

**COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES – SPECIAL SESSION
16 MARCH 2010**

Mr. Chairman,

May I take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of the LDC Group, for your perspective on the forthcoming stocktaking exercise scheduled for the week of 22 March 2010.

The LDC Group is optimistic that the stock taking exercise will set pace for continued and intensified negotiations on the remaining outstanding issues under the mandate on Trade in Services.

May I also take this opportunity to inform the membership that the LDC Group had organized a series of consultations in various formats since the last formal meeting held on 9 February 2010. The last consultations were held on 12 March 2010 with a number of delegations and the group's assessment is that we have made substantial progress in identifying where major gaps are and in clarifying the content of the waiver . It is the Group's expectation that members will continue to engage positively in these consultations so that work on the waiver can be finalized in the nearest possible future.

As highlighted during the General Council Meeting held on 22 February 2010, the LDC group highlighted the importance of finalizing consultations on the waiver so that the outcome could serve as an important input into the stocktaking exercise. The LDCs look forward to having this as one of the issues for consideration during the stocktaking exercise and post stocktaking.