.

Subjects discussed

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A. OPENING STATEMENTS

1. The Chairperson said that, as set-out in Airgram WTO/AIR/3846 of 27 October 2011, the purpose of the Thirty-First Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of the Russian Federation was to consider the entire Draft Accession Package of the Russian Federation for adoption *ad referendum* and transmission to the Eighth Ministerial Conference for approval.

2. For the WTO and for the Russian Federation this was a historic moment. He thanked Members of the Working Party for their direct engagement and contributions.

3. He underlined that the accession of the Russian Federation clearly demonstrated that, when WTO Members were determined to accomplish a goal, they did so with distinction. The Working Party would not have reached this stage without the unified purpose of the Membership. Members had set an example of coordinated and purposeful action. Director-General Pascal Lamy shared this view.

4. The representative of the Russian Federation recalled that, in 1993, democratic institutions and the market economy had been just arising; numerous industries had been in a serious situation; and, his country had had to resort to international loans. Nevertheless, the task to integrate the Russian Federation into the rules-based Multilateral Trading System had been put forward. Over the past 18 years, the Russian Federation had become the sixth largest economy in the world; a major player in global markets; and, had formed a Customs Union with Kazakhstan and Belarus. One thing had not changed: the confidence that the WTO was the only basis for the future development of the Multilateral Trading System and its Members.

5. The accession of the Russian Federation, a country that represented one seventh of the global customs territory, had generated record interest among WTO Members. Initially, the Working Party had had 40 Members.¹ At the final stage, the Working Party had 65 Members.² The Report of the Working Party was an encyclopaedia of trade law from the Russian Federation and the Customs Union. According to the records of his Delegation, the Russian Federation had conducted several thousand rounds of negotiations. Hundreds of people had been involved in the process. It had been a remarkable school of practical trade policy. As in any living process, there had been mountains and valleys, hopes and disappointments, victories and defeats, dramas and, of course, comedies. The Russian Federation was not fully satisfied with the final arrangement. Many Members were not entirely satisfied either. This was one of the most important lessons in the WTO: if the parties in the negotiations were not completely satisfied with the outcome, the deal was fair.

6. History was made by people. The Accession Package of the Russian Federation had many parents. He thanked Delegations, both in Geneva and Capital-based, for their multi-year efforts and the Secretariat Team, led by Mr. Chiedu Osakwe: Mr. Eric Ng Shing, Mr. Jürgen Richtering and Mr. Dayong Yu for their patience in the consolidation of the Schedule of Concessions and Commitments on Goods; Ms Alicja Wielgus for contributing to the finalization of the commitments on domestic support; Mrs. Josefita Pardo de León, Ms Petra Beslač, Mrs. Irena Giraud and Mrs. Nadia Ferdi Demierre for their tireless efforts in producing a never-ending series of documents in impossibly tight deadlines.

7. He conveyed special thanks to Switzerland for its mediation, which had enabled Members to uphold the decision-making traditions of the WTO.

¹ WT/ACC/RUS/1/Rev.1.

² WT/ACC/RUS/1/Rev.30.

8. He expressed gratitude and appreciation for the selflessness, persistence and impartiality of the Chairperson.

9. While the work on accession was coming to its end, his Delegation was looking forward to restarting work as a WTO Member soon. There were numerous negotiating topics of interest, where the Russian Federation was looking forward to engaging constructively. His Delegation was pleased to see Kazakhstan moving forward with its accession and welcomed the resumption of the process of Belarus.

10. The representative of Bangladesh, on behalf of the LDC Group, welcomed the progress made in the accession of the Russian Federation. He thanked the Chairperson for his efforts to bring the process to the threshold of conclusion and expressed appreciation for the work of the Secretariat.

11. The accession of the Russian Federation had systemic importance, as it was a step towards the universality of the WTO. The integration of the Russian Federation into the Multilateral Trading System would promote further growth in trade and investment and create new market access opportunities for least-developed countries.

12. The LDC Group reiterated the importance of further strengthening and streamlining the accession process for developing and least-developed countries. Useful lessons could be drawn from the experience of the Russian Federation. The LDC Group looked forward to working with the Russian Federation to promote issues of common interest in the WTO.

B. ADOPTION OF THE ACCESSION PACKAGE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

13. The Chairperson suggested that the Working Party considered each of the items of the Accession Package of the Russian Federation in turn: (i) Draft Report of the Working Party; (ii) Draft Schedule of Commitments and Concessions on Goods; (iii) Draft Schedule of Specific Commitments on Trade in Services and Draft List of Article II MFN Exemptions; (iv) Draft Decision on the accession of the Russian Federation; and, (v) Draft Protocol of Accession.

14. The Chairperson proposed that the Working Party adopted *ad referendum* the Draft Report of the Working Party (WT/ACC/SPEC/RUS/25/Rev.6).

15. The Working Party so agreed.

16. The Chairperson proposed that the Working Party adopted *ad referendum* the Schedule of Concessions and Commitments on Goods (WT/ACC/SPEC/RUS/38/Rev.1).

17. The Working Party so agreed.

18. The Chairperson proposed that the Working Party adopted *ad referendum* the Draft Schedule of Specific Commitments on Trade in Services and Draft List of Article II MFN Exemptions (WT/ACC/SPEC/RUS/37).

19. The Working Party so agreed.

20. The Chairperson proposed that the Working Party adopted *ad referendum* the Draft Decision on the accession of the Russian Federation (Appendix to WT/ACC/SPEC/RUS/25/Rev.6).

21. The Working Party so agreed.

22. The Chairperson proposed that the Working Party adopted *ad referendum* the Draft Protocol of Accession of the Russian Federation (Appendix to WT/ACC/SPEC/RUS/25/Rev.6).

23. The Working Party so agreed.

C. CONCLUSION

24. The Chairperson concluded that the Working Party had adopted *ad referendum* the Accession Package of the Russian Federation. Therefore, the Working Party had successfully fulfilled its mandate.

25. Following standing practice, the Secretariat would make the necessary technical updates to the Accession Package, adopted *ad referendum*. The Final Accession Package of the Russian Federation would be circulated with a new double document symbol (WT/ACC/RUS/70 and WT/MIN(11)/2 and their respective *Addenda* 1 and 2) for transmission to the Eighth Ministerial Conference. The approval of the Accession Package of the Russian Federation would be placed in the Agenda of the Eighth Ministerial Conference by Director-General Pascal Lamy.

26. Tribute needed to be paid to Mr. Maxim Medvedkov, Chief Negotiator of the Russian Federation, and his Team for their commitment to pursuing accession and enacting WTO-consistent legislation, both at national and Customs Union levels, particularly during the last 18 months. The Chairperson thanked Members of the Working Party for their direct engagement, hard work and spirit of compromise, which enabled the successful conclusion of the accession process.

27. The accession of the Russian Federation to the WTO was a strong, positive and clear signal about its commitment to engage in the framework of the rules-based Multilateral Trading System.

28. For the WTO, the accession of the Russian Federation meant a warm welcome for the largest economy outside the Multilateral Trading System. This had systemic benefits, such as improving market access in goods and services for the whole Membership and strengthening the universality of the WTO.

29. He acknowledged the significant contributions made by the two previous Chairpersons, namely, H.E. Mr. William Rossier (Switzerland) and H.E. Mr. Kåre Bryn (Norway). He paid tribute and expressed his deep appreciation for the extremely hard work by the Secretariat. Throughout his eight years of Chairmanship, the Secretariat had played a critical role in the accession process. He had had the privilege to work with highly professional and talented individuals, who had shown dedication and commitment that had enabled the Working Party to conclude its mandate. It had been a challenging, but at the same time enjoyable experience. He conveyed his warm appreciation to the Director of the Accessions Division, Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, and his Team, as well as to his predecessor, Mr. Arif Hussein and his respective Team.

30. The representative of the United States said that the final meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of the Russian Federation represented a moment of great significance for the WTO. He acknowledged the indispensable role of the Chairperson as guide in the accession process and his commitment to working with the Russian Federation and all Members of the Working Party. He expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for its efforts, expertise, and attentiveness to transparency and the needs of Members. He particularly thanked the Director of the Accessions Division, Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, and his Team, and recognized the contributions by the former Team in the Accessions Division. He thanked Director-General Pascal Lamy and Deputy Director-General Alejandro Jara for their careful stewardship of this process.

31. Any accession process was an exercise of collaboration among Members. This had been tangible in the Working Party on the Accession of the Russian Federation. He underlined the particular contribution of Switzerland, whose efforts were a testimonial to the best qualities and traditions of the host country of the WTO. Georgia and the Russian Federation had stretched to reach a mutually-acceptable solution. His Delegation was confident that the same spirit would prevail in the implementation of their Bilateral Agreement.

32. Tribute was paid to the Delegation of the Russian Federation, headed by Mr. Maxim Medvedkov, for representing its country with remarkable skill, patience, and dedication. They had reflected the commitment of their country to join the WTO.

33. The accession of the Russian Federation represented an important milestone for the United States. It advanced the determination of President Obama to expand the economic dimensions of a bilateral relationship that had traditionally been dominated by political and security affairs.

34. The Accession Package, which had just been adopted *ad referendum*, was good for the Russian Federation, good for the United States and good for the WTO. Like all Members, the United States had worked intensively to ensure that the result was welcomed by domestic stakeholders. The market access commitments and steps taken with regard to the protection of intellectual property rights, information technology, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, transparency and the whole range of WTO disciplines created a stronger basis for conducting bilateral trade relations. The Accession Package also advanced the objectives of the Russian Federation in terms of diversification, modernization, and integration into the global economy. The Russian Federation was growing, and with WTO Membership that growth would be enhanced, solidified, and made more sustainable.

35. For the WTO, as an institution, the adoption *ad referendum* of the Accession Package and its consideration by the Eighth Ministerial Conference represented important steps. It had been a long time since the WTO had welcomed an economy of the size of the Russian Federation. As with any accession, this would involve adjustments, both for the new Member, and for existing WTO Members. Members should be confident that the thoroughness of the deliberations in the Working Party had laid down a sound foundation for solid collaboration with the Russian Federation.

36. The representative of the European Union congratulated the Russian Federation for the conclusion of the 18-year long process of accession negotiations. The European Union was the most important trading and investment partner of the Russian Federation. Therefore, this was a particularly important accession process, which his Delegation had supported from the start.

37. Since 1993, the accession process had gone through stages of acceleration and losing momentum. There were periods when negotiations seemed close to completion and times when progress stalled. In June 2009, the Russian Federation, together with Kazakhstan and Belarus, had announced the creation of a Customs Union with centralized trade policy competences. This had led to significant reforms in the trade regime of the Russian Federation, which had become intertwined with the Customs Union. These developments had to be carefully analysed, as they presented the Working Party with the challenge of considering the application of an acceding government that had transferred important competences to a body composed of countries that were not Members of the WTO. The European Union, together with Members, had taken unprecedented efforts and devoted extraordinary resources to address this challenge and advance the process. It had been worth it. Difficulties had been overcome and ways to make progress had been found.

38. In the past 18 months, the Russian Federation had demonstrated its determination and readiness to agree on the terms of accession. He acknowledged the major efforts undertaken by the Russian Federation and Members of the Working Party to find solutions for the most challenging issues, some of which had only been resolved in the last days and hours.

39. His Delegation appreciated the determination of Georgia and the Russian Federation to reach a timely resolution to their sensitive bilateral issues. He thanked Switzerland for its instrumental role. The effective implementation of the agreed terms was of crucial importance.

40. The value of the accession of the Russian Federation to the WTO could not be underestimated. The actual results and effects would be seen in the coming years. His Delegation was pleased to complete the accession process and to adopt, unanimously, the results of the negotiations.

41. He concluded by expressing appreciation to the Delegation of the Russian Federation, led by Mr. Maxim Medvedkov. He thanked the Chairperson, Director-General Pascal Lamy and the Accessions Division, headed by Mr. Chiedu Osakwe. His Delegation looked forward to the formal completion of the accession of the Russian Federation at the Eighth Ministerial Conference.

42. The representative of Argentina welcomed the successful conclusion of the accession process. The approval of the Accession Package at the Eighth Ministerial Conference would be a milestone for the WTO and an important step in the integration of the Russian Federation into global markets and the Multilateral Trading System.

43. She congratulated the Delegation of the Russian Federation, led by Mr. Maxim Medvedkov. She thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat for their dedicated efforts.

44. The representative of Hong Kong, China, congratulated the Delegation of the Russian Federation on the historic achievement of the Working Party. He thanked the Chairperson for his leadership and the Secretariat for its efforts.

45. He acknowledged the positive and constructive approach taken by the Russian Federation, particularly, with regard to trade liberalization and economic reforms. The commitments reflected in the Accession Package provided meaningful market access and assurances that the Russian Federation was ready to abide by WTO rules.

46. His Delegation looked forward to welcoming the Russian Federation to the WTO, upon approval of the Accession Package at the Eighth Ministerial Conference.

47. The representative of India congratulated the Russian Federation on the completion of its accession negotiations. It was a landmark that would strengthen the Multilateral Trading System and the global economy.

48. He welcomed the bilateral agreement between the Russian Federation and Georgia, as well as the constructive engagement by Members of the Working Party. He thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat for their sincere efforts and supportive role to ensure that the accession process could be concluded this year.

49. His Delegation had long supported the accession of the Russian Federation. The strong, time-tested bilateral relation had been enhanced by the India-Russia Strategic Partnership of October 2000, which had been elevated to a Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership in December 2010. The Partnership had ensured close coordination on a wide-range of international and regional issues, including trade and economic interaction, modernization and transfer of technology.

Accession to the WTO would further strengthen cooperation between India and the Russian Federation.

50. As part of BRICS, India was also a close partner of the Russian Federation. BRICS had played an important role promoting a multi-polar world order based on international law, equality, cooperation, coordinated action and collective decision making.

51. India looked forward to welcoming the Russian Federation in the WTO with a view to deepening and diversifying bilateral engagement and cooperation.

52. The representative of Japan welcomed the adoption *ad referendum* of the Accession Package of the Russian Federation and its contribution to the universality of the WTO.

53. The Russian Federation had applied for accession 18 years ago. During the accession negotiations, Members and the acceding government had faced difficult situations. However, obstacles had been overcome thanks to collective wisdom. He commended Mr. Maxim Medvedkov and his Team for their efforts and constructive flexibility which, undoubtedly, had brought this process to a successful conclusion. He thanked the Chairperson for his work and the Secretariat for its professionalism, which had been a key element in the success of this process.

54. Over the past months, delegations had doubled their efforts to solve outstanding issues, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels, to be ready for the final meeting of the Working Party. The bilateral issue between Georgia and the Russian Federation had been one of the most critical. Japan highly appreciated the efforts by Switzerland, as mediator, as well as the constructive engagement by Georgia and the Russian Federation.

55. Japan looked forward to the approval of the accession of the Russian Federation at the Eighth Ministerial Conference. His Delegation was confident that the Russian Federation would fulfil the commitments contained in the Accession Package, including the abolition of measures inconsistent with the WTO Agreement.

56. The representative of Australia said that the adoption *ad referendum* of the Accession Package of the Russian Federation was a milestone for the Russian Federation and the WTO. The Russian Federation had persevered throughout 18 years of negotiations. This had demonstrated a strong commitment to complete the accession process and recognition of the value of WTO Membership.

57. For Members, the Accession Package created a sense of certainty for future economic engagement with the Russian Federation. For the Russian Federation, accession would ensure the benefits and protection afforded by the rules-based Multilateral Trading System. Intense work had taken place over the last few days to secure an outcome on high quality beef, which would be non-discriminatory and upheld the MFN principle.

58. He thanked the Delegation of the Russian Federation, headed by Mr. Maxim Medvedkov, for its hard work and constructive approach to solving the most difficult and complex issues. He thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat for the key role played in delivering this welcomed outcome.

59. Australia had long supported the accession of the Russian Federation, having completed bilateral negotiations in 2006. His Delegation looked forward to adopting the Accession Package at the Eighth Ministerial Conference.

60. The representative of Uruguay congratulated the Russian Federation on the major step taken towards joining the WTO. He acknowledged the constructive approach taken by the Delegation of

the Russian Federation, Members of the Working Party, the Chairperson and the Secretariat. This had demonstrated that it was possible to work as a team and obtain tangible results.

61. The adoption of the Decision on the Accession of the Russian Federation at the Eighth Ministerial Conference would strengthen the WTO and the Multilateral Trading System based on predictable, transparent and non-discriminatory rules. His Delegation extended a warm welcome to the Russian Federation and hoped to continue working constructively on issues of common interest.

62. The representative of Korea welcomed the successful completion of accession negotiations. This accession benefited the Russian Federation and the WTO. After 18 years, the conclusion of this accession sent the positive message that the WTO can deliver tangibly and meaningfully. When WTO Members worked together, they delivered. This message was critically important when the WTO was struggling to remain relevant, in its role as the guardian of the Multilateral Trading System, as the current economic and trade environment became more challenging.

63. This accession was economically relevant, as the Russian Federation was the largest economy outside the WTO. Upon completion of the accession, WTO Members would cover 99 per cent of world trade. This would open new opportunities for trade expansion and economic growth. He hoped that accession would serve as the catalyst for further strengthening bilateral relations between Korea and the Russian Federation, as had been demonstrated at a recent Bilateral Summit in St. Petersburg.

64. He welcomed the Bilateral Agreement reached by Georgia and the Russian Federation, and applauded the mediation by Switzerland. He thanked the Delegation of the Russian Federation, headed by Mr. Maxim Medvedkov, for its tireless and constructive engagement. He expressed appreciation for the leadership of the Chairperson and the hard work by the Secretariat.

65. His Delegation would continue to work closely and constructively with other delegations to ensure that the accession of the Russian Federation would come to a successful conclusion at the Eighth Ministerial Conference.

66. The representative of Ukraine congratulated the Russian Federation for the conclusion of its accession negotiations. The accession of the Russian Federation would strengthen global trade and promote bilateral and economic relations, based on the principles of the Multilateral Trading System.

67. The representative of Mexico welcomed the adoption *ad referendum* of the Accession Package of the Russian Federation. It was a landmark in the history of the WTO.

68. Over the past 18 years, quantitative analyses had demonstrated the economic importance of the accession of the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, this accession was also a decisive and strategic step forward in the defence and promotion of the Multilateral Trading System and its consolidation as a development strategy.

69. She commended the Delegation of the Russian Federation, as well as Members of the Working Party, for their efforts and determination to reach a successful conclusion. She thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat for their dedication and hard work. Teamwork was the key for reaching this important outcome.

70. The representative of Turkey expressed satisfaction on the conclusion of accession negotiations and congratulated the Russian Federation. This accession would make the WTO a universal body. It had been one of the most complex accession processes.

71. The integration of the Russian Federation into the international economic system had been long awaited. It would offer new opportunities in the vast and booming Russian market, and would

add impetus to global economic growth. The Russian Federation and the whole WTO Membership would benefit from a stable and predictable trade environment.

72. The excellent work by the Chairperson and the Secretariat Team, led by Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, had been the basis for Members to move forward and adopt *ad referendum* the Accession Package.

73. He conveyed special thanks to Switzerland for the successful mediation, which had permitted to overcome one of the stumbling blocks of this process.

74. His Delegation looked forward to welcoming the Russian Federation as a WTO Member. It would give its final endorsement at the Eighth Ministerial Conference and awaited the early ratification of the Accession Package.

75. The representative of Chinese Taipei expressed appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Delegation of the Russian Federation, led by Mr. Maxim Medvedkov, the Chairperson and the Secretariat Team, headed by Mr. Chiedu Osakwe. Those efforts had turned what had once looked as a "mission impossible" into tangible results.

76. His Delegation had been a strong advocate for the early completion of the accession of the Russian Federation, as it would greatly benefit the Russian Federation and WTO Members. As a recently-acceded Member, Chinese Taipei had a precise understanding of the challenges of meeting accession criteria and fulfilling WTO requirements. As the process entered its final stage, his Delegation would continue to support the accession of the Russian Federation and looked forward to welcoming it as a Member.

77. The representative of Thailand, on behalf of ASEAN, congratulated the Delegation of the Russian Federation, headed by Mr. Maxim Medvedkov. She thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat for their hard work. She conveyed appreciation to previous Chairpersons.

78. ASEAN looked forward to welcoming the Russian Federation as a WTO Member. The accession of the Russian Federation would significantly increase global trade flows, as well as strengthen the Multilateral Trading System.

79. The representative of New Zealand congratulated the Russian Federation on successfully completing its Accession Package. He acknowledged the huge efforts undertaken by Members and the Russian Federation over the past 18 months, after the establishment of the Customs Union.

80. His Delegation appreciated the willingness of the Russian Federation to answer specific questions, both at informal meetings and during bilateral discussions. This had facilitated the ability to understand and agree on the Accession Package. He paid tribute to the Delegation of the Russian Federation, headed by Mr. Maxim Medvedkov, for its contributions and commitment to the process. This had established an excellent foundation for the constructive participation of the Russian Federation in the WTO.

81. He thanked DDG Jara and the Secretariat Team, led by Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, for their efforts and timely distribution of the Accession Package. As in any accession, several Members had made significant contributions. The results were the product of collective efforts by colleagues, both current and past. He acknowledged the contributions of the Chairperson, as well as his clear direction and objectivity, which had been instrumental in reaching this final stage.

82. He concluded by recognizing the key role played by Switzerland, as mediator. The accession of the Russian Federation to the WTO would be a significant moment for the WTO. His Delegation

looked forward to the approval of the Accession Package at the Eighth Ministerial Conference and to working constructively with the Russian Federation in the WTO.

83. The representative of China congratulated the Russian Federation on the successful conclusion of accession negotiations. He commended the Delegation of the Russian Federation for its efforts and thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat. He also applauded the Russian Federation and Georgia for reaching a Bilateral Agreement, under the excellent mediation by Switzerland.

84. China and the Russian Federation had shared a long-standing friendship. China had been one of the first Members to conclude bilateral negotiations with the Russian Federation. Having also experienced a lengthy accession process, China understood the feelings at this stage of the process. Accession to the WTO would contribute to bilateral economic cooperation and to the consolidation of the strategic partnership. His Delegation looked forward to working together with the Russian Federation in the WTO.

85. The adoption *ad referendum* of the Accession Package was a historic moment for the Russian Federation, the WTO and the international economic community. The Russian Federation was the only large economy outside the WTO. This accession was a major step towards universality of the WTO and would be one of the most important deliverables for the Eighth Ministerial Conference.

86. He concluded by saying that, with the fresh thrust from the accession of the Russian Federation, there was optimism that WTO Members could overcome the impasse of the Doha Round.

87. The representative of Nigeria said that one of the most important tasks faced by the WTO was accession. The experience of the Russian Federation was exceptional, as it was the largest economy outside the Multilateral Trading System. He welcomed the adoption *ad referendum* of the Accession Package and thanked Members for their constructive engagement and support.

88. The accession of the Russian Federation would benefit the Russian Federation and the Multilateral Trading System. It would open new business opportunities and strengthen the competitiveness of the Russian economy.

89. He congratulated the Delegation of the Russian Federation for its dedication. He thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat Team, under the leadership of Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, for their hard work.

90. The representative of Nepal congratulated the Russian Federation on the adoption *ad referendum* of its Accession Package. He expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by the Chairperson and the Secretariat Team.

91. The Russian Federation was the only one of the five permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations, and also the only G-8 and G-20 country outside the WTO. It had the largest territorial extension, mineral reserves and natural resources, and was one of the most populous countries in the world. This accession truly contributed to the universality of the WTO.

92. His Delegation looked forward to welcoming the Russian Federation as a WTO Member.

93. The representative of Pakistan congratulated the Russian Federation. He expressed appreciation for the indefatigable efforts of the Delegation of the Russian Federation, Members of the Working Party, the Chairperson and the Secretariat. He conveyed special thanks to Switzerland for successfully mediating a solution between the Russian Federation and Georgia, who deserved praise for showing a spirit of accommodation and compromise.

94. Accession to the WTO was an important step in integrating the Russian Federation into the global economy. It would foster growth and development, as well as increase the stability and predictability of the Russian trade and investment regimes. The WTO was an instrument. Those who knew how to use it grew stronger. Those that preferred to sit behind a fence of protectionism were lost. Accession would lay a solid foundation for sustained economic reform, industrial efficiency and international competitiveness in the Russian Federation.

95. The representative of Norway said that her Delegation had been a firm supporter of the accession of the Russian Federation, during the past 18 years. Throughout the negotiations her Delegation had attached great importance to finding solutions and ensuring compliance with WTO rules.

96. Bilateral negotiations had been concluded in 2005. In the multilateral track, the strongest interests of Norway had been in the area of sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Her Delegation welcomed the commitments undertaken by the Russian Federation in this and other areas.

97. She thanked the Delegation of the Russian Federation, led by Mr. Maxim Medvedkov, for contributing to a constructive dialogue and for its efforts to finding solutions. She thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat for their tireless work to facilitate the process.

98. This was a historic moment. She applauded the crucial contribution of Switzerland as mediator. Her Delegation looked forward to the approval of the Accession Package at the Eighth Ministerial Conference.

99. The representative of Brazil recalled that, in a previous informal meeting, his Delegation had spoken on behalf of BRICS countries that were WTO Members. He was pleased that, in the near future, all BRICS countries would be WTO Members.

100. The longest negotiations in the Multilateral Trading System had just been finalized to admit the largest economy outside the WTO. Members had taken the longest stride to achieve universality of the WTO. The accession of the Russian Federation would be a very significant outcome for the Eighth Ministerial Conference.

101. The representative of Canada said that the adoption *ad referendum* of the Accession Package was a milestone for the Russian Federation and WTO Members. It had been a long and winding road, stemming from the give and take and challenges of negotiations. Throughout, the strong and persistent commitment by the Russian Federation, particularly in the final stretch, had been palpable.

102. His Delegation welcomed the accession of the largest economy outside the WTO, as it would enhance the legitimacy of the Multilateral Trading System. He congratulated the efforts of the Delegation of the Russian Federation, led by Mr. Maxim Medvedkov, Members of the Working Party, the Chairperson, the Director of the Accessions Division and the Secretariat Team. He recognized the stellar and tireless mediation of Switzerland, which made the Bilateral Agreement between the Russian Federation and Georgia possible.

103. The representative of Chile welcomed the successful conclusion of the accession of the Russian Federation. It was a long-awaited outcome that would contribute to the universality of the WTO. Chile and the Russian Federation had concluded their bilateral negotiations in 2006. He hoped that this would be the beginning of a stronger relation, beyond trade.

104. He applauded the commitment by the Russian Federation throughout the accession process. It had demonstrated their interest to fully participate in the Multilateral Trading System, which had

allowed small countries, like Chile, to reap benefits of trade on equal footing without discrimination. In a period of economic uncertainty, this accession was a vote of confidence for the WTO.

105. He thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat Team, headed by Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, for guiding the accession process with caution and determination towards a just, equitable and transparent consensus-based solution.

106. The representative of Colombia congratulated the Russian Federation for the adoption *ad referendum* of the Accession Package. This accession would strengthen the WTO and enable the Russian Federation to benefit from the stability and predictability of the rules-based Multilateral Trading System. His Delegation looked forward to working with the Russian Federation.

107. He thanked the Delegation of the Russian Federation and Members of the Working Party for the efforts undertaken to reach this final stage. He applauded the mediation by Switzerland. He appreciated the hard work by the Chairperson and the Secretariat. As long as there was interest, dedication and determination, teamwork could achieve the most distant outcomes.

108. The representative of Cuba congratulated the Russian Federation for its efforts, flexibility and pragmatism throughout the accession process. His Delegation reiterated its unconditional support for the Russian Federation and looked forward to joining forces to foster development-related issues in the WTO.

109. This was a historic moment for the WTO and the Russian Federation. The accession of the largest economy outside the WTO would strengthen the Multilateral Trading System, particularly in this difficult juncture. His Delegation shared the enthusiasm for the accession, but could not conceal regret that it had taken a record-setting process of 18 years. There were some improvements to be made to the accession process. His Delegation called for a thorough analysis, as many developing countries were still waiting to join the WTO.

110. He thanked Switzerland for its excellent mediation; Georgia for its willingness to reach an agreement; the Chairperson for his leadership; and the Secretariat for its hard work.

111. The representative of Ecuador welcomed the successful conclusion of the accession process. His Delegation looked forward to the formal approval of the Accession Package at the Eighth Ministerial Conference.

112. The accession of the Russian Federation would consolidate the Multilateral Trading System and strengthen predictability in trade relations and market access for developing countries. His Delegation was confident that the Russian Federation would honour its commitments.

113. He commended the contribution by Switzerland, as mediator, and congratulated the Russian Federation and Georgia for reaching a mutually-acceptable solution. He thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat for their constructive work.

114. The representative of Georgia said that, in an effort to ensure transparency, her Delegation had regularly informed Members on the developments in the bilateral negotiations between Georgia and the Russian Federation, mediated by Switzerland.

115. As a result of the bilateral negotiations, three types of documents had been signed on 9 November 2011: (i) Agreement on the Basic Principles for a Mechanism of Customs Administration and Monitoring of Trade in Goods; (ii) Memoranda of Understanding to affirm the role of Switzerland as the Neutral Third Party, as had been foreseen in the Agreement; and, (iii) *Notes Verbales* and letters defining the terms of reference for the activity of neutral monitors, as

envisaged in the Bilateral Agreement, had been exchanged by the three Parties (Georgia, the Russian Federation and Switzerland).

116. Her Delegation expressed sincere gratitude to Switzerland for its tireless efforts in the negotiations, as well as for its commitment to the implementation of the Bilateral Agreement, emphasized by accepting the role of the Neutral Third Party. Georgia looked forward to the effective functioning of the mechanism established by the Bilateral Agreement. She thanked the Chairperson and the Accessions Division.

117. The representative of Paraguay congratulated the Russian Federation for completing its accession negotiations. His Delegation hoped to continue working constructively with the Russian Federation, in its new capacity as Member, in the various *fora* of the WTO. He thanked the Delegation of the Russian Federation, Switzerland, the Chairperson and the Secretariat for the fundamental roles played in this process.

118. The representative of Viet Nam joined ASEAN in congratulating the Russian Federation. WTO Membership would strengthen the Russian economy and attract foreign investment. As a recently-acceded Member, his Delegation understood the difficulties of the accession process. Accession would improve the competitiveness of Russian businesses and consumers would have access to higher-quality goods and services.

119. The representative of El Salvador, on behalf of Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic, welcomed the adoption *ad referendum* of the Accession Package. It was a historic event that would enhance the universality of the WTO and strengthen the economy of the Russian Federation. He hoped that the market access commitments on goods and services would foster trade relations and looked forward to working with the Russian Federation in the WTO. He congratulated the Delegation of the Russian Federation for its efforts; acknowledged the mediation by Switzerland; and, thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat for their work.

120. The representative of Costa Rica congratulated the Russian Federation for the successful conclusion of its accession negotiations. The efforts of the Russian Federation and Members of the Working Party had proved that, when delegations joined forces and worked with determination, consensus and agreements were reached. The Accession Package, which had just been adopted *ad referendum*, was a satisfactory result. It had laid the foundation for new and potential trade flows.

121. Her Delegation appreciated the commitment by the Russian Federation to assume its obligations as a WTO Member in a serious and responsible manner. She thanked the Chairperson for the skilful conduct of the process and the Secretariat for its excellent work.

122. The representative of Peru welcomed the successful conclusion of the 18-year long accession process. This was a historical moment, as the only major economy outside the WTO completed the last steps to join. He congratulated Switzerland for mediating the Bilateral Agreement reached by Georgia and the Russian Federation. Peru had always supported the accession of the Russian Federation, as it would contribute to strengthen their excellent bilateral trade and investment relations. He hoped to continue working constructively with the Russian Federation.

123. The representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia joined Members in congratulating the Russian Federation for concluding its accession negotiations. This accession would add value to the Multilateral Trading System and enable the Russian Federation to fully participate in the global economy, complying with WTO rules and standards.

124. The representative of Switzerland congratulated the Russian Federation for the historical achievement. He paid tribute to DG Pascal Lamy, DDG Alejandro Jara, the Director of the

Accessions Division, Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, as well as his predecessor Mr. Arif Hussain and their respective Teams. He congratulated the Chairperson for his subtle and strong leadership. There was a powerful lesson to be drawn from this accession process: if and when WTO Members cooperated and searched for constructive solutions, great things could be achieved. This winning formula should be remembered and applied throughout the WTO.

125. He congratulated the Delegation of the Russian Federation, headed by Mr. Maxim Medvedkov, for its incredible skill, patience and determination during this 18-year long process. There had been numerous ups and downs along the path that had led to the completion of the mandate of the Working Party.

126. Undoubtedly, the integration of the Russian Federation in the Multilateral Trading System opened a new chapter in WTO history. This was a major step towards making the WTO truly universal. Once Ministers approved the Accession Package at the Eighth Ministerial Conference and the ratification process was completed, the Russian Federation and WTO Members would have a win-win situation full of new opportunities. Accession was a strong signal of the dedication of the Russian Federation to the rules-based system and its attachment to the balance of rights and obligations associated with WTO Membership.

127. He thanked all Delegations for their kind words with regard to the humble support that Switzerland had provided to facilitate cooperation and understanding between Georgia and the Russian Federation. It had been a great honour for Switzerland to offer its modest assistance. It was both Georgia and the Russian Federation who deserved the credit for taking the necessary steps towards each other. Switzerland just built a little bridge, or better said, two corridors.

128. The Working Party took note of the statements made.
