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**Trade Policy Review Body
27 and 29 April 2021****TRADE POLICY REVIEW**

VIET NAM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING*Chairperson: H.E. Dr Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme (Botswana)***CONTENTS**

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1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON

1.1. The second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam was held on 27 and 29 April 2021. The Chairperson, H.E. Dr. Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme (Botswana), welcomed the delegation of Viet Nam, headed by H.E. Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade; H.E. Ambassador Mrs. Le Thi Tuyet Mai, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the WTO; the rest of the delegation from Ha Noi; and the discussant, H.E. Ambassador Mrs. Monique Van Daalen (Netherlands).

1.2. The Chairperson was pleased that, in addition to physical presence, the meeting also benefited from the Interprefy online connection, allowing for a wider participation of the Membership, in particular of officials who could not make the journey from Ha Noi given the current circumstances.

1.3. The Chairperson recalled the purpose of TPRs and the main elements of procedures for the meeting. The report by Viet Nam is contained in document WT/TPR/G/410, and that of the WTO Secretariat in document WT/TPR/S/410.

1.4. Questions by the following delegations were submitted in writing before the deadline: Israel; Brunei Darussalam; Japan; Canada; Ukraine; Chile; Hong Kong, China; Switzerland; New Zealand; Malaysia; Singapore; Mexico; China; Argentina; the United States; Australia; Chinese Taipei; and Brazil. The following delegations submitted written questions after the deadline: the European Union; Colombia; Indonesia; the Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Thailand; the Philippines; Turkey; the Republic of Korea; Iceland; the United Kingdom; Bangladesh; and Kazakhstan.

1.5. In Viet Nam's first TPR, which took place in September 2013, Members had congratulated Viet Nam for the progress made in moving from a low-income country, with a centrally-planned economy, to a market-led lower middle-income economy. They had commended Viet Nam's achievement in reducing poverty levels through fast export-led growth.

1.6. Since the first Review, Viet Nam had continued its development endeavour by further opening its economy. In 2019, Viet Nam was ranked among the 20 largest traders in the WTO, and its poverty rate had declined to nearly 6%.

1.7. During the review period, Viet Nam deepened its participation in global value chains (GVCs). As the Secretariat reported, GVC trade did not lose momentum even while facing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2013, the share of manufactured goods, including high value-added consumer electronics, in total exports had almost doubled.

1.8. In the government report, the authorities attributed this outcome to a mix of policies and reforms aimed at, *inter alia*, transforming and diversifying the economy and increasing exports.

1.9. Members wished to learn the experience from Viet Nam on how to successfully engage in GVCs. Viet Nam shared with Members its intention to participate in international initiatives, such as joining the WTO GPA, the expanded ITA, and other ongoing initiatives at the WTO.

1.10. At the time of the first TPR, several Members had noted that Viet Nam's administrative and legal system was complex. They had also considered that a simpler, more stable, and predictable investment regime would be essential for Viet Nam to attract more foreign direct investment.

1.11. During the review period, Viet Nam continued taking steps to improve its business environment, including by enacting new legislation on enterprises and investment, competition policy, and government procurement.

1.12. Nonetheless, foreign investment restrictions remained in place. For example, equities caps on foreign ownership were applied in a number of sectors, such as financial, transport, and telecommunication services, as well as services incidental to agriculture. As indicated in their advance written questions for this Review, some Members wished to learn more about the investment environment, in particular the policies and incentives provided in export processing zones and industrial parks.

1.13. Protection of intellectual property rights was a matter of high priority at the time of the first Review. During this review period, Viet Nam updated its IPR regime and launched a national

campaign on IPR awareness. Members were interested in knowing more about the protection provided by the new legislation, and Viet Nam's policy on technology transfer. Members also wished to know more about Viet Nam's efforts in IPR enforcement, including the fight against online infringement.

1.14. On sectoral issues, at the time of the previous Review, there had been concern over the perceived lack of information on government assistance to agriculture and support to fisheries. Viet Nam remains an important exporter in the world's rice and fisheries markets. Members were interested in learning more about Viet Nam's policy intention for these two sectors, especially its participation in the fishery subsidy negotiations, and effort to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

1.15. Other issues arising from Members' advance questions included: the applications of tariff quotas, the customs valuation methods, export prohibitions of certain products, alignment to international standards in connection with TBT and SPS measures, and business environment for the pharmaceutical industry. Some of these had already been raised during the previous Review, while some are new issues.

1.16. The Chairperson looked forward to hearing updates from Viet Nam on these matters during the two-day meeting.

1.17. This meeting was a good opportunity for Members to discuss in greater detail issues of interest to them and of systemic importance to the multilateral trading system.

1.18. It was also an opportune moment for Viet Nam to update the Membership on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its economy and measures it had taken in response. The Chairperson looked forward to a fruitful exchange.

1.19. The Chairperson closed her introductory remarks by wishing Viet Nam a very successful second Trade Policy Review.

2 OPENING STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF VIET NAM (H.E. MR. TRAN QUOC KHANH)

2.1. On behalf of the Government of Viet Nam, I am deeply honoured to be here today at Viet Nam's second Trade Policy Review under the framework of the WTO. Also attending with me are the representatives of all relevant ministries and agencies based in Ha Noi, as well as our colleagues from the Viet Nam's Mission in Geneva.

2.2. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Ambassador Molokomme, Chair of the Trade Policy Review Body, and the staff of the WTO Secretariat for your enthusiasm and close collaboration throughout the preparation for this Trade Policy Review. May I also thank Her Excellency Monique Van Daalen, Ambassador, Head of the Mission of the Netherlands to Geneva, for her zealous role as the discussant for this Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam.

2.3. This is the second time that Viet Nam has undertaken our TPR – a work reflecting WTO's fundamental principle of transparency. Leading up to today's session, we have received over 850 questions from 31 WTO Members. We have strived with our best efforts based on goodwill and earnestness to answer to as many questions as possible in written form. With those responses, as well as the direct questions at today's session, we hope that WTO Members will obtain a more objective, accurate, and comprehensive view of the trade-related policies that the Vietnamese Government has been enforcing.

2.4. As we can all witness, the world economy is undergoing a challenging time due to many reasons, factors, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic and the earlier turmoil in trade relationships at both regional and global levels. In such a context, Viet Nam, as a developing country located in the hub of a dynamic region, still achieved considerably positive and outstanding outcomes. Eight years ago, in 2013, when Viet Nam conducted the first TPR, our GDP growth was only 5.4%. Today, this number has reached 7%, putting Viet Nam in the high growth group of the region and the world. With the size of USD 343 billion in 2020, the Vietnamese economy is currently amongst the top 40 largest economies in the world.

2.5. From 2013 to 2019, Viet Nam's trade volume rocketed from USD 264 billion to USD 517 billion, with an average compound annual growth rate of 11.85%. Statistics also show that the Viet Nam's total exports and imports have increased respectively 170 times compared to when we started the "Doi Moi" policy in 1986; 37 times compared to when we acceded to ASEAN in 1995; and five times higher than when we officially acceded to the WTO in 2007. According to WTO's World Trade Statistical Review 2020, among the top 50 merchandise traders, Viet Nam recorded the biggest increase in world ranking, improving its position from 39th place in 2009 to 23rd in 2019. All of this demonstrates how "open" Viet Nam is and how seriously we have implemented our commitments since joining the WTO.

2.6. In recent years, thanks to the signing and implementation of a series of free trade agreements, together with our efforts to improve the business and investment environment, to maintain security and political stability, as well as in economic development, Viet Nam has made remarkable achievements in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), creating a driving force for economic growth. In 2019, Viet Nam's registered FDI capital hit a record high of USD 39 billion since the global economic crisis of 2008-2009.

2.7. Another significant indicator for assessing the strength of an economy is the national competitiveness. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), Viet Nam's Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) has improved 13 places - from 68 out of 131 economies ranked in 2007 to 55 out of 137 economies ranked in 2017 – moving from the bottom half to the top half of the global competitiveness ranking. In 2019, WEF upgraded Viet Nam's GCI by 10 places compared to 2018, ranking 67th out of 141 economies.

2.8. Apart from such indicators, Viet Nam has also achieved tremendous results in sustainable development. According to the United Nations survey and evaluation, Viet Nam has continuously climbed up the ranks in Sustainable Development Index (SDG) from the 88th place in 2016 to 57th and 49th place in 2018 and 2020, respectively. These economic achievements have significantly contributed to the country's poverty alleviation. The poverty rate has decreased from 9.88% at the end of 2015 to less than 3% in 2020, with an average reduction of over 1.4% annually.

2.9. The aforementioned achievements were not made overnight; rather, they are the fruits of long-term efforts, persistence, and steadfastness in implementing plenty of reforms, restructuring the economy together with innovation of growth models; enhancing productivity; amending legal regulations; improving business and investment environment towards modernity and transparency; ensuring fair competition; creating favourable conditions for businesses and approaching closer than ever to international standards. Let me point out a few examples among many of such policies.

2.10. First, Viet Nam has established a fairly complete economic legislative system, serving as a legal foundation for the operation of businesses of all types. Fundamental laws based on which the economy and businesses, in particular, operate have been revised towards the direction of openness, innovation, and facilitation of business, such as the 2015 Law on Investment and the 2015 Law on Enterprises. The mode of operations of state agencies continues to be reformed. Such agencies now arrange frequent dialogues to seek feedback from the public and the business community, in order to provide timely policy responses, as well as to promptly and satisfactorily resolve shortcomings in the business and investment environment. Between 2016 and 2020, there was an annual average of 128,000 newly established businesses with an increase in average registered capital by over 2.6 times compared to 2015. By the end of 2020, there had been an accumulation of 1.4 million registered enterprises, excluding dissolved ones.

2.11. Second, Viet Nam has implemented many measures to support business development and to improve the investment environment, which have received international recognition, focusing on creating favourable conditions for businesses, reforming administrative procedures, and reducing production cost. Viet Nam has established a National Public Services Portal that connects Public Services Portals to all ministries and localities, providing 389 online public services. Furthermore, the government has reduced and simplified 3,893 out of 6,191 conditions for businesses, and reduced 30 out of 120 administrative procedures related to specialized examination. This effort has saved about 18 million working days annually, equivalent to VND 6,300 billion. Ministries and localities have also implemented the single window mechanism for the provision of public services. According to the 2018 survey of the United Nations, Viet Nam ranked 88th out of 193 countries in e-government and 59th out of 193 countries in the online public services index.

2.12. In addition, the Vietnamese Government has also focused on developing and upgrading logistics infrastructure and services such as highways, airports, and seaports contributing to greater connectivity between both domestic regions and paving the way for international trade.

2.13. With our efforts in improving the business environment, according to the World Bank, Viet Nam's Ease of Doing Business Rank has made great strides. Specifically, if Viet Nam ranked only 99th in 2013 in terms of favourable business environment, by 2019 such ranking had climbed to 69th.

2.14. Third, alongside domestic policies, the Government of Viet Nam in recent years has actively promoted deeper integration into the regional and global economy. The most obvious example is Viet Nam's conclusion of negotiation, signing and implementation of a series of free trade agreements (FTAs) with many partners in the region and around the world, including high standards FTAs with deep commitments, such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the EU-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) and the UK-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (UKVFTA). Our participation in these FTAs once again stands testimony to Viet Nam's consistent policy and strong determination in proactively reforming and improving its legislation, and enhancing the competitiveness of the economy to anticipate and efficiently make use of the opportunities and benefits brought about by these FTAs.

2.15. In other multilateral frameworks such as ASEAN or APEC, Viet Nam has played an active and leading role, assisting its members in reaching consensus on many important issues. This has been clearly demonstrated during Viet Nam's Chairmanship of APEC in 2017 and the Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2020.

2.16. Last but not least, it is Viet Nam's steadfast support for an open, fair and rule-based multilateral trading system. Recognizing the difficulties and challenges facing the WTO, Viet Nam has actively participated in discussions on initiatives and proposals on WTO reform, and joining negotiations on current key topics such as fisheries subsidies.

2.17. Moving forward, following such solid foundations and achievements, Viet Nam will continue to promote trade policies in a more comprehensive and synchronous manner, towards the larger goal of economic development associated with sustainable growth, improving people's lives and contributing to the common prosperity of the region and the world. To be precise, Viet Nam will continue to innovate and improve our development and strictly enforce the law, ensuring consistency, feasibility, modernity and international competitiveness. The government will continue to operate synchronously and flexibly macro policies to stabilize the macro-economy, control inflation, support sustainable economic growth, and stabilize the currency and foreign exchange markets, whilst implementing the sustainable development goals under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Regarding the reform of administrative procedures, we will continue to reduce administrative procedures and business conditions; and strictly control the introduction of new administrative procedures.

2.18. In terms of external trade policies, Viet Nam will strive to be more active in the affairs of the WTO with the immediate goal of achieving substantive results at the 12th WTO Ministerial Meeting to be held this late November-early December. In addition, Viet Nam will also focus on the effective and comprehensive implementation of existing international commitments and FTAs, and looks for potential partners to negotiate new FTAs, contributing to expanding our commercial relations.

2.19. Above are the results and highlights of the trade policies which Viet Nam has been and will be implementing moving forward. We stand ready to answer and provide more information to WTO Members during the next two days to help you get a full picture of Viet Nam's efforts and determination in realizing our present economic development policies based on full implementation of and compliance with international commitments. Thank you for your kind attention.

3 STATEMENT BY THE DISCUSSANT

Introduction

3.1. Viet Nam and the Netherlands share excellent relations. Trade between our countries is flourishing and growing year by year. My personal interest in Viet Nam and its economy dates back several decades. I wrote my Master's thesis about the lending policies of the Asian Development Bank, and Viet Nam was one of the case studies I described. I have been following economic developments in Viet Nam ever since. So I am honoured to participate today as discussant in Viet Nam's second Trade Policy Review.

3.2. The common thread in my intervention today is that Viet Nam has been able over the past decades to foster trade as a driver of economic growth and poverty reduction. When the Viet Nam War ended in 1975, Viet Nam's economy was one of the poorest in the world. By initiating economic reforms and making use of the opportunities which the multilateral trading system provides, Viet Nam has been able to develop into a middle-income country with a young and growing population and a vibrant economy. Viet Nam's economic development has proven to be an example for many other countries. Moreover, these experiences should give further impetus to our initiatives to reform the WTO and to put its negotiation and dispute settlement pillar back on track.

3.3. I would like at the outset to thank the WTO Secretariat and the Government of Viet Nam for their outstanding reports. They provide us with the necessary information to review and further improve our trade policies.

3.4. In addition, I would like to thank Deputy Minister Tran Quoc Khanh for his thought-provoking introductory remarks.

Economic and trading development

3.5. Thirty-five years ago, the Vietnamese Government initiated the Doi Moi. The Doi Moi is the economic reform process that dismantled the largely planned economy, opened up a closed economy to international markets and trade, and initiated pro-business reforms.

3.6. Since these reforms, Viet Nam has transformed into a lower-middle-income emerging economy. The poverty rate declined sharply from over 70% in the early 1990s to below 6% in 2019. During the period under review, GDP per capita rose quickly from almost USD 1,900 to over USD 2,700. In other words, it grew with over 40% in six years. Even in 2020, a daunting year for many reasons, Viet Nam's economy managed to grow, albeit at a significantly slower pace.

3.7. Trade has contributed to Viet Nam's economic growth and to lifting millions out of poverty. Since its last Review in 2013, Viet Nam has further integrated into the world economy. Trade integration facilitated Viet Nam's participation in global value chains, first as an exporter of low-tech manufactured goods and later more complex high-tech goods. It is impressive that both imports and exports more than doubled over the period under review. Labour productivity grew at a no less staggering pace of 65% in six years.

3.8. Some challenges, however, remain. In order to sustain the transition from a low- to a middle-income country, investments have to be made in education and innovation and require a shift to a more circular economy. Foreign investors indicate that they would like to see a further reduction in red tape, more predictable tax policies, and increased transparency. Moreover, unlocking the huge potential of formal and informal MSMEs and the female workforce, as well as tackling growing inequality in the distribution of wealth, are key to maintaining Viet Nam's international competitiveness.

3.9. Services are the main sector in the Vietnamese economy. Its share in GDP is 46%. Whereas most services are oriented to the domestic market, the manufacturing sector is highly export-oriented.

3.10. In the remaining part of my intervention, I will briefly address some specific topics including state-owned enterprises, Regional and Bilateral Trade Agreements, Foreign Direct Investment, Services, and ICT goods and telecommunications.

State-owned enterprises

3.11. As the reports note, the economy of Viet Nam is defined by its Constitution as a socialist-oriented market economy. It is characterized by economic dualism combining government planning with free-market incentives. Although extensive market reforms have already been carried out, the 2013 report mentioned the need to intensify the restructuring of state-owned enterprises. In their questions during this Trade Policy Review some Members reiterated that the structural transformation is not yet complete, resulting in an uneven playing field between the state and the private sector. They deem further reforms to be required, including on to the issue of state trading and price stabilization.

3.12. The number of 100% state-owned enterprises fell from 1,309 to 487 in the last decade. Additionally, the government continues to hold a controlling stake in 185 enterprises. The banking sector, for example, is dominated by state-owned commercial banks. State-owned enterprises also dominate the telecommunications market, including the delivery of internet services.

3.13. In 2019, the Prime Minister of Viet Nam approved the overall project on economic restructuring. The Government of Viet Nam has enacted a number of laws and regulations to implement its objectives. Among other things, amendments to the Investment Law aim to equalize business conditions for state-owned, foreign-invested, and domestic private enterprises. Fully respecting the national specifics of these measures, I do believe that we, the WTO community, can draw inspiration from the course of action taken by Viet Nam in this respect.

Regional and Bilateral Trade Agreements

3.14. Viet Nam considers that participation in regional trade agreements is a way to advance its international integration. In that regard, ASEAN is considered to be Viet Nam's cornerstone. Among other agreements, Viet Nam has recently become Party to the CPTPP-Agreement and RCEP. In addition, the Free Trade Agreement between Viet Nam and the European Union entered into force on 1 August 2020 and the EU-Viet Nam Investment Protection Agreement is in the process of ratification.

3.15. These agreements offer the EU and Viet Nam good opportunities to exchange views on how to promote trade for sustainable development: trade for the benefit of all, companies both big and small, women and men alike, while respecting nature and the environment.

3.16. Viet Nam is not yet a Contracting Party to the WTO Plurilateral Agreement on Government Procurement. Nevertheless, the report notes that Viet Nam made its first commitments in the CPTPP-Agreement and the EU-Viet Nam FTA to open up its government procurement procedures to foreign suppliers bidding directly from abroad. The government procurement chapters of both agreements are based to a large extent on the GPA. These first commitments will hopefully be a step towards committing to WTO disciplines on government procurement and opening up additional opportunities for Vietnamese businesses.

Investment

3.17. Viet Nam's investment regime has been substantially revised since its previous Review in 2013. By updating its legal framework, Viet Nam intends to equalize the treatment accorded to Vietnamese and foreign investors and to attract more foreign direct investment. The reports note that further investment is likely to be needed to raise Viet Nam's potential growth path.

3.18. Most of Viet Nam's inward FDI was destined for the manufacturing sector. FDI in Viet Nam's manufacturing sector is dominated by electronic multinationals and apparel producers engaged in processing and final assembly. The investment in these segments is positively correlated to productivity. An IMF working paper shows that Viet Nam's deep engagement in global value chains improves the capacity of local firms that supply those foreign-owned firms.

3.19. Despite these positive developments, opportunities to further improve the investment climate exist. For example, procedures for entering the Vietnamese market could be further streamlined to limit administrative burdens. In some sectors foreign equity caps of between 30 and 70% are in force, including in banking, telecoms and transport. Approval from the Prime Minister is required for

specific investment projects, including all projects valued at more than USD 214 million. In addition, the report notes that the hiring of foreign workers is subject to the approval of the Chairman of the local People's Committee, based on employers' needs that cannot be covered by Vietnamese workers.

Services

3.20. Services are the main sector in the Vietnamese economy. But trade in services remains a very small component of Viet Nam's foreign trade. Viet Nam imports more services than it exports.

3.21. In light of the growing productivity in the services sector, there is good reason to believe that Viet Nam's trade in services will continue to grow in the future, especially when it will become easier to travel again as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.22. Viet Nam is not yet a formal participant in one of the Joint Statement Initiatives in services. Joining these negotiations may give further impetus to Viet Nam's services sector. Recently, Thailand and Australia gave a presentation on similarities between Domestic Regulation provisions in the RCEP Agreement and the JSI. It appears that Viet Nam is already bound by and committed to most of the disciplines in the Domestic Regulation JSI through its commitments in regional trade agreements.

ICT Goods and Telecommunications

3.23. Manufacturing is becoming increasingly important to the Vietnamese economy. In 2019, more than 11 million Vietnamese were working in the manufacturing sector. Exports are crucial for this sector and the export of manufactured goods is crucial for the Vietnamese economy. Whereas the contribution of manufacturing to GDP rose by a few percentage points to 18%, manufacturing exports more than doubled during the period under review.

3.24. In particular, the production of footwear and garments rose substantially during the review period. Apart from textiles, Viet Nam has emerged as an important manufacturing center for ICT equipment, in particular smartphones and consumer electronics. Viet Nam's manufacturing exports are also dominated by ICT products and textiles. The export of telephones and spare parts accounted for an astonishing 27% of total merchandise exports in 2019.

3.25. Interestingly, Viet Nam mostly imports electronic products as intermediate goods and subsequently exports electronic products as final consumer goods. Whereas Viet Nam imports most from China, most of Viet Nam's exports are destined for the United States. It comes as no surprise that rising trade tensions in recent years have also affected Viet Nam.

3.26. Viet Nam has joined the Information Technology Agreement. WTO research shows that Viet Nam has recorded the highest annual increase in exports of ITA products of all ITA members. In addition, Viet Nam's exports of ITA products rose more than the export of any other product group. Viet Nam's share in the world exports of ITA-2 expansion products is also increasing. Viet Nam has, however, not yet decided to join the ITA-expansion.

3.27. Viet Nam's telecommunications market continued to grow in recent years. This expansion is expected to be sustained in the coming years, given the government's plan to promote the application and development of IT solutions to meet objectives of sustainable economic growth and integration. The development of IT-related activities in the country continues to boost the demand for telecommunications services. The government intends to develop software and digital content outsourcing services to enable a thriving telecommunications industry. Yet, some Members have raised concerns regarding the Law on Cybersecurity and its implementation measures, which would affect a wide array of digital service suppliers. Concerns exist regarding data localization and local presence requirements as well as regarding the protection of personal data.

Outlook

3.28. Viet Nam's prospects are promising. Viet Nam's Report states that it strives to become, by 2030, a developing country with modern industry, high-average income, efficient and effective

institutions, and a dynamic and sustainable economy. By 2045, Viet Nam aims to be a developed and high-income country.

3.29. Deputy Minister, I am encouraged by Viet Nam's economic development during the period under review and hopeful that Viet Nam will overcome existing challenges and manage to achieve these ambitious goals. As the past has shown, the multilateral trading system and the WTO can contribute to delivering these objectives. Deputy Minister, I wish you and your delegation a productive Trade Policy Review. Thank you.

4 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

ISRAEL

4.1. Israel would like to thank you, the discussant, H.E. Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen (Netherlands), and the Secretariat for the detailed reports. Israel also welcomes Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, as the Head of delegation. Although in modern history the ties between our two countries can be traced back to the 70s, Israel and Viet Nam's formal relations began in 1993. Since then, there has been an exponential growth primarily through trade. We look forward to continuing and increasing trade as Israel views Viet Nam as a close economic partner and a gateway to the ASEAN Economic Community.

4.2. The bilateral trade between Israel and Viet Nam is growing steadily, reflecting a growing mutual interest of both business and industrial sectors. Bilateral trade between Israel and Viet Nam reached USD 1,135 million in 2020, a slight rise from USD 1,100 million in 2019. This trend does not seem to be slowing down. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, trade revenue between the two countries stood at USD 791 million during the first half of 2020 and topped USD 1 billion only a few weeks later.

4.3. Israel's main exports to Viet Nam are dominated by electronics and machinery, agricultural technology and equipment, chemicals, minerals, and technological services. On Viet Nam's side, its exports to Israel include food, coffee, natural products, textiles, and shoes.

4.4. The existing bilateral trade profile is one reason why Israeli companies are interested in agriculture, investment, startups, applying technology in production, cybersecurity, and information technology.

4.5. Our interest in capitalizing and mutually benefiting from increased and more diversified trade is reflected by our ongoing negotiation on a free trade agreement between Viet Nam and Israel, which we hope we can conclude as soon as possible. The FTA between our countries would mark an important milestone in Viet Nam-Israel bilateral relations and will serve as a platform for enhanced cooperation in various areas of trade.

4.6. During this TPR exercise, Israel submitted some questions to Viet Nam, and we look forward to reviewing the replies in due course. The areas of interest for Israel include intellectual property, services, and government procurement.

4.7. In the WTO, Viet Nam is a valued partner and an active contributor to the Organization's success. In that sense, Israel encourages Viet Nam to join the other JSIs it is not participating in yet. Israel would especially highlight the e-commerce JSI, which is an area where we see great potential for mutual benefits, that is, for other WTO Members and Viet Nam.

4.8. On that note, and as noted in the Secretariat report, Viet Nam has been an observer in the WTO Committee on Government Procurement since December 2012. Israel would also encourage Viet Nam to begin its process of accession in this agreement. It could be the first step in increasing participation in the agreement across the region while at the same time benefiting Viet Nam with open, fair, and transparent conditions of competition in major government procurement markets.

4.9. As we are nearing the half-year mark, Israel looks forward to Viet Nam's continued constructive engagement and contributions towards our work at the WTO with a view towards a successful Ministerial Conference.

4.10. Finally, Israel looks forward to continuing our collaboration with Viet Nam and its delegation in Geneva. Israel wishes Viet Nam a successful TPR.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM ON BEHALF OF ASEAN

4.11. It is a great pleasure to warmly welcome the delegation of Viet Nam led by Deputy Minister Tran Quoc Khanh of the Ministry of Industry and Trade to their second Trade Policy Review. We thank Viet Nam for its government report and statement. We would also like to thank

H.E. Ambassador Monique T.G. Van Daalen of the Netherlands for her role as discussant and the WTO Secretariat for its comprehensive report.

4.12. Viet Nam has been an ASEAN Member State since 1995 and has been an active contributor in the development of the ASEAN Community's regional integration and cooperation efforts. During its ASEAN Chairmanship last year, despite the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, it has successfully delivered on its Chairmanship theme of "Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN" by helping build an ASEAN Community that is increasingly united in the face of regional and global challenges. It has also facilitated the delivery of significant economic outcomes such as the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and other regional initiatives to address and foster recovery from the pandemic.

4.13. ASEAN commends Viet Nam's impressive economic transformation over the past 30 years, with recent sustained high growth rates and a steep decline in the poverty rate from above 70% in the early 1990s to below 6% in 2019. Its GDP per capita reached over USD 2,700 in 2019, largely in part due to the strong and clear vision that the Vietnamese leadership has instituted, and determination in which they have implemented important market reforms.

4.14. We note from the Secretariat's report that Viet Nam's economic expansion in recent years was underpinned by robust domestic demand and manufacturing exports. Since its last Review in 2013, Viet Nam has further integrated into the world economy, with its ratio of trade to GDP increasing from 165% in 2013 to 210% in 2019, which reflects Viet Nam's active participation in global value chains (GVC). In 2019, Viet Nam's exports to ASEAN Member States accounted for 9.4% of its total exports, while ASEAN accounted for 12.7% of Viet Nam's imports.

4.15. Viet Nam's trade policies recognize international economic integration as a key driver for its institutional improvement, economic growth, and development. ASEAN appreciates the importance Viet Nam attached to its WTO Membership since its accession in 2007. We also recognize Viet Nam's active engagement and commitment to the rules-based multilateral trading system which plays a central role in its international integration strategy.

4.16. Over the review period, Viet Nam actively engaged in various WTO negotiations and regular work, including the discussions on WTO reform and fisheries subsidies where Viet Nam has been constructive in its engagement. Viet Nam also most capably chaired the ASEAN Committee in Geneva last year amidst the COVID-19 crisis.

4.17. Together with Viet Nam, ASEAN reaffirms our strong commitment to uphold an open, inclusive, transparent, non-discriminatory and rules-based multilateral trading system as embodied in the WTO.

4.18. Some ASEAN Member States have submitted written questions to Viet Nam and we would like to express our appreciation in advance for Viet Nam's written responses.

4.19. We would also like to thank the delegation in Viet Nam for their constructive engagement and commend the contribution of H.E. Ambassador Le Thi Tuyet Mai and the members of the Permanent Mission in Geneva for their hard work. We wish Viet Nam a successful second Trade Policy Review.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

4.20. Brunei Darussalam associates itself with the ASEAN statement just delivered and reiterates the warm welcome to the delegation from Viet Nam and our appreciation for the extensive reports provided by the Government of Viet Nam and the WTO Secretariat, and once again thank Ambassador Van Daalen of the Netherlands for her comprehensive summary.

4.21. Brunei Darussalam and Viet Nam established diplomatic relations in 1992, and was further strengthened in 2019 when our bilateral relations were elevated to a "Comprehensive Partnership". This partnership spans a wide range of areas of cooperation including trade, energy, agriculture and fisheries, labour, education, defense, tourism, and people-to-people exchanges at the highest level on both sides. Indeed, bilateral trade flows between our two countries have increased in the last five years.

4.22. Regionally, as a fellow member of ASEAN, Viet Nam has played a leading role in the Organization, particularly as Chair of ASEAN last year during a period of unprecedented global turmoil with the advent of the global pandemic, COVID-19. Viet Nam was able to skillfully and quickly adapt to the evolving norms of international diplomacy, and is an example which Brunei Darussalam appreciatively looks up to in our chairmanship efforts this year.

4.23. Viet Nam is also an active international player, having signed and ratified a number of major free trade agreements, most notably the RCEP and the CPTPP, both of which Brunei Darussalam is also a member of, in line with the goals espoused by Viet Nam's 8th National Congress to "[build] an open economy and [integrate] with the region and the world."

4.24. We also share the belief in a fair, open and rules-based multilateral trading system, as embodied by the WTO, and supported by organizations such as APEC which Viet Nam also led capably in 2017.

4.25. It is this strong commitment to international economic integration that has enabled Viet Nam to transform over the past 30 years into a strong "lower-middle-income emerging economy", lifting 45 million people out of poverty, and for this we warmly congratulate Viet Nam on its achievements, and wish them a successful second Trade Policy Review. We would also like to commend H.E. Ambassador Mai and her team at the Permanent Mission in Geneva on all their hard work, especially in the past year and a half, our warmest congratulations.

JAPAN

4.26. Let me first extend a warm welcome to this second TPR meeting to the distinguished delegation of Viet Nam headed by H.E. Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade. We sincerely appreciate the dedicated efforts made by Viet Nam and the WTO Secretariat to prepare the insightful reports shared with the Members in advance of today's Review. We are also grateful to the discussant, H.E. Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen, Ambassador of the Netherlands, for her insightful remarks.

4.27. In this review period, Viet Nam's economy has been steadily developing at the highest level among the ASEAN members, although it has been hit by the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Viet Nam is an important trading partner for Japan. As we are one of Viet Nam's major FDI partners, the number of Japanese companies doing business in the country has been increasing. Japan, as the long-standing largest supporting country for Viet Nam, will continue to provide cooperation toward Viet Nam's robust and high-quality economic growth.

4.28. Viet Nam has concluded EPAs with 15 Members, including our Viet Nam-Japan EPA. We acknowledge that Viet Nam has been proactively proceeding with RTA negotiations, including the CPTPP and the recently signed RCEP. We appreciate Viet Nam's joining of these high-level EPAs and we expect it to implement these EPAs appropriately. We are sure that Viet Nam's participation in these EPAs will help contribute to a fairer and more liberalized global economic environment.

4.29. When it comes to domestic measures for trade facilitation, Japan commends the reform to enhance the customs procedure with the national single window and the electronic customs clearance. However, there is still room for improvements such as enhancement of information about the relevant systems and procedures, as well as the uniform interpretation of the HS nomenclature.

4.30. As we recognize that the increasing number of counterfeit and pirated products in Viet Nam is a serious issue that also adversely affects our market. We acknowledge Viet Nam is going to reform the Intellectual Property Law. We expect this reform will be consistent with the TRIPS Agreement. At the same time, we request Viet Nam to consider the introduction of a system that would enable private parties to demand disclosure by Internet Service Providers of the identity of anonymous senders distributing information that infringes on others' rights.

4.31. In February this year, the Ministry of Public Security issued the Draft Decree on Personal Data Protection. We expect the implementation of the Decree to be consistent with GATS Article 17 and other relevant provisions in EPAs such as CPTPP and RCEP. Bearing in mind the importance of a fair competitive environment, Japan would like to underscore that the obligation to store personal data in Viet Nam would create a disadvantage for foreign businesses.

4.32. On technical requirements, the requirement for products that are not for sale in the Vietnamese market to have labelling written in Vietnamese is imposing additional costs on manufacturers. Japan is concerned that this requirement will adversely affect foreign investment. We also request that an exemption be provided for this obligation, as it appears to be irrelevant for the purpose of consumer protection.

4.33. In conclusion, Japan appreciates Viet Nam making this TPR meeting possible in spite of the current situation with the pandemic. We wish Viet Nam a successful and productive TPR.

CANADA

4.34. We welcome the opportunity to participate in the second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam.

4.35. First, we commend Viet Nam's commitment to the WTO and to rules-based trade, particularly at this time when daunting economic challenges and post-pandemic recovery efforts require global collaboration. We also commend Viet Nam on the progress it has made to open its economy and welcome foreign investment and trade since its last Trade Policy Review. We are pleased to have worked with Viet Nam within the CPTPP, in the context of APEC, and at the WTO to underscore the need for global cooperation on trade. We acknowledge Viet Nam's support for the Declaration on Facilitating the Movement of Essential Goods and for the Statement on COVID-19 by APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade.

4.36. Since its last Trade Policy Review, Viet Nam's business environment has seen significant improvements. According to the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2020 Report, Viet Nam now ranks 70th among 190 economies, up from 99th in 2013. The revision of both the Enterprise Law and the Investment Law in July 2015, meant to equalize business conditions for SOEs, foreign-invested enterprises, and the domestic private sector, seems to be having the desired impacts, including an increase in the number of fields eligible for public-private partnership (PPP) projects.

4.37. Canada recognizes the significant improvements to Viet Nam's business environment over recent years. As Viet Nam strives to further enhance the simplicity, predictability, and transparency of its business environment, we would like to highlight a few areas where further action is warranted.

4.38. Firstly, while we recognize Viet Nam's commitments on government procurement under the CPTPP, "Buy National" requirements and other price preference policies remain key elements of Viet Nam's government procurement law. We would encourage Viet Nam to continue modernizing its domestic procurement regime and to consider the possibility of acceding to the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA).

4.39. Secondly, we understand that Viet Nam has made great efforts to facilitate foreign business investment to develop Viet Nam's transportation system and believe it would be beneficial to clarify the mechanisms established to facilitate foreign investment in this sector. In addition, we welcome the consideration of further exemptions or liberalization of existing requirements for foreign investment or participation of foreign service suppliers in order to help with the continued development of Viet Nam's transportation system.

4.40. Thirdly, regarding intellectual property rights, we acknowledge Viet Nam's ongoing legislative and administrative updates and reforms, such as its progress in addressing online piracy and its revised Law on Technology Transfer. We also commend Viet Nam on its recent work to develop a national IP Strategy.

4.41. Canada thanks Viet Nam for its recent efforts in meeting its WTO transparency requirements, including its 2014 to 2017 notifications on agriculture domestic support. In addition, we would encourage Viet Nam to actively participate in the phase II work of the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment. We would also encourage Viet Nam to participate in discussions on e-commerce and services domestic regulation.

4.42. We have submitted written questions that reflect some of the concerns raised today. We look forward to Viet Nam's responses, and to a constructive exchange of views on all aspects of Viet Nam's trade policy.

UKRAINE

4.43. On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, I would like to warmly welcome Deputy Minister Tran Quoc Khanh and the entire delegation of Viet Nam.

4.44. We would also like to thank WTO Secretariat and the Government of Viet Nam for the corresponding reports and express appreciation to H.E. Mrs. Monique Van Daalen for her meaningful analysis.

4.45. Ukraine commends Viet Nam for its positive economic performance represented by constant GDP growth, rise of GDP per capita, and sharp decline of the poverty rate.

4.46. It is important to note that Viet Nam pays deep attention to processes of international economic integration as a key driver for its institutional improvement, economic growth, and development.

4.47. At a multilateral level, Ukraine appreciates Viet Nam's viewpoint to support a fair, open and rule-based multilateral trading system.

4.48. In terms of bilateral trade relations, Viet Nam is a prospective trading partner of Ukraine.

4.49. In 2020, the Ukrainian-Vietnamese trade in goods amounted to USD 644.6 million (↑ 22.5% comparably to 2019). The volume of bilateral trade in agricultural products amounted to USD 179.6 million in 2020 (↑ 79.6%).

4.50. Ukraine is interested in further market access improvements and reaffirms readiness for enhancing cooperation with Viet Nam, including in the agricultural sector to increase bilateral trade and investments.

4.51. The reports, prepared by Viet Nam and the WTO Secretariat, raised questions in a number of areas – as detailed in Ukraine's written submissions to this Review. The main themes addressed were: measures of the Strategy on Exports and Imports for 2011-20; conditions regarding licences and certificates that might apply to investment; approval procedure of investment projects and the role of responsible authorities; operation of the National Investment Information System for Private Sector; customs valuation; allocation of quotas for eggs and sugar; import prohibitions and import licensing requirements; particularities of intellectual property regime; measures taken to reduce negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, etc.

4.52. We are looking forward to receiving replies to the outstanding questions and wish the delegation of Viet Nam a successful TPR.

CHILE

4.53. We extend a warm welcome to the delegation of Viet Nam, headed by the Honourable Mr Tran Quoc Khanh, Vice Minister of Industry and Trade.

4.54. We also welcome the Mission of Viet Nam to the WTO in Geneva, headed by Ambassador Le Thi Tuyet Mai, and Ambassador Van Daalen (Netherlands), who will be discussant of this Review, as well as the Secretariat, whom we thank for the report that it has prepared for this exercise.

4.55. On 25 March 2021, Viet Nam and Chile celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations. Our country was the second Latin American nation to establish an embassy in that country, which led to a rapprochement between our nations despite the geographical distance separating us.

4.56. We have important commonalities that unite us, such as the fight against climate change, protecting the oceans and environmental conservation.

4.57. The friendship between our nations has resulted not only in our country's broad support for Viet Nam joining APEC and this House, but also made it possible for our nations to sign a free trade agreement 10 years ago, Chile being the first country outside ASEAN to conclude a treaty independently with Viet Nam. Today, we are CPTPP partners.

4.58. Viet Nam and Chile strongly support the multilateral trading system and the role of the WTO, actively participating in the various ongoing negotiations, including those related to prohibitions on fisheries subsidies and the Informal Working Group on MSMEs. In my capacity as coordinator of the Joint Initiative on Investment Facilitation, we would love to have Viet Nam as a participant soon. I would therefore like to ask the delegation of Viet Nam if they are in the process of considering such a participation and when they expect a decision to be taken.

4.59. For this Review, we have raised 10 questions in areas such as adaptation of your forest industry, customs procedures and tariff matters, participation in global value chains and gender mainstreaming. We are grateful for the responses submitted, which are being analysed by our technical teams in capital.

4.60. With regard to the reports circulated for this Review, we would like to highlight the progress made in Viet Nam's growth rates, despite of the pandemic. In this regard, we see positively that the Export and Import Strategy for 2011-2020, called "Vision 2030", has borne fruit in the medium term.

4.61. We would also like to highlight the various initiatives that Viet Nam is taking to promote inclusive trade through its trade policy. In particular, we would like to welcome those programmes that aim to support enterprises that hire workers with disabilities or a higher proportion of women; and the use of public procurement as a tool to promote small and medium-sized enterprises and ensure women's employment.

4.62. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that during APEC Viet Nam 2017, Viet Nam put inclusive and sustainable growth, innovation, SMEs and people in general at the core of its work, all of which formed the basis of the initiatives that Chile proposed two years later in APEC Chile 2019. The year hosted by Viet Nam also saw the establishment of the APEC Vision Group, which met for two years and delivered its recommendations on the future of APEC after the Bogor goals. I would like to highlight the leadership of Ambassador Nga in this process.

4.63. Finally, we are interested in the various initiatives you are undertaking to support the economy and counter the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the incentives provided to encourage participation in trade by all segments of the population.

4.64. We wish Viet Nam a successful review of its trade policy.

HONG KONG, CHINA

4.65. I would like to start by extending a warm welcome to Vietnamese delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, and also like to thank Ambassador Van Daalen of the Netherlands, for sharing with us her insights as discussant and the Secretariat for the comprehensive report prepared for this Review.

4.66. Hong Kong, China congratulates Viet Nam on its robust growth in external trade, which amounted to USD 518 billion in 2019 and was more than six times its value in 2007 when Viet Nam joined the WTO.

4.67. Hong Kong, China and Viet Nam have long been enjoying strong bilateral trade and economic relations. Viet Nam was HKC's 8th largest trading partner in 2020, while HKC was Viet Nam's 11th largest trading partner and 5th largest export market. The bilateral trade volume between Hong Kong, China and Viet Nam has recorded strong growth, with an average annual growth rate of 10% between 2016 and 2020, and a year-on-year increase of 16.7% in 2020.

4.68. We look forward to continued growth in our bilateral economic ties in the years to come, especially with the smooth implementation of the ASEAN-HKC Free Trade Agreement and the related Investment Agreement since June 2019.

4.69. Viet Nam and Hong Kong, China are both staunch supporters of WTO and the rules-based multilateral trading system. We welcome opportunities to continue to work with Viet Nam and other WTO Members to tackle the challenges facing the WTO at a time when responses to the pandemic and post-pandemic recovery are urgently required.

4.70. Now let me turn to several specific areas in Viet Nam's trade policies.

4.71. First, trade facilitation. We would commend Viet Nam's continued effort in reforming its custom procedures. For example, Viet Nam has completed and enhanced its customs risk management, implemented post-clearance inspection in accordance with international practices, implemented the national single window and ASEAN single window, and expanded the application of information technology and modern equipment to customs activities.

4.72. Viet Nam has also introduced various trade facilitation measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures include enhanced IT application for customs and goods clearance, expedited clearance of goods, reduced physical review of goods, and simplification of customs procedures for goods in transit or transshipment. We applaud Viet Nam's dedicated efforts in facilitating trade amidst this challenging time.

4.73. Second, agriculture. We note that there have not been substantial changes in Viet Nam's average applied MFN tariff on agricultural and non-agricultural products since the previous Review. At 18.1%, the average applied MFN tariff on agricultural products remains much higher than the 10.9% on non-agricultural products. We would encourage Viet Nam to further liberalize its agricultural sector.

4.74. Viet Nam has notified the WTO in August 2020 of its 20-day export quota on rice amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate Viet Nam's effort in maintaining transparency, as well as its restraints in imposing this emergency agricultural measure. Meanwhile, we also note with concerns that Viet Nam has not provided any notification on export subsidies since 2016, and its last notification to the WTO on domestic support covers only up to calendar year 2017. We would encourage Viet Nam to submit the outstanding notifications as soon as practicable.

4.75. Lastly on services, while Viet Nam has continued to liberalize trade in services progressively, state-owned enterprises still dominate various service sectors including banking and telecommunications, and there are six MFN exemptions in place relating to commercial presence, audio-visual and maritime transport services. We would encourage Viet Nam to consider removing these MFN exemptions and further promoting free trade and foreign investment in its services sectors.

4.76. Hong Kong, China would like to reiterate our commitment to fostering our economic and trade cooperation with Viet Nam, and to collaborating with Viet Nam in pursuing progressive liberalization of international trade. We thank Viet Nam for its replies to some of our written questions and look forward to receiving other outstanding replies. We wish Viet Nam a successful Trade Policy Review.

SWITZERLAND

4.77. I would like to start by extending a warm welcome to Viet Nam's delegation led by H.E. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade. I would also like to thank Ambassador Van Daalen for her valuable observations as a discussant, and the Secretariat for its substantive contribution to this Review.

4.78. It is a great pleasure for me to take the floor on this occasion, as Viet Nam and Switzerland are celebrating the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations this year. The ties between Viet Nam and Switzerland have developed in many areas over time, and we look forward to continuing to strengthen them in the future.

4.79. Over the last decades, Viet Nam has become one of the most open economies in the world. It has also performed particularly well in poverty reduction. In 2019, Viet Nam was one of the fastest growing economies globally, with a growth rate of over 7%. Despite the setback caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Viet Nam's economic fundamentals remain solid and its growth prospects are good. As highlighted in the report of the Secretariat, Viet Nam's proactive measures helped mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

4.80. Viet Nam has integrated itself rapidly and steadily in the world economy. It is a priority country of Swiss economic and development cooperation, and Switzerland also supported Viet Nam's process of accession to the WTO. Today, 15 years later, Viet Nam also takes part in numerous free trade

agreements, including two so-called mega-regional agreements: the CPTPP and the RCEP. This network of agreements will undoubtedly further enhance Viet Nam's economic integration and enable it to consolidate its role as a key player in global value chains.

4.81. Viet Nam and Switzerland, together with other EFTA States, are currently negotiating a free trade agreement. Viet Nam is our third largest trading partner in the ASEAN region. Swiss FDI in Viet Nam is also significant, with a number of Swiss companies active in various sectors, such as machinery, electronics, construction and pharmaceuticals. Building on our strong economic relationships, we look forward to a timely conclusion of the negotiations and the future opportunities that the agreement will bring about.

4.82. During the period under review, Viet Nam has implemented a number of reforms improving the investment and business climate. Noteworthy is the fact that Viet Nam is embracing digital transformation and has defined a number of goals and measures in order to further advance the digitalization of its economy and its public sector.

4.83. We note with satisfaction that during the period under review, Viet Nam has modernized its intellectual property (IP) system and that the protection of IP has improved significantly. We commend Viet Nam's efforts to improve its IP regime, while we note with concern the significant increase of reported IP infringement cases between 2013 and 2019. Therefore, we encourage Viet Nam to continue its efforts towards the improvement of the IP framework and its enforcement.

4.84. We would also like to encourage Viet Nam to further explore the idea of becoming a Party to the Government Procurement Agreement in the near future. Membership to the GPA could be an important incentive for Vietnamese enterprises, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises, to increase their export opportunities and reinforce their competitiveness on domestic and world markets.

4.85. We also welcome the adoption and entry into force of a new law on competition in 2019, which significantly reshaped Viet Nam's competition regime.

4.86. Switzerland has submitted a number of questions in writing ahead of this Trade Policy Review and we thank Viet Nam for its replies. In particular, we are thankful for the explanations provided by Viet Nam with regard to its applied MFN tariff rates and its measures concerning rice production and exports. We also thank Viet Nam for the information provided in response to our questions, notably concerning its new competition law, the proposed amendments to the IP law and measures in the telecommunications sector.

4.87. The reports highlight in many instances Viet Nam's impressive achievements, its liberalizations efforts and its willingness to pursue reforms, as well as its role as a strong supporter of the multilateral trading system. We thank Ambassador Thi Tuyet Mai and the Vietnamese delegation for their constructive contribution to the work to the WTO. We encourage Viet Nam to continue on this path.

4.88. To conclude, we would like to wish Viet Nam a successful outcome of this Trade Policy Review.

NEW ZEALAND

4.89. A very warm welcome to Deputy Minister Tran Quoc Khanh and his delegation from Ha Noi and also to Ambassador Le Thi Tuyet Mai and her team in Geneva. Thanks to the Secretariat and the Government of Viet Nam for the reports and preparations for the second Trade Policy Review, and the discussant, Ambassador Van Daalen for her remarks this morning.

4.90. New Zealand is fortunate to have a strong and long-standing trading relationship with Viet Nam. In the year to December 2020, Viet Nam was New Zealand's 14th largest two-way trading partner and a key market for New Zealand food and beverage.

4.91. New Zealand and Viet Nam are both members of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement. In 2018, we both became members of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership, and most recently we signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. New Zealand is committed to continue working with Viet Nam on the full implementation

of our shared agreements and commitments. As 'Strategic Partners', there is real potential for further, accelerated trade growth by utilising these commitments which increase market access, remove trade barriers, and improve trade facilitation.

4.92. New Zealand and Viet Nam share a commitment to multilateralism and international law. As New Zealand hosts APEC in 2021, we look forward to working with Viet Nam to advance common goals across the APEC agenda.

4.93. New Zealand commends Viet Nam for the recent work done to fulfill previously outstanding WTO notification obligations and encourage further improvement in the Member's notification procedures to avoid future notification delays. Notifications – including 'nil' notifications – are critical to the effectiveness and transparency of the WTO's monitoring function. As the Director-General has indicated and as has been highlighted in the Ottawa Group's Trade and Health communication to the General Council, this is even more important during the COVID-19 crisis. We encourage all Members to undertake their best efforts to fulfill their notification obligations. We acknowledge that this can be a resource-intensive process, and encourage Members to seek assistance from the Secretariat if required.

4.94. New Zealand has raised questions during this review with regards to Viet Nam's fisheries policies. New Zealand notes Viet Nam's progress in countering Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. We are interested to learn more from Viet Nam regarding how it ensures that those involved in IUU fishing do not benefit from domestic support to the fisheries sector.

4.95. New Zealand commends Viet Nam for its commitment to reducing greenhouse gases and supporting the greater use of renewable energies. New Zealand notes Viet Nam's Law on Energy Saving and Efficiency and the National Action Plan for Green Growth 2014-20 which promoted the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the use of clean and renewable sources of energy in a wide range of activities in agriculture and industry.

4.96. New Zealand commends Viet Nam's commitment to the rules-based multilateral trading system. We acknowledge the progress made by Viet Nam since the last Trade Policy Review and welcome the opportunity to be involved in this process. New Zealand looks forward to continue working with Viet Nam to advance our many common interests across our trade and economic relationship.

MALAYSIA

4.97. At the outset, Malaysia wishes to associate ourselves with the ASEAN statement, which was delivered by Brunei.

4.98. Malaysia is pleased to take part in the second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam and would like to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade and his delegation. We would also like to thank the discussant, H.E. Ambassador Monique T.G. Van Daalen of the Netherlands, for her comprehensive comments and analysis.

4.99. Malaysia would like to commend Viet Nam for its impressive economic performance during the period of 2013-2019 and for its positive economic growth rate of 2.9% in 2020. It is a remarkable achievement amid the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating the resilience of Viet Nam's economy.

4.100. Malaysia and Viet Nam share strong ties as ASEAN members. In 2020, Viet Nam was Malaysia's 11th largest global trading partner and 4th largest trading partner in ASEAN with a total trade value of USD 11.64 billion. Although trade with Viet Nam in 2020 decreased by 11.2% from USD 13.27 billion in 2019, we are optimistic that the bilateral trade will recover once the pandemic comes under control. We would also like to highlight that as of September 2020, a total of four manufacturing projects were approved in Malaysia with total investments worth USD 4.67 million.

4.101. At the multilateral front, we applaud Viet Nam's strong efforts in adhering to the various WTO Agreements, for example, in ratifying the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in 2015. We also appreciate Viet Nam's active and constructive participation in the discussions at the Cairns Group and the Joint Statement Initiative on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Malaysia would also like to commend Viet Nam's serious efforts towards trade liberalization by concluding and

ratifying various FTAs such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP).

4.102. Malaysia has submitted written questions on areas such as investment, government procurement and trade promotion measures. Malaysia also looks forward to obtaining further clarifications regarding the antidumping and safeguard measures implemented by Viet Nam during the review period and specific rules and regulations governing the timber and furniture industry.

4.103. We would also like to thank Ambassador Le Thi Tuyet Mai and her able team for their constructive engagement and contribution. We appreciate Viet Nam for the responses, and we shall examine these responses with great interest.

SINGAPORE

4.104. The Singapore delegation warmly welcomes Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, His Excellency Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, and our Vietnamese colleagues participating virtually from Hanoi. We thank Viet Nam for the comprehensive government report and statement, we commend the excellent work of the Mission under the leadership of Ambassador Mai. We also thank the TPRB Chair, Ambassador Athaliah Molokomme, the Secretariat, and the discussant, Ambassador Monique Van Daalen of the Netherlands, for their insightful perspectives. Allow me to make three points.

4.105. First, Singapore commends Viet Nam for its impressive achievements in developing its economy and weathering the COVID-19 pandemic. Viet Nam continued to sharply reduce its poverty rate and has made great strides in alleviating hunger and illiteracy. Economic growth has been consistent and robust, reaching a 10-year high of 7.1% in 2018. Viet Nam has also responded deftly to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing proactive measures at the national and local levels. In addition to adopting swift measures to contain the spread of the virus, Viet Nam introduced a series of fiscal measures and incentives to replace lost income and boost growth. These included a fiscal support package, fee cuts, tax payment deferrals and deductions, and financial incentives for employers and employees. As a result, economic recovery is forecasted to be 2.5% in 2020. Viet Nam also temporarily eliminated applied MFN tariffs on medical and certain personal protective equipment and did not introduce measures relating to import prohibitions, restrictions, and licensing in response to the pandemic. These actions reflect Viet Nam's commitment to keeping supply chains open.

4.106. Second, the long-standing and multi-faceted relations between Singapore and Viet Nam continue to grow from strength to strength. Viet Nam is Singapore's 10th largest trading partner. Bilateral trade has grown steadily over the past decade, doubling to S\$22.7 billion in 2020. Singapore was also the largest source of foreign investment into Viet Nam in 2020, with cumulative investments by the end of 2020 making Singapore the third largest foreign investor over the past 10 years. Despite global economic uncertainties, Singapore companies continue to see Viet Nam as an attractive investment destination. Singapore's largest FDI contribution in Viet Nam in 2020 was a USD 4 billion power production project in the Mekong Delta, which will create thousands of jobs and spur economic development in that region.

4.107. Third, on the regional front, Viet Nam has continued to play an active role in ASEAN's efforts to deepen economic integration. We congratulate Viet Nam for its successful ASEAN Chairmanship in 2020, amidst the challenging circumstances arising from the pandemic. During Viet Nam's Chairmanship, ASEAN members signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, which is now the largest trade bloc in history. ASEAN also took concrete steps to promote trade facilitation and supply chain connectivity, which was critical to the continued flow of essential goods during the pandemic. As ASEAN Chairman, Viet Nam also introduced various initiatives in the digital space, such as on cybersecurity intelligence cooperation and a pan-ASEAN roaming charge for mobile phones. We have confidence that Viet Nam will continue to support ASEAN's efforts to develop a digitally integrated region through collaborations on e-commerce, cross-border data flows, cybersecurity and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In this context, we encourage Viet Nam to join the JSI on E-Commerce.

4.108. Viet Nam has been an active and constructive Member of the WTO, participating in discussions on systemic issues, including WTO reform. We are heartened that during the review period, Viet Nam acceded to the Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA) and ratified the amendment

of the TRIPS Agreement. We look forward to learning more at this TPR about key issues such as transparency in its investment regime, the scientific basis and risk assessment of its Sanitary and Phytosanitary standards for meat and meat products, and the review of its applied shipping fees and surcharges.

4.109. Singapore looks forward to continue strengthening our cooperation with Viet Nam at all levels. We are confident that Viet Nam will continue its positive economic development trajectory and wish Viet Nam every success for its second TPR.

MEXICO

4.110. Mexico warmly welcomes the delegation of Viet Nam, headed by Mr Tran Quoc Khanh, Vice Minister of Industry and Trade. I also thank Ambassador Monique Van Daalen (Netherlands) for her thorough analysis, and the WTO Secretariat for its hard work in preparing this report.

4.111. Mexico acknowledges Viet Nam's outstanding economic performance during the review period, as well as the proactive measures taken by the Government to address the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that, despite the weakening of international trade, value chains did not lose momentum. This was reflected in an enviable GDP growth of 2.5% in 2020.

4.112. Similarly, Mexico congratulates Viet Nam on its decisive step in significantly reducing its poverty rate from over 70% in the early 1990s to less than 6% in 2019. Certainly an outstanding economic achievement by any standard.

4.113. Viet Nam is our twelfth trading partner, and we expect our trade and investment exchanges to strengthen in the coming years through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), to which we are both party.

4.114. With regard to WTO-related issues, during the period under review, counterfeiting and piracy, both in the physical and online markets in Viet Nam, continue to be of major concern, especially with regard to software, music, films, books and magazines, pharmaceuticals, pesticides and consumer goods.

4.115. However, it is important to highlight the process of modernization that Viet Nam has undergone in its intellectual property system, such as the National Intellectual Property Strategy with Visions to 2030, through which it is seeking to strengthen judicial enforcement, including criminal investigation. This strategy will surely yield good results for the protection of intellectual property rights, which will reflect positively on domestic and international trade.

4.116. Mexico welcomes that the number of wholly state-owned enterprises in Viet Nam has decreased from 1,309 at the end of 2011 to 487 at the end of 2019. However, our attention is drawn to the fact that the number remains high, even more so when considering that the banking sector is dominated by state-owned commercial banks.

4.117. Regarding agricultural tariffs, although all tariffs are bound and range between 0% and 40%, it is important to highlight the high level of average MFN tariffs for agricultural products, which was 18.1% in 2020. It is also important to note that these are almost twice the average for non-agricultural products.

4.118. Furthermore, Mexico congratulates Viet Nam on its Master Plan on Fisheries Development through 2020, Vision to 2030, which aims to turn fisheries into a highly productive sector. In this regard, it would be important for this Plan to guarantee the sustainability of fisheries in order to contribute to the conservation of marine resources and ensure it is in line with any possible commitments of this Organization.

4.119. To conclude, we recognize the great work that Viet Nam has undertaken in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), growing from a cumulative amount of USD 81.8 billion in 2013 to USD 161 billion in 2019, contributing to a significant share of production in different sectors and creating employment for more than 5 million people.

4.120. Finally, we thank Viet Nam for the responses provided to the questions raised by my delegation and wish it every success in this review.

CHINA

4.121. China warmly welcomes the delegation of Viet Nam, led by H.E. Deputy Minister Khanh, to the second Trade Policy Review and would like to thank the discussant, Ambassador Van Daalen for her insightful comments and guiding questions. Many thanks also go to you, Chair, and the Secretariat for the efforts to make this Review happen.

4.122. China would like to congratulate Viet Nam on its development achievements. The poverty rate of Viet Nam declined sharply from above 70% in the early 1990s to below 6% in 2019. The economy grew at an average rate of 6.6% between 2014 and 2018 and reached a 10-year high of 7.1% in 2018.

4.123. China and Viet Nam are close neighbours and enjoy long and traditional economic relationship. According to China's statistics, till the year 2020, China had been Viet Nam's biggest trading partner for 16 consecutive years. Despite the challenge of the COVID-19, trade volume increased by 18.7% in the year 2020 reaching USD 192 billion, which is strong evidence of close and robust bilateral economic ties between the two countries. Viet Nam is China's biggest trading partner among ASEAN countries.

4.124. The engagement in the multilateral trading system has also played an important role in Viet Nam's fast development. China commends Viet Nam's deeper engagement in WTO activities. In particular, we noted that Viet Nam submitted its instruments of acceptance for the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation in December 2015, and for the amendment of the TRIPS Agreement in January 2017. China also commends Viet Nam for its active effort in boosting trade and investment with partners through RTAs, including the most recently signed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

4.125. In the meantime, China is expecting Viet Nam to play a more active role in the WTO and we encourage Viet Nam to join the Investment Facilitation and other Joint Statement Initiatives, which we believe would further promote Viet Nam's development.

4.126. It is also applaudable that Viet Nam continues to improve its trade and investment environment by various means, including substantially updating investment regime and active participation in regional trade agreements. For example, the general cap of 49% for foreign acquisition of public companies operating in unconditional sectors was abolished in 2015.

4.127. China applauds these achievements and believes that Viet Nam is just another good example of economic success boosted by the accession to the WTO, domestic reforms and trade liberalization.

4.128. Having said that, China encourages Viet Nam to further improve its trade and investment policies and measures. On investment regime, concerns have been raised about unequal treatment towards foreign investors, difficult and time-consuming approval process for investment and establishment of businesses, as well as un-coordinated implementation of laws and regulations by responsible government agencies.

4.129. It is also noted that foreign participation in some sectors remains capped at levels between 30% and 51%. China would like to encourage Viet Nam to take more proactive actions to facilitate foreign investment.

4.130. For the purpose of this review, China has submitted questions to Viet Nam covering mainly foreign investment regime and trade policies and we thank Viet Nam for the response.

4.131. Finally, we sincerely hope this Trade Policy Review a great success.

THE SEPARATE CUSTOMS TERRITORY OF TAIWAN, PENGHU, KINMEN AND MATSU

4.132. On behalf of my delegation, I would first like to extend a warm welcome to the Viet Nam delegation, led by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, for its second Trade

Policy Review. I would also like to express our sincere thanks to the discussant, Ambassador Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen, for her in-depth discussion, as well as the WTO Secretariat for their hard work in preparing the reports.

4.133. Over the past 30 years, Viet Nam has achieved a remarkable economic success by greatly reducing its poverty rate from above 70% in the early 1990s to below 6% in 2019. Today, Viet Nam has become a lower-middle-income emerging economy. Its success builds on its further integration into the world economy, with its ratio of trade to GDP increasing from 165% in 2013 to 210% in 2019. Despite the weakened demand and reduced trade resulted from the COVID-19, Viet Nam has adopted proactive measures to maintain the momentum in its main exporting sectors. In particular, Viet Nam has introduced a series of fiscal measures and incentives such as a fiscal support package equivalent to 3.6% of GDP, fee cuts and tax payment deferrals, to replace lost income and boost growth.

4.134. On its participation in the multilateral trading system, Viet Nam has been very active in the WTO. In 2015, Viet Nam submitted its instruments of acceptance for the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation. In 2017, Viet Nam further approved the amendment of the TRIPS Agreement. Being a strong believer of the WTO dispute settlement body, Viet Nam has initiated 5 complaints during the review period. In line with consumer electronics as its main exporting sector, Viet Nam also participates in the Information Technology Agreement (ITA).

4.135. On the bilateral front, we have enjoyed strong economic ties with Viet Nam over the past three decades. We are Viet Nam's fourth largest foreign investor and its fifth largest trading partner. Last year, the value of bilateral trade between us amounted to USD 21 billion, accounting for 3.85% of Viet Nam's total foreign trade. From 1988 to 2018, we have invested in Viet Nam over USD 31.4 billion and around 80% of our investment was related to manufacturing. At the end of 2019, we updated our Bilateral Investment Agreement, which will certainly further strengthen our bilateral economic cooperation.

4.136. With Viet Nam's sound economic development and outlook, we would like to further encourage Viet Nam in the following areas. We suggest Viet Nam to consider joining the expansion of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA 2) to further boost its IT sectors. By adhering to the high standards E-Commerce requirements of CPTPP, Viet Nam may also consider participating in the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on e-commerce.

4.137. In conclusion, we commend Viet Nam on its achievements and the way forward. We look forward to continuing to deepen our bilateral economic and trade relations. We wish Viet Nam a very successful and constructive Review.

ARGENTINA

4.138. We would like to associate ourselves with the Members who have already welcomed the delegation of Viet Nam, headed by H.E. Tran Quoc Khanh, Vice Minister of Industry and Trade of Viet Nam. We extend our appreciation to the work of its Ambassador to this House, H.E. Le Thi Tuyet Mai, and to the discussant, Ambassador Van Daalen of the Netherlands, for her insightful reflections.

4.139. Viet Nam is one of the Argentina's most important trading partners. In 2019, it ranked sixth in terms of global bilateral trade and fifth in terms of exports for our country. In 2020 alone, imports from Viet Nam to our country increased by 14.6%, which illustrates our healthy trade links. We export mainly food and cereals to Viet Nam. From Viet Nam, we import machinery, electrical equipment, footwear, mechanical appliances and clothing.

4.140. Argentina welcomes Viet Nam's economic growth, which in 2018 reached the highest figure recorded in a decade. This economic growth, which exceeds the period under review and covers an almost uninterrupted period over the last 30 years, has allowed Viet Nam to become an emerging lower middle-income economy; which has been reflected in a significant improvement in the quality of life of its population.

4.141. Our country is pleased to note that economic growth in recent years has been due to the increase in domestic demand and manufacturing exports, as reflected in figure 1.2 of the Secretariat's report. It is notable in this regard that, during the period under review, manufacturing

exports have doubled. We believe that greater development of the physical transport infrastructure could contribute even further to Viet Nam's strong economic performance.

4.142. Equally commendable are Viet Nam's efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular through a series of fiscal measures and incentives adopted by its government. Particularly noteworthy in the various measures listed in box 1.1. of the Secretariat's report are tax reductions, tax deferrals and tax deductions.

4.143. With regard to trade policy itself, our country would like to highlight the implementation of Viet Nam's Customs Development Strategy. Under this strategy, the Customs Law of 2015 was adopted. We are confident that this and other similar measures will help to simplify customs procedures and requirements in the country. We are also confident that the early acceptance of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in 2015, and especially the final implementation of category A, B and C commitments by 2025, will further strengthen Viet Nam's trade regime.

4.144. For this trade policy review, we have submitted questions to Viet Nam related, inter alia, to the benefits granted under the so-called eco-industrial parks, the possibility of applying specific or compound import duties on products considered sensitive and their customs valuation regime. We thank Viet Nam in advance for its replies, which will be forwarded to our authorities in Buenos Aires.

4.145. In closing, we would like to wish the Vietnamese authorities a successful conclusion to this, their second trade policy review.

UNITED STATES

4.146. It is my pleasure and honour to warmly welcome Viet Nam's delegation led by Vice Minister Khanh, and we appreciate the reports prepared by the WTO Secretariat and the Government of Viet Nam for Viet Nam's second Trade Policy Review (TPR).

4.147. Viet Nam is an important economic partner of the United States, and our bilateral trade relationship has deepened significantly since Viet Nam's accession to the WTO in 2007. In 2019, U.S. goods and services two-way trade with Viet Nam totalled an estimated USD 81.3 billion. The United States continues to work closely with Viet Nam through our Trade and Investment Framework Agreement to strengthen our bilateral trade relationship and address priority issues.

4.148. The United States recognizes the importance of WTO Membership to Viet Nam and appreciates its expression of support for WTO reforms. We appreciate the leadership Viet Nam's Ambassador and Mission here continue to play in supporting the regular work of WTO Committees and in active negotiations and would encourage Viet Nam to take an even more prominent role here in the WTO. We commend Viet Nam for its continued economic reforms, including improvements to its legal framework, since the previous TPR. We would like to use the review today to highlight some of those areas, and to also identify and raise certain areas in which the Government of Viet Nam could make further improvements and implement additional reforms.

4.149. The United States welcomes efforts by Viet Nam to fully implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, beginning with the establishment of Viet Nam's National Trade Facilitation Committee. We note with interest Viet Nam's partnership with the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation to develop a modern customs bond system for the conditional release of goods. Once in place, Viet Nam will be the first country in Asia with such a comprehensive system. With support from USAID's Trade Facilitation Project, Viet Nam is now regularly reviewing its progress to implement its TFA category B and C commitments and is developing a forward-looking plan to ensure timely notifications. We would urge Viet Nam to consider joining the WTO Communication entitled, Supporting the Timely and Efficient Release of Global Goods Through Accelerated Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (G/TFA/W/25). A Rev. 4 will be issued in the near term and we welcome Viet Nam joining the United States and the 14 other cosponsors in making this important statement.

4.150. The United States also recognizes that Viet Nam has issued a number of measures to address origin fraud and illegal transit of goods through Viet Nam. We would appreciate an update on these measures and other actions taken by Viet Nam to address these issues.

4.151. The United States notes the importance Viet Nam has placed in advancing its digital economy in support of its broader growth and development goals. However, we have significant concerns with certain existing and proposed measures that may undermine the provision of services foundational to this digital future, which are frequently provided on a cross-border basis. For example, Viet Nam's Ministry of Public Security has issued a draft implementing decree for the Law on Cybersecurity that includes data localization and local presence requirements, and has recently released a draft Decree on Personal Data Protection that appears to replicate and expand the scope of data localizations requirements. We also are concerned that draft revisions to the Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC) Decree 6 on the Management, Provision, and Use of Radio and Television Services would impose significant new restrictions on legitimate on-demand suppliers of such programming. The United States would appreciate updates from Viet Nam on the status of these measures. We also note that Viet Nam maintains a local-agent requirement for cross-border advertising services, and that in 2020, MIC issued a revised draft of Decree 181 on Advertising Services that would remove Viet Nam's local-agent requirement. The United States would appreciate an update on the status of this revised draft.

4.152. In the area of agricultural trade, we would like to note that Viet Nam and the United States are both cosponsors of the proposed MC12 SPS Declaration and Work Program. We have sincerely appreciated Viet Nam's active engagement and partnership in this initiative.

4.153. The United States has concerns regarding SPS measures maintained by Viet Nam that restrict trade. We have posed a number of questions on food safety, pre-clearance and post-clearance inspections, animal health, maximum residue limits, pesticides, as well as the risk assessment and the proposed domestic ban for glyphosate. We look forward to receiving and reviewing Viet Nam's responses. As was the case in the previous TPR, the United States continues to encourage Viet Nam to provide notifications required by the SPS Agreement at an early stage to ensure a reasonable period of time for consideration of comments prior to finalizing laws and implementing regulations. We also would like to stress the importance of Viet Nam responding to official comments submitted by the United States.

4.154. We recognize efforts by the Government of Viet Nam to strengthen elements of its intellectual property regime, including efforts to amend the Law on Intellectual Property and continuing public awareness campaigns and training activities. However, the United States continues to have several concerns, including Viet Nam's heavy reliance on administrative enforcement actions, lack of coordination among ministries and agencies responsible for enforcement, and widespread counterfeiting and online piracy. We would appreciate updates on Viet Nam's plans to further strengthen its IP framework, including through upcoming revisions to the IP Law, and enhanced enforcement efforts.

4.155. The United States also recognizes Viet Nam's active engagement in the fisheries subsidies negotiations, and we welcome working together with Viet Nam and other Members to achieve a meaningful agreement. As a party to CPTPP, Viet Nam has already adopted fisheries subsidies disciplines and we recognize Viet Nam's efforts to reform its subsidy programs and prohibit the most harmful fisheries subsidies.

4.156. We appreciate the opportunity provided by this meeting to discuss Viet Nam's trade and investment policies. We are closely reviewing the responses we have received, and would like to note that at this time we have not yet received responses to all our advance written questions. We look forward to Viet Nam's responses to our questions, to working together to resolve outstanding issues and further strengthen our bilateral relationship, and to continued good cooperation here at the WTO and in ASEAN, APEC, and other fora.

AUSTRALIA

4.157. Viet Nam's economic growth over the past three decades is a great success story. Since reforms in the 1980s, it has evolved from a low-income, closed agricultural economy with heavy state involvement to a dynamic, mixed economy with a growing private sector. The country has ascended from being one of Asia's poorest to middle-income status, lifting 45 million people out of poverty. Viet Nam's strong public health response to COVID-19 also allowed its economy to continue to grow despite the pandemic in 2020 – one of the few countries in the world to do so.

4.158. Australia encourages Viet Nam to continue the process of trade policy reform and looks forward to continuing our support for Viet Nam's efforts to develop its economy further, as well as its greater integration into the global trading system. Australia welcomes the commitment expressed in Viet Nam's TPR Report to its involvement in regional and multilateral trade institutions. A more prosperous and confident Viet Nam will improve the quality of life of its citizens, contribute to regional security, and become an even more significant export market and trading partner for Australia.

4.159. Australia recognizes that in many areas a maturation of Viet Nam's relevant policy and institutional settings has taken place. This is reflected in areas such as: fiscal consolidation and the pursuit of a more stable monetary policy; improvements in Viet Nam's foreign investment framework; and modernization of its competition policy. Australia notes Viet Nam has reduced the degree of state involvement in some important sectors of the economy, and considers this will provide a valuable boost for efficiency and productivity. But we note the extent of state control of the economy remains extensive. Changes in Viet Nam's intellectual property and government procurement policies taken pursuant to membership of the CPTPP will also be positive and Australia looks forward to these developments.

4.160. We note Viet Nam's steady pursuit of its economic integration agenda through its Membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO), ASEAN and APEC. Given the importance of agricultural trade to both of our economies, Australia values Viet Nam's positive contribution, including through its Membership of the Cairns Group, to continuing agricultural trade reform. We look forward to working with Viet Nam in the leadup to MC12 to achieve a meaningful outcome on agriculture, in particular on domestic support.

4.161. Services trade is of increasing importance to Viet Nam's economy. Viet Nam has recently taken on comprehensive services domestic regulation commitments in RCEP. We encourage Viet Nam to join the WTO Services Domestic Regulation Joint Statement Initiative (JSI). This JSI will provide greater certainty to global service providers and help support Viet Nam's long-term economic growth.

4.162. Australian businesses and importers have reported Viet Nam's implementation of trade commitments, such as acceptance of digital certificates of origin under the CPTPP, has been inconsistent. More broadly, customs procedures when inconsistently applied have acted as constraints to trade. These kinds of border clearance barriers affect a variety of traders, particularly through biosecurity and related certification issues. Australia encourages Viet Nam to fully implement its commitments under all trade agreements.

4.163. Australia welcomes Viet Nam joining the Trade Facilitation Agreement in 2015, and notes the steps Viet Nam has taken already to implementing the agreement. We look forward to Viet Nam finalizing implementation of all commitments by 2025 as scheduled. We note Viet Nam's participation in the Information Technology Agreement, and would encourage it to consider joining the agreement's expansion.

4.164. Australia also looks forward to working with Viet Nam and all other AANZFTA parties on the AANZFTA upgrade negotiations – the upgrade presents an opportunity to enhance economic integration and maximize the agreement's contribution to the region's economic recovery.

4.165. Digital trade is contributing an increasing amount to global economic growth. Viet Nam has made important commitments in its FTAs to support digital trade, including to support business and traders through cross-border data flows. Australia encourages Viet Nam to continue to support this important area of trade by ensuring a supportive regulatory environment and through full implementation of its FTA commitments into the future.

4.166. A further reduction in trade barriers will be an important part of Viet Nam's domestic economic reform process, strengthening trade and competitiveness and supporting further integration into global value chains and long-term economic growth. Continuing structural reform of the economy is essential if Viet Nam is to realize its full potential.

4.167. Let me conclude by wishing Viet Nam and its delegation all the very best for its Trade Policy Review and we look forward to continuing working with Viet Nam into the future.

BRAZIL

4.168. Brazil extends a warm welcome to the delegation of Viet Nam, headed by Deputy Minister Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh and to the Vietnamese team in Geneva. I also thank you, Chair, for the very useful introduction, and the discussant, Ambassador Van Daalen for her very thoughtful comments, as well as the Secretariat for its report.

4.169. The importance placed by Brazil to this Trade Policy Review is reflected in the number of questions submitted to Viet Nam – 42 in total – ranging from SPS matters to telecommunications; from market access to civil aviation policies.

4.170. Brazil appreciates and shares Viet Nam's interest in the last few years to deepen economic and commercial ties between our two countries.

4.171. In 2020, in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, bilateral trade grew by 0.3%, in excess of USD 4.5 billion, an historic record.

4.172. For the second year in a row, Viet Nam is Brazil's main ASEAN trade partner and since 2020 16th biggest trade partner worldwide.

4.173. The first months of 2021 have confirmed the upward trend in bilateral trade, with an impressive 3.7% increase in relation to the same period of 2020.

4.174. With regard to investments, we believe there is significant room for expansion. There are at least three Brazilian companies operating in Viet Nam and we expect and welcome Vietnamese FDI in Brazil.

4.175. Turning to the civil aviation sector, my delegation notes with satisfaction several points of convergence between modernization practices in Viet Nam and in Brazil, in the direction of more liberalization and openness to foreign investment, as well as in rules for airport infrastructure concession processes.

4.176. As we aim for further expansion of our bilateral trade flows, Brazil looks forward to engaging constructively with Vietnamese authorities to find solutions for the opening of their market to some Brazilian agricultural products.

4.177. Brazil is hopeful bilateral talks will be held without undue delay and in a transparent manner, compatible with our mutual goal to fulfill the potential for growth of our bilateral trade and economic relations, for the common benefit of our producer and consumers.

4.178. Let me conclude by wishing Viet Nam a very successful and productive Trade Policy Review.

EUROPEAN UNION

4.179. On behalf of the European Union, I would like to welcome the delegation of Viet Nam led by Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade. I would also like to thank the WTO Secretariat and the Government of Viet Nam for their reports, which form the basis for our discussion today. Let me extend also our appreciation to the discussant, H.E. Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen (Netherlands) for giving us her views on the country's main trade features.

4.180. The EU welcomes this opportunity to discuss developments in Viet Nam's trade policies and practices since its first WTO Trade Policy Review in 2013.

4.181. Viet Nam is a dynamic emerging country and has become one of the EU's main partners in Southeast Asia. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade is being felt across the globe, and Viet Nam is no exception.

4.182. Since 1986, impressive reforms have been carried out towards a more market-oriented economy, with further transformation still ongoing. EU-Viet Nam relations have developed significantly, which the recent EU-Viet Nam trade agreement is further consolidating. EU-Viet Nam trade flows have increased exponentially from 2014 to 2018, from EUR 24,9 billion to

EUR 42,8 billion, respectively, making Viet Nam the second biggest trading partner in ASEAN. The year 2019 has reconfirmed this trend with a trade balance of EUR 45,5 billion.

4.183. During the period under review, Viet Nam's economy has been strong, with an average annual GDP growth of 6.6% between 2014 and 2018. Robust domestic demand, export-oriented manufacturing and foreign direct investment have supported Viet Nam's economic transformation and expansion. The services sector is the main contributor to both GDP (about 46% in 2019) and employment (about 35% of the labour force), while manufacturing activities are growing and agriculture, forestry and fishing activities remain important.

4.184. The EU commends Viet Nam's strong commitment to the multilateral trading system. The EU welcomes Viet Nam's ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in 2015 and the amendment of the TRIPS Agreement in January 2017. We also note some positive developments toward a more stable and sustainable business environment with Viet Nam's revision of the Enterprise Law, the Investment Law and the adoption of a new Investment framework for public-private-partnerships (PPPs). The EU encourages Viet Nam to consider becoming a Party to the plurilateral Agreement on Government Procurement.

4.185. In the WTO, in addition to the multilateral negotiations on fisheries subsidies, the EU works with Viet Nam on micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. The EU calls on Viet Nam to participate in the Joint Statement Initiatives on e-commerce, investment facilitation for development, and domestic regulation in services, which constitute an important and forward-looking agenda for international trade and WTO.

4.186. With reference to our bilateral relationship, the EU-Viet Nam Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation (PCA) marked the EU's commitment to strengthen and broaden the scope of the mutually beneficial partnership with Viet Nam (entered into force in 2016). For years, Viet Nam has benefited considerably from the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP), which has facilitated expansion of Vietnamese exports to the EU market. Recently, the EU and Viet Nam Trade Agreement entered into force on 1 August 2020 and an Investment Protection Agreement was signed in 2019. The broad scope of the trade agreement leads to a strengthened cooperation between the EU and Viet Nam in a very high number of areas. We also work closely with Viet Nam in the context of the EU-ASEAN Cooperation Agreement with the goal to ensure an effective environment for trade and investment relations.

4.187. The EU would also like to highlight a few challenges, some related to the questions we addressed earlier. The EU encourages Viet Nam to continue on the path to reform its state sector. We attach importance to a transparent and accelerated process where state-owned enterprises after being transformed, can and will function in heed to market forces on an equal footing with other economic operators.

4.188. We also call on Viet Nam to ensure that pharmaceutical products, which account for an important part of the EU trade flows with Viet Nam, can be placed on the Vietnamese market in conformity with international standards.

4.189. In addition, we encourage Viet Nam to strengthen its attempts to combat fraud, corruption and illicit trade.

4.190. Finally, on behalf of the EU, I wish the delegation of Viet Nam a successful TPR.

COLOMBIA

4.191. We would like to welcome the distinguished delegation of Viet Nam, which is here with us today, headed by the Vice Minister of Industry and Trade, Mr Tran Quoc Khanh, and its Ambassador, Dr Le Thi Tuyet Mai. We would also like to thank the Secretariat for the report and Ambassador Monique T. G. Van Daalen (the Netherlands) for her relevant contributions.

4.192. Since implementing the process of reform towards the "Doi Moi" controlled opening up, Viet Nam has shown an exemplary economic performance that has been sustained for more than three decades. The most important achievement to note was undoubtedly the reduction of its poverty rate from 70% in the early 1990s to under 6% in 2019. This victory is due, inter alia, to

sustained economic growth which, for much of the period under review in this report, averaged 6.6%, and even remained positive at 2.5% during 2020 despite the global health crisis.

4.193. Viet Nam is also an example of how to tackle the pandemic from an open economy. The country recognizes the importance of the export sector as a driver of development and has achieved a strong integration into global value chains in areas such as clothing, and especially consumer electronics, where around 85% of imports during 2019 were intermediate goods, while 44% of exports of these products were final consumer goods destined for the markets of the United States of America, the United Arab Emirates and Austria.

4.194. The COVID-19 global containment measures affected the Vietnamese economy due to its high level of global integration. However, preliminary figures for 2020 show that the country has not lost momentum and this is mainly due to the Government's fiscal support measures, tax rate reductions and tax deferrals, as well as financial incentives offered to employers and employees.

4.195. The response to the pandemic reiterates the prominent role of the Government of Viet Nam in all aspects of its economy. It is for this reason that the Secretariat's report describes its economy as "dualistic," where centralized government planning coexists with an extensive free-market incentive system. Several decades ago, the Vietnamese Government initiated a process of economic restructuring to eliminate disparities between the State and the private sector, with significant but inconclusive results.

4.196. A significant step towards improving this situation of inequality between the different economic operators was to update the investment regime. With this measure, foreign-invested enterprises, public enterprises and the domestic private sector sought to even out the unlevel playing field in which they operate. The number of areas restricted to foreign investment was reduced, the number of sectors in which Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) can be created was increased, and the general limit of 49% foreign capital in state-owned enterprises was eliminated. However, there are still some sectors with ownership limits of between 30% and 50%.

4.197. With regard to customs, Viet Nam has also made great strides. The Vietnamese authorities continue to reform their policies and measures related to customs procedures, and today the customs administration uses an automatic clearance mechanism, single window, and risk management at all levels. I would also like to note that Viet Nam has already bound all its tariffs, which range from 0% to 40%, with a simple average applied MFN of 10.9%.

4.198. 1.39. Two other recent reforms worth highlighting were: first, amendments to its Intellectual Property Law in 2019, with the intention of bringing it in line with the commitments made under the CPTPP; and second, the enactment of the Law on Competition, which, together with its enabling decrees, laid the groundwork for the creation of the National Competition Commission (NCC).

4.199. I cannot conclude my intervention without highlighting Viet Nam's commitment to the international system. Since its accession in 2007, Viet Nam considers its participation in the WTO as a crucial part of its international integration strategy and therefore actively contributes to the different processes. In December 2015, it notified the completion of the procedures for accepting the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA); in January 2017, it also gave notification of the reform of the TRIPS Agreement; and it is a party to the Information Technology Agreement (ITA). I would like to take this opportunity to invite Viet Nam to contribute in addition to the various negotiating processes under the Joint Ministerial Statements, especially on e-commerce, investment facilitation for development and domestic regulation in services.

4.200. I conclude by wishing Viet Nam every success in its second trade policy review and encouraging its representatives to continue their constructive engagement within the WTO for a better and more inclusive functioning of the multilateral trading system.

INDONESIA

4.201. I would like to begin by extending a very warm welcome to Viet Nam's delegation led by H.E. Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, Minister of Industry and Trade. Let me also thank the discussant, H.E. Mrs. Monique T.G Van Daalen of the Netherlands for her contribution to this Review, and the Government of Viet Nam and the Secretariat for their insightful and comprehensive reports.

4.202. Secondly, I would like to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Mrs. Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme as the newly elected Chair of Trade Policy Review Body.

4.203. Indonesia would also like to associate itself with ASEAN's statement delivered by Brunei Darussalam.

4.204. Viet Nam has demonstrated its able and strong leadership as the Chair of ASEAN Committee in Geneva last year, which has positively contributed to the advancement of issues of common concern. Viet Nam has also been constructive and actively engaged in various issues in WTO, such as fisheries subsidies, and agriculture.

4.205. Indonesia and Viet Nam have a long history of friendship and cooperation. With nearly 66 years of diplomatic engagements, the two countries' relationship has been progressing well, however, we believe there is still a lot of room for improvement to strengthen the relationship. Viet Nam represents a very interesting and long-term strategic trading partner for Indonesia. Between 2014 and 2020, the total bilateral trade showed a dynamic trend and reached USD 8.07 billion in 2020, which decreased by 11.5% from the previous year that reached USD 9.001 billion.

4.206. Since its last review in 2013, Viet Nam has been able to integrate into the world economy, reflected with a trade to GDP ratio of 210% in 2019, increased from 165% in 2013. Merchandise trade expanded at a double-digit annually, reinforcing the significance of Viet Nam's participation in global value chains.

4.207. Throughout the review period, Viet Nam's economy grew at an average annual rate of 6.6% and reached a 10-year high of 7.1% in 2018. In 2019, real GDP increased by 7%, and GDP per capita surpassed USD 2,700. Be that as it may, like many other countries, Viet Nam's GDP growth was declining and expected to slow to 2.5% in 2020, owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.208. The COVID-19 pandemic has effectively incapacitated or otherwise crippled virtually every business around the world, to which Vietnamese enterprises are no exception. Viet Nam suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of weakened global demand due to its thorough integration into the world economy. Tellingly, some products, such as electronic products did not seem affected by the decline of global demand. This condition is attributed to the merit of government policies introduced by the Vietnamese Government. As such, we believe Viet Nam has been able to successfully overcome the economic slump and develop a national vision 2035 strategy.

4.209. Indonesia commends Viet Nam for its success in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing various fiscal measures and incentives to replace lost income and boost growth, including a fiscal support package equal to 3.6% of GDP, fee reductions, tax deferrals and deductions, and financial incentives for employers and employees. The Vietnamese Government also reduced interest rates three times during 2020 and restructured debts to negate the undesirable impacts of COVID-19 on the economy.

4.210. The Viet Nam Vision 2035 aims to transform the country into an advanced economic country. In doing so, Viet Nam mobilizes resources to invest and develop the petroleum and gas industries; enhance the financial, scientific, and technological competencies of enterprises operating in the sector. This strategy is a tangible sign of the Viet Nam attempt to reduce its dependence on foreign oil supplies and a cornerstone of its effort to improve its efficiency.

4.211. We note the growing advocacy of self-reliance in the Vietnamese domestic industries. The Government of Viet Nam aims to increase the quality of industrial products, which encompasses a broad range of industries development, including mechanical engineering, chemicals, agriculture, forestry, textiles, and electronic and telecommunications. It is expected that the share from these sectors will account for 40% of Vietnamese GDP by 2035 and to account for 90% of merchandise exports by 2025. Indonesia believes the efforts to synergize Vietnamese Vision 2035 and Indonesian Vision 2045 can be encouraged as a joint effort to strengthen the two countries' bilateral cooperation.

4.212. Indonesia has submitted a set of questions, covering policies and measures of our interests, some of the questions including government's support for the Small and Medium Enterprises. Indonesia is always concerned with the development of its Small and Medium Enterprises since they

are the backbone of our economy. Hence, we would like to further understand on how Viet Nam develops its supports to Small and Medium Enterprises that are consistent with the WTO regulations.

4.213. Furthermore, we also seek clarification regarding the issuance of the Ministry of Health regulation on marketing authorization of drugs and medical ingredients. Indonesia is aware that the objective of this regulation is to improve the availability and supply of medicines in the country. However, this regulation has caught our attention that suggests a questionable sense of judgement, whether or not this regulation possesses unnecessary trade barriers for Indonesian pharmaceutical products in the future.

4.214. We also would like to address the Government of Viet Nam the decision to extend anti-dumping measures on cold-rolled stainless steel imported from, *inter alia*, Indonesia in 2019. Taking into account that the antidumping measures have been implemented since 2013, we believe Vietnamese domestic industries have been well recovered ever since.

4.215. Other issues that we also raised in our written submission were regarding trade and investment regimes, measures that are directly affecting imports, fisheries, customs modernization, distribution services, as well as other general questions.

4.216. In conclusion, Indonesia believes that this TPR could address our concerns as well as enhance trade and economic cooperation between Indonesia and Viet Nam. We appreciate the responses provided by Viet Nam to our written questions and will consider them carefully.

4.217. Finally, Indonesia would like to commend H.E. Le Thi Tuyet Mai, the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam and the delegation of Viet Nam for their hard work. On behalf of Indonesia, I wish Viet Nam a very productive and successful second Trade Policy Review.

ECUADOR

4.218. The Ecuadorian delegation welcomes the delegation of Viet Nam, headed by Mr Tran Quoc Khanh, Vice Minister of Industry and Trade. I would also like to associate myself with the appreciation expressed by previous speakers for the quality of the reports prepared by both the Secretariat and the Vietnamese Government.

4.219. I would also like to congratulate the discussant, Ambassador Monique Van Daalen, on her comments and observations.

4.220. Ecuador has followed with interest Viet Nam's second trade policy review. It hopes that the measures implemented to alleviate the negative impact caused by the COVID-19 crisis will have the anticipated effect.

4.221. My country welcomes the positive economic results achieved and the fact that, despite the crisis, Viet Nam still expects to record GDP growth. We are pleased to hear that economic growth has been reflected in improved living conditions for the people, as evidenced by the Secretariat's information on poverty reduction.

4.222. We appreciate the replies received from Viet Nam and look forward to receiving information on some outstanding issues. In particular, we would like to know more about Viet Nam's experience with its TRQ administration policies in the context of agreed liberalization in connection with some trade agreements.

4.223. Furthermore, Ecuador is interested in learning more about the measures implemented with respect to trade facilitation, and the operation of single windows and automatic customs clearance. On this subject, the Ecuadorian trade authority would appreciate receiving information about Viet Nam's experience in the use of the database on enterprises before, during and after customs clearance.

4.224. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ecuador would appreciate information on the measures mentioned in paragraph 3.50, on the excise duty relief available to taxpayers who produce goods subject to excise tax and who experience problems arising from natural disasters or other contingencies.

4.225. Ecuador is closely following Viet Nam's policy to attract investment, promote economic diversification and strengthen the country's productive structure. In this regard, we congratulate it on having implemented a promising integration into global value chains. My country also wishes Viet Nam successful results in its policies on the promotion of the digital economy, technological development and the participation of MSMEs in the economy.

4.226. Ecuador imports manufactured goods from Viet Nam such as various kinds of electronic equipment, machinery, shoes and textiles. For our part, we export shrimps, flowers and teak wood to Viet Nam. We hope that in the medium and long term, exchanges and economic links between our countries will grow and a deeper relationship will develop.

4.227. Ecuador wishes Viet Nam every success in concluding its second trade policy review.

THAILAND

4.228. At the outset, Thailand would like to associate itself with the ASEAN statement delivered by the Ambassador Mazlilah Mahalee of Brunei Darussalam.

4.229. Thailand is pleased to participate in the second Trade Policy Review (TPR) of Viet Nam. We would like to extend our warmest welcome to Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade H.E. Tran Quoc Khanh (เจี้ยน กวอ๊ก แซ่จี้) and his delegation.

4.230. We would like to thank the TPRB Chair and the discussant, H.E. Ambassador Monique T.G. Van Daalen of the Netherlands, for her insightful comments. We also thank the Government of Viet Nam and the WTO Secretariat for their useful and comprehensive reports.

4.231. Thailand and Viet Nam have enjoyed long-standing amicable relationship and growing bilateral trade and economic cooperation at all levels. Through our close physical, institutional, and people-to-people connectivity, we are confident that the relationship between the two countries will continue to grow for the foreseeable future.

4.232. One of the most prominent aspects of the relationship between Thailand and Viet Nam is the economic and commercial linkages that have continued to prosper.

4.233. In 2020, Viet Nam is Thailand's 6th largest trading partner and 3rd among ASEAN, while Thailand is Viet Nam's 7 largest trading partner and 1st among ASEAN. Most recently, both countries have participated in the RCEP agreement which will become the world largest free trade agreement.

4.234. Total trade value between the two countries amounted to USD 16,600 million and has increased, on average, by 3.72% over the past 5 years. Top exported items from Thailand to Viet Nam include vehicles and parts, electrical machinery and equipment and parts, plastics and articles thereof, air-conditioning machines and parts, fruits, and beverages. Meanwhile, major products Thailand imports from Viet Nam include electrical and electronic appliances, electrical machinery and parts, iron and steel and articles thereof, and crude oil.

4.235. Moreover, Thailand is also one of the top foreign investors in Viet Nam with USD 12,800 million of total registered investment capital as of November 2020. We are positive that our bilateral trade will be further strengthened through the aforementioned cooperation and improved connectivity between the two countries.

4.236. Thailand commends Viet Nam for its sustained remarkable macroeconomic performance. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Viet Nam's GDP growth in 2020 reached 2.91%, following the 7% growth rate in 2019. This strong macroeconomic performance has, in turn, sharply reduced poverty rate and created fiscal space to deal with the current COVID-19 pandemic and other long-term structural reforms. In 2021 and beyond, we are confident that Viet Nam's economic growth will continue to impress the whole world.

4.237. Thailand congratulates Viet Nam on its success and contribution as an ASEAN chair during the difficult time of the COVID-19 outbreak. Moreover, we applaud Viet Nam for being an active WTO Member and for significantly embracing international economic integration and actively participating in the global value chains. This, particularly, renders the country one of the global

manufacturing hubs, especially for apparel and consumer electronics. Thailand supports Viet Nam in implementing policies to promote exports and economic integration as a way to boost the country's sustainable economic growth and development. Furthermore, we appreciate Viet Nam's efforts in easing its trade measures and custom procedures and encourage it to further align its technical regulations with internationally accepted standards, especially for motor vehicles and pharmaceutical products.

4.238. In this Review, Thailand submitted a set of questions, covering the policy areas of our concerns. We take the opportunity to thank Viet Nam for its timely responses and will study them in detail with great interest.

4.239. In closing, Thailand would like to express our appreciation to Viet Nam for excellent cooperation. We look forward to further strengthening our partnership in all areas of mutual interest and wish Viet Nam every success in its second Trade Policy Review.

PHILIPPINES

4.240. At the outset, the Philippines associates itself with the ASEAN statement delivered by Brunei Darussalam, highlighting Viet Nam's significant contributions and active role in the ASEAN and the WTO.

4.241. The Philippine delegation warmly welcomes and congratulates the delegation of Viet Nam led by Deputy Minister Tran Quoc Khanh of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and Ambassador Le Thi Tuyet Mai of the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam to the WTO on their second Trade Policy Review. We also thank Ambassador Monique Van Daalen of the Netherlands for her insightful comments as discussant, and the WTO Secretariat for a comprehensive report.

4.242. The Philippines enjoys a long-standing bilateral relationship with Viet Nam since the establishment of our diplomatic relations in July 1976. Over the past 45 years, we have witnessed a steady growth in mutually beneficial cooperation between our two countries on a broad range of issues, including the further promotion of our trade and investment relations. The Philippines-Viet Nam Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC) established in 1994 serves as an important dialogue mechanism for our two countries to deepen and broaden our relations and cooperation. We also adopted a Philippines-Viet Nam Plan of Action since 2011, with the most recent action plan covering the period 2019-2024 which comprehensively maps out specific commitments to be jointly undertaken by both countries in the political, security, economic and cultural spheres.

4.243. In 2020, Viet Nam ranked as the Philippines 11th major trading partner with total bilateral trade valued at USD 4.22 billion. Philippine exports to Viet Nam slightly went up by 0.32% from USD 1.27 billion in 2019 to USD 1.27 billion due to increase in exports of electrical and electronic machinery and digital monolithic integrated circuits. Meanwhile, Philippine imports from Viet Nam decreased by 18.97% from USD 3.64 billion in 2019 to USD 2.95 billion in 2020 due to decline in imports of semi-milled or wholly milled rice, coffee extracts, and transmission apparatus incorporating reception apparatus.

4.244. The Philippines recognizes Viet Nam's remarkable economic development over the past 30 years with its sustained high GDP growth rates and declining poverty rate which have transformed the country into a lower-middle-income emerging economy. Viet Nam's pursuit of export-oriented trade policies and active implementation of international economic integration processes during the recent years contributed to bringing about positive impacts on the country's economic growth and modernization.

4.245. Given its deep integration with the global economy, the Vietnamese economy has been hit by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic but has shown remarkable resilience by recording a GDP growth rate of 2.9% in 2020. Although this is the country's lowest rate throughout the period 2011-2020, it still stands among the highest rates all over the world in 2020 and thus is considered a great success.

4.246. Viet Nam's Membership in the WTO plays a central role in its international integration strategy since its accession to the Organization in 2007. The Philippines notes Viet Nam's strong support for a fair, open and rules-based multilateral trading system, which it has demonstrated

through its commitment and active engagement in the various work of the WTO. The Philippines appreciates Viet Nam's participation in the discussions on WTO reforms and the negotiations on fisheries subsidies, and its support to the Informal

4.247. Working Group on MSME's package of recommendations and declarations to support MSMEs participation in international trade.

4.248. The Philippines has submitted advance written questions on the TPR reports, and we thank the delegation of Viet Nam for their prompt replies which we have transmitted to our capital for consideration.

4.249. In closing, the Philippines looks forward to further enhancing the mutually beneficial economic relations with Viet Nam in the bilateral, regional, and multilateral fora.

TURKEY

4.250. We would like to join previous speakers in extending a very warm welcome to the delegation of Viet Nam, headed by the Honourable Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade. We took note of his introductory remarks and we thank the delegation of Viet Nam and the Secretariat for their comprehensive reports, as well as our discussant Ambassador Van Daalen of the Netherlands for her insightful comments.

4.251. As indicated in the reports, Viet Nam sustained high GDP growth rates during the review period. The economy grew at an average rate of 6.6% per annum between 2014 and 2018 and reached a 10-year high of 7.1% in 2018.

4.252. These numbers were indeed facilitated by Viet Nam's export-oriented policies, focus on deeper international economic integration and active participation in global value chains. As a result, Viet Nam's ratio of trade to GDP increased from 165% in 2013 to 210% in 2019 and its merchandise trade grew at a double-digit rate annually.

4.253. Implementation of fiscal consolidation, adoption of customs development strategy, revision of investment regime and institutional framework for competition are some of the steps taken by the government during the review period to further consolidate the country's economic and trade outlook.

4.254. We are pleased to see Viet Nam's active engagement in the WTO. Submission of instruments of acceptance for the Agreement on Trade Facilitation in 2015 and for the amendment of the TRIPS Agreement in 2017 shows its firm commitment to the multilateral trading system.

4.255. Turkey and Viet Nam's bilateral relations progress with a positive agenda in every field. We see Viet Nam as an important partner in South East Asia and we wish to further deepen and diversify our bilateral cooperation in all fields.

4.256. Currently, Viet Nam is one of our top trade partners among ASEAN countries. Within more than a decade, our trade volume has increased from USD 154 million to almost USD 2 billion. However, we consider that the total volume is still lagging behind strong ties and great potential.

4.257. As the reports set out, Viet Nam has signed 15 regional and bilateral FTAs and is currently negotiating two FTAs. We would like to commend successful conclusion of CPTPP during the review period and RCEP in November 2020 during Viet Nam's ASEAN Chairmanship. We also welcome the FTA between Viet Nam and the EU and we are looking forward to initiate bilateral FTA negotiations to further increase our bilateral trade volume.

4.258. In concluding, we wish Viet Nam a very successful completion of its second Trade Policy Review.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

4.259. I would like to join others in welcoming His Excellency, Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade and his delegation to the second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam. I also thank

Ambassador Mrs. Van Daalen for her role as discussant and the Secretariat for its very comprehensive report.

4.260. Korea takes note that Viet Nam has turned into a strong player in the regional and world economy through proactive integration in an effective manner. As a result, Viet Nam accomplished outstanding achievements in the areas of GDP growth, trade volume, and FDI, just to name a few.

4.261. At the same time, Viet Nam has continued to foster its role in multilateral mechanisms, in ASEAN, United Nations, APEC, and other international fora and advanced bilateral cooperation with its trading partners by signing 15 regional and bilateral FTAs to date.

4.262. Currently, Viet Nam is a strong supporter of the multilateral trading system and the WTO, actively participating in the negotiations, including fisheries subsidies, and expressing its support for WTO reforms, which demonstrates that Viet Nam has established itself as an important player in the multilateral trading system.

4.263. Turning to the bilateral aspect, Viet Nam and the Republic of Korea share excellent relations. The Viet Nam-Korea FTA, which came into effect on December 2015, has contributed to strengthening the bilateral trade between Viet Nam and the Republic of Korea. The bilateral trade increased 1.8 times from USD 36.5 billion in 2015 to USD 67 billion in 2019, in which exports and imports increased 2.2 and 1.7 times, respectively.

4.264. Viet Nam-Korea FTA also plays an important role in attracting FDI from the Republic of Korea to Viet Nam. In 2019, total FDI investment into Viet Nam reached USD 38.02 billion, in which the Republic of Korea ranked first. In 2020, our FDI decreased due to the pandemic. Still, we are the largest FDI investor in Viet Nam, with 8,934 projects with accumulated investment of USD 70.3 billion. In addition, Viet Nam and the Republic of Korea established the ministerial level Joint Committee and sub-committee to supervise the implementation of the FTA, having three meeting sessions under this mechanism as of 2019.

4.265. Despite the great bilateral relations between Viet Nam and the Republic of Korea, taking this opportunity, and as I was going to raise some points, particularly on the ratification stage of the third Protocol to amend the ASEAN-Republic of Korea Trade in Goods Agreement which appears in page 32 of your Government report, I have received a revised Government report this morning from Viet Nam, where Viet Nam corrected what we raised our questions about. I appreciate it and will duly report to our capital. With regards this and other matters such as Viet Nam subsidy notification, cross-border service, SOEs and technology transfer, my delegation has submitted written questions and we look forward to receiving a response and having constructive exchanges.

4.266. Again, we commend Viet Nam for the impressive achievements at all levels. We hope that Viet Nam will keep working to take a leap forward and we look forward to working with Viet Nam in due course. I thank you for your attention and we wish Viet Nam a successful second TPR.

ICELAND

4.267. Iceland joins others in welcoming Deputy Minister Tran Quoc Khanh and the distinguished delegation of Viet Nam to their Trade Policy Review. We also express appreciation for the reports prepared, as well as to the discussant, Ambassador Van Daalen (Netherlands) for her excellent framing of the issues for our discussion today.

4.268. Negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement between Viet Nam and the EFTA states were launched in 2012 and 16 rounds have been held so far. The negotiations cover a comprehensive range of topics, including trade in goods, trade in services, IPR and trade and sustainable development. Trade between Viet Nam and Iceland has been growing substantially during the last five years and in particular imports from Viet Nam to Iceland in machinery and footwear.

4.269. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Viet Nam had been experiencing sustained economic growth and impressive decline in poverty rates driven by merchandise trade and active participation in global value chains. However, preliminary figures for 2020 show a sharp economic downturn, reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.270. As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are still unfolding, it is widely recognized that women are likely to be harder hit than men by trade disruptions caused by the pandemic.

4.271. Iceland welcomes the export-oriented trade policies undertaken by Viet Nam, as well as various policies to secure women's employment and participation in trade. Among such is the Law on Support for Small and Medium Enterprises prioritizing the selection of SMEs owned by women, and SMEs that employ more female workers, as well as the Bidding Law favouring contractors who employ 25% (or more) female employees when taking part in the bidding.

4.272. In September 2020, a group of WTO Members agreed to establish an Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender, marking the next phase of the Buenos Aires initiative kickstarted in 2017 to increase the participation of women in trade.

4.273. The Trade Policy Review provides an excellent opportunity to share best practices of respective experiences relating to policies and programs to encourage women's participation in national and international trade and thus promoting sustainable socio-economic development.

4.274. Iceland submitted advance written questions on the participation of women in the economy of Viet Nam. The answers will be useful as we gather best practices.

4.275. Iceland appreciates Viet Nam's active engagement in WTO and their continued support for the multilateral trading system. We wish the delegation of Viet Nam every success for their Trade Policy Review.

UNITED KINGDOM

4.276. The United Kingdom joins others in welcoming the delegation of Viet Nam, led by Deputy Minister Tran Quoc Khanh.

4.277. We also express our gratitude to the WTO Secretariat for the reports and to discussant Ambassador Van Daalen for her insights.

4.278. We have submitted questions to Viet Nam and look forward to the clarifications they may provide.

4.279. Viet Nam is an important trading partner for the United Kingdom.

4.280. Although bilateral trade of around USD 7.9 billion a year was impacted by the pandemic in 2020, trade between Viet Nam and UK doubled between 2010 and 2020.

4.281. The United Kingdom and Viet Nam share a strategic commitment to global trade, and the free flow of capital and investments – demonstrated by our recently signed bilateral Free Trade Agreement.

4.282. This provides a platform to continue to grow trade and investment between our two economies.

4.283. The United Kingdom is pleased to note that Viet Nam has increased its engagement within the WTO over this review period, in particular the submission of instruments for the acceptance of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation in December 2015.

4.284. Given the growth in Viet Nam's economy and international outlook, the United Kingdom remains interested in Viet Nam's priorities for multilateral trade.

4.285. The United Kingdom seeks to maximize trade and investment opportunities globally, so we take a strong interest in the intellectual property protections of our trading partners.

4.286. We welcome the changes Viet Nam has made to its intellectual property regime over the review period, in particular its ratification of the WTO TRIPS Agreement amendment in 2017 and the publication of its Intellectual Property Strategy to 2030.

4.287. A number of our written questions relate to IP protection and enforcement, and we thank Viet Nam in advance for its responses.

4.288. The United Kingdom supports Viet Nam's work to harmonize national standards with international standards.

4.289. We are encouraged to see the increase from 30% to 60% over the review period.

4.290. These efforts are welcome and support Viet Nam's commitment to reduce regulatory barriers under our bilateral Free Trade Agreement.

4.291. The United Kingdom is encouraged that Viet Nam considers climate change a policy priority in the transport and agriculture sectors.

4.292. Viet Nam is among those countries most affected by the impacts of climate change, so we welcome its targets for efficiency and conservation of energy to 2030, and the further development of renewable energy, to make the most of its huge solar and off-shore wind potential.

4.293. The United Kingdom is committed to supporting its international partners and this includes supporting Viet Nam to meet its energy transition development goals, including in our capacity as hosts of COP26 later this year.

4.294. We recognize the severe consequences and unprecedented challenges all Members and businesses are currently facing in response to COVID-19.

4.295. The United Kingdom is supporting Viet Nam in the development and distribution of vaccines through technical capacity building and knowledge exchanges.

4.296. Collaboration between Viet Nam and the United Kingdom on healthcare continues to strengthen, making valuable contributions to global health security through tackling emerging risks including non-communicable diseases and antimicrobial resistance.

4.297. Viet Nam's Ministry of Education and Training has indicated a willingness to engage with the United Kingdom on developing a framework that would underpin the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications, particularly in Higher Education. This is welcome.

4.298. Understanding assessment criteria is key to progressing this.

4.299. Improved transparency regarding the list of specific education services opened for foreign investors, including under bilateral arrangements and agreements would likewise be beneficial.

4.300. We are also pleased to see Viet Nam's moves to recognize qualifications achieved online, which will also be important in the post-COVID world to ensure an education system that is fully inclusive.

4.301. Finally, we wish to congratulate Viet Nam for its successful chairing of ASEAN in 2020, its election to the United Nations Security Council and its management of Viet Nam's COVID-19 epidemic.

4.302. Last year, we refreshed the UK-Viet Nam Strategic Partnership, which sets an upward trajectory to our relationship for the next 10 years.

4.303. We look forward to deepening our trade ties through our bilateral Free Trade Agreement, and through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, which the United Kingdom is seeking to join.

4.304. The United Kingdom appreciates Viet Nam's active participation in this WTO Review, and wish them all the best for the review process this week.

BANGLADESH

4.305. At the outset, the Bangladesh delegation welcomes H.E. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade and Head of the Vietnamese delegation, and thank him for his introductory presentation at the second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam. Bangladesh also thanks H.E. Ambassador Van Daalen from the Netherlands for her insightful discussions. Our sincere appreciation also goes to the Government of Viet Nam and to the WTO Secretariat for the comprehensive reports.

4.306. Viet Nam has made great strides and significant progress in recent years. It is encouraging to see that prudent macroeconomic measures adopted by the country have resulted in impressive economic growth and remarkable improvement in almost all indices. It sustained high GDP growth rates during the last 30 years; the poverty rate declined sharply from above 70% in the early 1990s to below 6% in 2019. In 2019, real GDP grew by 7%, with GDP per capita reaching over USD 2,700.

4.307. The country's economic expansion in recent years has been underpinned by robust domestic demand and manufacturing exports. Since its last Review in 2013, Viet Nam further integrated into the world economy, with its ratio of trade to GDP increasing from 165% in 2013 to 210% in 2019. Reflecting strong economic fundamentals, the real effective exchange rate of the Vietnamese Dong appreciated by 4% on an average each year. These economic successes transformed the country into a lower-middle-income emerging economy.

4.308. Bangladesh and Viet Nam enjoy excellent bilateral trade and economic relations. The bilateral ties between the two countries have been further bolstered by the regular high-level visits from both sides. Broad-based institutional mechanisms of dialogue have contributed to the deepening of our relations. We share a similar vision of development - that is becoming a developed country, by 2045 for Viet Nam, and by 2041 for Bangladesh.

4.309. Bangladesh-Viet Nam Joint Trade Committee (JTC) has been working to double the bilateral trade volume from USD 900 million in 2019 to USD 2 billion by the end of 2021. Concerning trade and investment, we have identified 11 priority areas including agricultural trade and pharmaceutical exports from Bangladesh to Viet Nam. Bangladesh welcomes Vietnamese investment in Special Economic Zones. We are going to extend cooperation in ICT, textile and RMG, halal products, software services, jute and jute goods, establishing direct air links, banking, and tourism, particularly Buddhist tourism.

4.310. Bangladesh appreciates Viet Nam's constructive engagement with the WTO and its commitment to the multilateral trading system. However, we have raised some issues regarding the second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam and will welcome responses in due course.

4.311. To conclude, we wish the delegation of Viet Nam a productive and successful TPR. My delegation will continue to work closely with the Viet Nam delegation, led by Ambassador H.E. Ms. Le Thi Tuyet Mai, to strengthen the multilateral trading system while we strive to enhance our bilateral trade.

KAZAKHSTAN

4.312. Kazakhstan warmly welcomes the delegation of Viet Nam led by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Tran Quoc Khanh. We express our gratitude to the Government of Viet Nam for its informative report and statement. We would also like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Le Thi Tuyet Mai and her team in Geneva. We also thank Ambassador Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen (Netherlands) for her insightful comments as a discussant and the WTO Secretariat for its comprehensive report.

4.313. Given its deep integration with the global economy, the Vietnamese economy has been hit by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but it has shown remarkable resilience. According to the World Bank data, Viet Nam GDP grew by 2.9% in 2020 and stood among the highest rates all over the world in 2020 and thus is considered a great success, especially given that the COVID-19 pandemic is still going on with complex developments.

4.314. Regarding bilateral relations, in 2015, the Free Trade Agreement between the EAEU and Viet Nam was signed. Viet Nam became the first country with which the EAEU signed such an agreement. The agreement proved its effectiveness and affected the trade and economic relations between our states, which began to develop at a faster pace.

4.315. Thus, Kazakhstan and Viet Nam enjoy rapid trade growth since the signing of the FTA. The bilateral total trade turnover in 2020 amounted to USD 380.8 million, increasing by almost 85% compared to 2015. There is a great potential for deepening further cooperation of our countries, and also it is vital to make use of available opportunities for the development of trade relations between Kazakhstan and Vietnam.

4.316. Looking forward, we are ready to explore new growth points for the bilateral economic relations in the Post-COVID-19 era and to better synergize the development strategies of both countries.

4.317. Kazakhstan has submitted a number of written questions on a range of issues of specific interest, such as investment regime, competition policy, TBT, etc. Kazakhstan looks forward to receiving replies from Viet Nam to its questions.

4.318. In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the delegation of Viet Nam and the Secretariat of the WTO for the hard work and efforts that went into preparing for this TPR.

4.319. We wish the delegation of Viet Nam every success for their second Trade Policy Review.

INDIA

4.320. My delegation is pleased to participate in the second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam. On behalf of India, I would like to welcome the delegation of Viet Nam led by H.E. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, and Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Viet Nam in Geneva H.E. Le Thi Tuyet Mai and her team for the TPR. We thank H.E. the Minister for his comprehensive opening statement, Ambassador H.E. Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen of Netherlands, for her insightful observations as a discussant, and the Secretariat and the Government of Viet Nam for the reports prepared for the Review.

4.321. India and Viet Nam enjoy close and friendly ties. Both countries share historical and cultural roots, including the common struggle for liberation and independence. Viet Nam is an important partner for India in South East Asia under the overall umbrella of ASEAN, ASEM and East Asia Summit. The 'Strategic Partnership' established between the two countries in 2007, has been elevated to "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" in 2016, during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Viet Nam.

4.322. The bilateral trade and economic linkages have grown significantly under India's look-east policy, paying rich dividends. From a meager USD 200 million in the year 2000, the two-way trade has grown steadily over the last two decades and stood at USD 10 billion in 2020. Indian exports to Viet Nam were USD 4.5 billion and Vietnam's exports to India were USD 5.5 billion. There was a contraction in the bilateral trade last year by 22.5% on account of COVID-19 related disruptions.

4.323. Viet Nam is also an attractive investment destination for Indian companies who have made a cumulative investment of close to USD 2 billion in the country and are active across multiple sectors including oil and gas exploration, mining, agro-processing, chemicals, auto components and IT. Similarly, Vietnamese companies also have invested in India in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, IT, chemicals and building materials.

4.324. India has a long-standing development partnership with Viet Nam and has made positive contributions towards capacity building and socio-economic development. India's Development Cooperation assistance to Viet Nam are within the ASEAN, the Mekong Ganga Cooperation and the bilateral cooperation frameworks. These include assistance through concessional lines of credit, training for capacity building and human resource development and technical assistance, including for conservation and preservation of monuments.

4.325. As a friend and partner, we have watched Viet Nam's impressive growth with great interest. The far-reaching structural reforms implemented since 1980s have transformed Viet Nam into one of the most dynamic economies in Asia. In this regard, we are happy to note from the Secretariat's report that during the review period Viet Nam's economy has grown at a strong pace, resulting in further increase in per capita income and reduction in poverty levels. We also commend Viet Nam's policies that seek greater integration with global trade, global value chains (GVCs) and promote export-orientation. We also note the significant economic transformation brought about by FDI, contributing to its GDP (20%), job creation (5 million in 2019) and productivity. We also commend the fiscal consolidation policies implemented by the Government of Vietnam.

4.326. We also commend Viet Nam's commitment to the multilateral trading system and welcome Viet Nam's ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in 2015, amendment to the TRIPS Agreement in 2017 as well their efforts to comply with the notifications obligations at the WTO, with more than 350 notifications to various WTO Committees. As a fellow developing country, India understands Viet Nam's challenges and shares several common concerns. Like Viet Nam, India values the multilateral trading system and the stability and predictability it provides. India remains committed to closely working with Viet Nam not only to expand and deepen our bilateral cooperation, but also to strengthen and reform the multilateral trading system.

4.327. I wish our friends from Viet Nam a productive and successful TPR.

LAO PDR

4.328. On behalf of the Lao PDR's delegation, I wish to extend our warmest welcome to the distinguished delegation of Viet Nam led by H.E. Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade and Head of the Vietnamese delegation

4.329. I would like to thank the Government of Viet Nam and the WTO Secretariat for the preparation of comprehensive reports for this Review, especially under the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.330. My thanks also go to discussant H.E Ambassador Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen (Netherlands) for her insightful observations and introduction.

4.331. Lao PDR would like to associate ourselves with the ASEAN statement delivered by Brunei Darussalam.

4.332. I am of the view that the Secretariat report and the Vietnamese Government statement have provided a good illustration of the changes and developments since the last TPR of Viet Nam. Today, my delegation wishes to share with you some points as follows.

4.333. Lao PDR is pleased to highlight the favourable growth of bilateral trade and investment. Viet Nam is the 3rd largest trading partner of Lao PDR. During the past 5 years, total trade between the two countries have constantly increased by 59.5%, from USD 1,000 million in 2016 to USD 1,596 million in 2020.

4.334. In terms of the investment, Viet Nam is the 3rd largest investment in Lao PDR. Up to now, there are 424 projects of Vietnamese enterprises in Lao PDR, with a total value of investment of USD 4.1 billion. These projects cover numerous sectors, including agriculture, industries, handicraft, and mining, bringing mutual benefits to both of our economies. Lao PDR hopes that our bilateral trade and investment will continue to grow to further strengthen our economic relations.

4.335. Lao PDR congratulates Viet Nam on its solid average annual economic growth of 6,46% for the period of 2013-2019. Trade plays a significant role for Viet Nam to achieve its economic objective. Viet Nam has taken various initiatives to continually improve its trade-related and investment policies. We believe that these efforts will contribute to sustainable and resilient economic growth in the country.

4.336. From regional cooperation perspective, Lao PDR would like to congratulate Viet Nam for being a successful ASEAN Chairmanship in 2020 and thanks Viet Nam for a close cooperation with Lao PDR and other ASEAN Member States, as well as the 5 partner countries in concluding the

negotiations and signing of the RCEP Agreement on 15 November 2020, which is a strong message on our region's support to the rules-based multilateral trading system.

4.337. Lao PDR is of the view that this TPR will provide an important opportunity for Viet Nam to review its trade policy in making a great achievement for the international trade and also to provide an important platform for Lao PDR to explore the possibility in improving bilateral trade and investment relation with Viet Nam.

4.338. Lao PDR is confident that with maintaining the momentum of its reform agenda, Viet Nam will achieve its target to reach the economic expansion of its period and we believe these priorities will be on track with Viet Nam's efforts to succeed in its economic transformation in according with National Program.

4.339. In conclusion, Lao PDR would like to express our appreciation to Viet Nam, particularly to H.E Ambassador Thi Tuyet Mai Le, Permanent Mission of Viet Nam, and to Mr. Le Dinh Ba, DPR of the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam and their staff for the cooperation in every level and the friendly working relationship between our two Missions here in Geneva. We wish Viet Nam every success in this Trade Policy Review.

COSTA RICA

4.340. On behalf of the Government of Costa Rica, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the delegation of Viet Nam, headed by Mr Tran Quoc Khanh, Vice Minister of Industry and Trade, as well as to the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the WTO, H.E. Le Thi Tuyet Mai, and her team here in Geneva, and to thank them for their report and excellent presentation this morning. I would also like to extend my thanks to Ambassador Van Daalen for her insightful comments and to the WTO Secretariat for the report that it has prepared.

4.341. Costa Rica is pleased to participate in Viet Nam's trade policy review. Viet Nam is an important trading partner for Costa Rica in South-East Asia and with which we share common initiatives and interests.

4.342. Costa Rica would like to emphasize the high importance that Viet Nam attaches to the WTO in its economic integration strategy, as well as its strong support for the multilateral trading system. Like Viet Nam, Costa Rica participates in joint initiatives such as the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) initiative and in groups such as the Cairns Group.

4.343. Specifically with regard to the review, we note the high economic growth experienced by Viet Nam during the review period, driven mainly by high domestic demand and soaring foreign trade and the attraction of foreign direct investment.

4.344. The promotion of public policies directed at exports and economic integration have been decisive in achieving these results. The strategy on exports and imports developed by Viet Nam in recent years is a clear example of how, with vision and planning, tangible results can be obtained, not only from an economic, but also from a social point of view.

4.345. The expansion of export markets, participation in global value chains, sustained growth in the value of its exports and the reduction in poverty rates are just some of the economic and social indicators that have evolved positively as a result of these policies.

4.346. To go from poverty levels above 70% to below 6% in a period of time of around 30 years is simply impressive. As a developing country that has had to deal with chronic levels of poverty in recent years, Costa Rica is encouraged by these results obtained by Viet Nam and we look forward to learning from its experience in the coming years.

4.347. During the current review period, we note with interest the changes introduced by Viet Nam to its investment regime. Although these changes are relatively recent, we would like to know whether Viet Nam has undertaken a preliminary assessment of the results obtained through these changes and whether it plans to make additional changes, in particular in relation to the number of so-called conditional business sector activities.

4.348. Another aspect that draws our attention is Viet Nam's energy policy, in particular its National Action Plan for Green Growth, which promoted the reduction of greenhouse gases and the use of clean and renewable energies. In this regard, we note that Viet Nam is still highly dependent on non-renewable energies such as coal and that this dependence is likely to increase in the short and medium term given the expected increase in energy demand and the absence of cleaner energy sources. In this regard, we encourage Viet Nam to continue in its efforts to diversify its energy mix and promote renewable energy sources such as solar and wind energy.

4.349. Lastly, we would also like to highlight the progress made by Viet Nam in its policies and measures relating to its customs procedures and competition policy. The modernization of policies in these areas will surely contribute positively to Viet Nam's economic reform process.

4.350. I would like to conclude by wishing Viet Nam every success in this Trade Policy Review.

MYANMAR

4.351. Myanmar aligns itself with the ASEAN statement made by Brunei Darussalam. First of all, my delegation would like to welcome the Viet Nam delegation led by H.E Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade. Myanmar further welcomes the Secretariat report (WT/TPR/S/410) and government report (WT/TPR/G/410) of Viet Nam second Trade Policy Review.

4.352. Our appreciation goes to the discussant, H.E. Monique T.G. Van Daalen, Ambassador of the Netherlands to the WTO for her comprehensive remarks.

4.353. Myanmar and Viet Nam have enjoyed long-standing diplomatic and economic relations and both countries shared good cooperation in every possible area including trade and investment. Myanmar-Viet Nam Joint Trade Committee has been established since 2002 and MoU on Trade Cooperation has been signed in 2017.

4.354. Our bilateral trade volume has been growing steadily and in favour of Viet Nam. According to the Statistics for the year 2019-2020, Viet Nam is one of the top ten importing partners of Myanmar and stands as the 4th major investor according to Myanmar Investment Law and 17th major investor according to Special Economic Zone Law.

4.355. Myanmar recognizes the major economic strategies of Viet Nam in regional and international integration in recent years and congratulates the successful signing of bilateral and regional FTAs.

4.356. It is also noteworthy that during 2015-2019, Viet Nam's average Export growth is 13% per year while the average Import growth is 11.2% and remarkable economic growth rate of more than 6%.

4.357. Myanmar welcomes the prospects of Viet Nam in promoting the implementation of FTAs but prioritizing ASEAN and its commitments in WTO. We also commend Viet Nam's National Digital Transformation Program and National Telecommunication Development Strategies for the digital infrastructure development.

4.358. Before I conclude, I would also like to appreciate H.E. Ambassador Le Thi Tuyet Mai and the members of the Permanent Mission in Geneva for their hard work and excellent cooperation. I wish Viet Nam every success in its 2nd TPR.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

4.359. We welcome the opportunity to participate in Viet Nam's second Trade Policy Review.

4.360. Viet Nam is Russia's long-standing economic and strategic partner. Our countries are linked through decades of friendship, mutual trust and productive cooperation. We highly value the successful collaboration with Hanoi in trade, economic, scientific and humanitarian fields.

4.361. Viet Nam remains one of Russia's largest trading destinations in Southeast Asia and became the first state to sign a Free Trade Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union, which entered into force in October 2016. This development positively reflected on our bilateral trade turnover, resulting

in a steady upward trend since then. In 2020, combined imports and exports amounted to USD 5,67 billion, rising by over 15% in comparison to the previous year.

4.362. Economic cooperation between our countries is guided by the Intergovernmental commission on trade, economic, science and technology cooperation. Currently the Commission oversees the implementation of 14 investment projects in the energy sector, civil aircraft engineering, agriculture, as well as in light, chemical and coal industries. Significant importance is attached to collaboration in the fuel and power sectors. Major Russian oil and gas companies are assisting in hydrocarbon exploration and extraction in Viet Nam. Other promising avenues of cooperation – atomic energy sector, development of banking, collaboration in the IT field, including the creation of e-government in Viet Nam and advancement of “smart cities” technologies.

4.363. Overall, Russia is satisfied by the cooperation with Viet Nam in the WTO and commends unwavering commitment of Hanoi to the multilateral trading system. We note with appreciation Viet Nam’s accession to the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation in December 2015 and acceptance of the amendment of the TRIPS Agreement in January 2017. We also congratulate Viet Nam with a decent notification record.

4.364. In conclusion, we wish Hanoi a successful Trade Policy Review.

MAURITIUS

4.365. The Mauritius delegation warmly welcomes the delegation from Viet Nam led by His Excellency Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade and extends its support to the delegation for this Trade Policy Review exercise.

4.366. We congratulate the Government of Viet Nam and the WTO Secretariat for successfully completing the second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam despite these trying times.

4.367. We also thank H.E. Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen of Netherlands for her insights about the TPR report.

4.368. For Mauritius, a developing nation, Viet Nam is an inspiring model of success and development. It is a country that has so much to offer to anyone who visits it. From its beautiful beaches to its lush forests and mountains while enjoying delicious cuisine, Viet Nam is simply an amazing destination.

4.369. We are happy to note that, in the last several years, Viet Nam’s economy has made significant achievements in terms of economic structure, trade and investment. Indeed, since its accession to the WTO Membership in 2007, Viet Nam has increasingly engaged with the international community and is party to a number of trade agreements with important international players.

4.370. The economic growth of Viet Nam has indeed reflected in a significant drop in poverty and today the country has evolved from a largely agricultural based economy to a more diversified one, with impressive manufacturing and service sectors. In this regard, we further commend Viet Nam for the development and successful implementation of its export-oriented trade policies.

4.371. While Mauritius and Viet Nam do not share extensive trade exchanges, we can testify of Viet Nam’s increasing integration in global value chains as some Mauritian companies have also started to partner with Viet Nam’s manufacturing sector to access international markets. This is true for precious stones that Mauritius used to export to the U.S. but is now sent to Viet Nam for processing before ultimately ending in the U.S. market.

4.372. Mauritius and Viet Nam are also host to a number of multinational companies which has led to partnerships in service sectors. We are sure that our two countries can further collaborate in a number of activities such as tourism or computer-related services.

4.373. We would like to highlight that Viet Nam and Mauritius share a lot of commonalities in their development agenda and albeit at largely different magnitudes, both our countries have seen their economic growth beginning with agriculture, followed by textiles, manufacturing and services.

4.374. Mauritian companies are increasingly viewing Viet Nam's industry players as potential collaborators which would contribute to our collective development and economic growth.

4.375. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected us for a long time, and the global economy is suffering immensely. International trade has never been so unpredictable, and we are unsure how we are going to emerge at the end of the tunnel.

4.376. Nonetheless, we are pleased to note that Viet Nam's rapid reactive policies have been able to contain, to a large extent, the impact of the pandemic. This is also testament to the resilience of a diversified economy against such global shocks and should serve as an example for all developing nations.

4.377. To be honest, Viet Nam has achieved so much that I could praise the country for hours on, but as is the case for every one of us, there is always room for improvement.

4.378. While the Government of Viet Nam has our support, we would, however, appeal Viet Nam to consider eliminating export restrictions, particularly on food products as this may have the effect of distorting global trade and cause disruptions to food security in other countries.

4.379. We fully understand the concerns of the Government of Viet Nam with respect to food security in its country, but we would humbly request the country to thoroughly assess the real need to impose these measures and to consider the impact on the international community, especially on net food importing developing countries and LDCs.

4.380. With that said, I would like to conclude my statement by saying that Mauritius commends the remarkable achievements made by Viet Nam and encourages the country to further integrate the global community. We hope that our two countries can, in the future, develop more linkages and achieve great things together with all WTO Members.

TAJIKISTAN

4.381. Tajikistan is pleased to participate in the second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam and would like to extend warm welcome to entire delegation of Viet Nam led by H.E. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade.

4.382. Tajik-Vietnamese diplomatic relations were established in 1992. The bilateral cooperation between Tajikistan and Viet Nam has been dynamically developing thanks to intense efforts of both parties. The basis of the legal framework between the two countries include number of documents.

4.383. Trade turnover between the two countries in 2020 amounted to USD 4,2 million and decreased compared to 2019 by USD 0.8 million. Exports of goods to Viet Nam from Tajikistan for this period amounted to USD 1.5 million and imports from Viet Nam amounted to USD 2.7 million. Given the current level of trade cooperation it is important to expand the trade relations between Tajikistan and Viet Nam.

4.384. We appreciate the efforts of the Government of Viet Nam and the Secretariat in producing the reports and the discussant, H.E. Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen of Netherlands for her valuable comments.

4.385. This second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam provides a great opportunity to understand its trade and investment regimes. The Republic of Tajikistan commends Viet Nam for significant achievements made since its last TPR in 2013. The growth rate for the period of 2013-2019 reached 6.46%. In 2020, Viet Nam's GDP increased by 2.91%.

4.386. We welcome the efforts of Viet Nam, particularly to advance WTO reform discussions and its engagement in the WTO negotiations. Viet Nam submitted its instrument of acceptance of the TFA in December 2015, and ratified the amendment of the TRIPS Agreement in January 2017.

4.387. To conclude, the Republic of Tajikistan highly appreciates the hard work and strong commitment of Viet Nam and wishes a very successful and productive Trade Policy Review.

NEPAL

4.388. Thank you chair for convening this meeting and giving me the floor. First, my delegation would like to welcome the delegation of Viet Nam under the leadership of H.E. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade and would like to appreciate him for his insightful remarks delivered this morning. I wish to congratulate the Government of Viet Nam for its comprehensive report and would like to commend the Secretariat for its detailed report. Furthermore, I wish to thank H.E. Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen, Ambassador of Netherlands for her comprehensive remarks as a discussant.

4.389. My delegation commends Viet Nam's continuous commitment to rules-based, fair, open and predictable multilateral trading system.

4.390. While going through the reports, it is observed that Viet Nam has taken significant policy reforms to improve its trade and economic regime over the review period.

4.391. Diversification and multilateralization of relations, building an open economy and integrating with the region and the world are some major policy guidelines.

4.392. Viet Nam has presented itself as one of the fastest growing and most dynamic economies in the region.

4.393. It is a matter of pleasure to mention that over the past 30 years, Viet Nam sustained high GDP growth rates, which transformed the country into a lower-middle-income emerging economy.

4.394. The poverty rate declined sharply from above 70% in the early 1990s to below 6% in 2019, which is definitely a result of high economic growth.

4.395. I commend Viet Nam for its 6.6% average annual economic growth between 2014 and 2018 and a positive growth of 2.5% even in the COVID-19 year 2020.

4.396. Rapid growth in the size of trade with an increase of 332 times from 1986 to 2019, continued trade surplus from 2016 to 2020, and significant increase in FDI are highly appreciated.

4.397. Strategy on Exports and Imports for 2011-20, socio-economic development strategy 2011-2020, and Vision 2030 remained major policy guidance to trade and economic development of the country.

4.398. Furthermore, its intention to develop another 10-year socio-economic development strategy for the period of 2021-2030, I believe, would be instrumental in guiding its future development endeavours.

4.399. Improvement in investment regime by revising both the Enterprise Law and the Investment Laws with a view to attracting FDI by equalizing business conditions for SOEs, foreign-invested enterprises, and the domestic private sector are appreciated.

4.400. Enactment of the Law on Competition and creating National Competition Commission (NCC) to address some issues of regulatory deficiencies, and continued reforms in policies and measures on customs procedures based on Customs Development Strategy remained impressive.

4.401. Nepal and Viet Nam have been enjoying cordial relationship in various dimensions of socio-economic and cultural development since long back. Our friendship has been further strengthened after establishing the diplomatic relation in 1975.

4.402. Nepal and Viet Nam have been bound by commonality of culture and shared values.

4.403. Buddhism has remained one of the strongest binding threads between the peoples of the two countries.

4.404. With the passage of time, our ties have been advancing with increased interactions and close cooperation mainly due to increased economic and cultural relation.

4.405. Exchanges of high-level visits from both sides have further contributed to widening the relationship in different dimensions.

4.406. For instance, a side-line meeting of Prime Ministers of both countries during the annual Davos World Economic Forum in January 2019, and a visit by Right Honourable Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. KP Sharma Oli to Viet Nam in May 2019 offered good occasions to discuss measures to accelerate bilateral cooperation across various fields.

4.407. The Signing of Agreement on Visa exemption for diplomatic and official passport holders, and MoU on establishment of bilateral consultation mechanism between the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs were important achievements of the visit.

4.408. Furthermore, Nepal-Viet Nam Friendship Association, Memorandum of Arrangement between the aeronautical authorities of Nepal and Viet Nam, and MoU on cooperation between the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and the Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC), among others are some examples of our friendly ties.

4.409. Both the countries have taken an initiative of concluding a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement which may further enhance our bilateral cooperation in trade and investment in the days ahead.

4.410. Viet Nam is one of the major trade partners of Nepal particularly in importing goods from abroad. Trade data reveals that Nepal imported various goods from Viet Nam worth of about 10 billion Nepali rupees in the year 2019. However, Nepal exported to Viet Nam worth of only 362 million Nepali rupees in the same year resulting a huge trade gap with an export import ratio of 1:27.6.

4.411. This calls for wider and deeper collaboration and partnership in trade, investment and tourism sectors for our mutual benefit.

4.412. Electric appliances, coffee, tea, seafood, textile, leather footwear, energy, renewable energy, high-tech agriculture, information exchange and cooperation in agricultural science and technical research, and tourism could be some important areas of collaboration between the two countries.

4.413. Nepal wishes to constructively engage with Viet Nam at bilateral level to further strengthen our partnership focusing on reducing the existing trade gap and enriching mutual benefits.

4.414. My delegation wishes Viet Nam a successful Trade Policy Review.

SRI LANKA

4.415. My delegation welcomes the delegation of Viet Nam led by Hon. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Head of the Vietnamese delegation, who joins this meeting remotely due to the prevailing global health situation, for the second review of the trade policies and practices of Viet Nam. We thank H.E. Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen, the discussant, for her report and the WTO Secretariat and the Government of Viet Nam for their comprehensive reports made available to the delegations in advance of this meeting.

4.416. My delegation notes that over the past 30 years, Viet Nam sustained high GDP growth rates, which transformed the country into a lower-middle-income emerging economy; the poverty rate declined sharply from above 70% in the early 1990s to below 6% in 2019. The economy grew at an average rate of 6.6% per annum between 2014 and 2018 and reached a 10-year high of 7.1% in 2018. In 2019, real GDP grew by 7%, with GDP per capita reaching over USD 2,700. Preliminary data showed that GDP growth in 2020 slowed down to 2.5%, reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.417. Viet Nam pursues export-oriented trade policies and recognizes international economic integration as a key driver for its institutional improvement, economic growth, and development.

Given its deep integration into the global economy, Viet Nam suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic due to weakened demand and reduced trade. However, preliminary evidence indicates that Viet Nam's merchandise trade based on GVCs in 2020, particularly in the consumer electronics and garment sectors, appeared not to be losing momentum, compared with those sectors' performance in 2019, partly reflecting the government's proactive measures.

4.418. All tariffs are bound, and mostly in the 0%-40% range. The simple average applied MFN rate for all goods was 11.9% in 2020, up from 10.4% in 2013, mainly due to the change from the HS12 to the HS17 nomenclature and the splitting of several tariff lines. Only second-hand motor vehicles are subject to applied non-*ad valorem* rates. The highest tariffs include 135% for five tariff lines concerning cigarettes. In 2020, the average bound rate was 14.7%. The simple average applied MFN tariff was 18.1% for agricultural products (WTO definition) and 10.9% for non-agricultural products. The difference between bound and applied MFN rates leaves some scope for flexibility in Viet Nam's tariff policy. Tariff rate quotas regulate imports of eggs, sugar cane, tobacco, and salt.

4.419. On trade, Viet Nam is the 29th export destination for Sri Lankan merchandises and the 17th supply source of imports to Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's exports to Viet Nam gradually increased from 2015 to 2018 but recorded a sharp drop in 2019. Sri Lanka's exports to Viet Nam are concentrated on very limited products which is the dominant footwear that made the Balance of Trade between the two countries have always been heavily in favour of Viet Nam.

4.420. My delegation notes with concerns that all the official documents/regulations/measures and reports pertaining to exporting to Viet Nam are made available only in Vietnamese language, which creates an indirect non-trade barrier for Sri Lanka when trading with Viet Nam. Further, Sri Lankan exporters of meat and related products, sea food to Viet Nam are required to be approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT), which are published in their respective websites. This approval process seems to be of highly complex.

4.421. Regular delays in getting certain comprehensive inputs/clarifications from Government Institutions of Viet Nam and lack of information on import regulations/ procedures publicly available are major obstacles to enhance our bilateral relations.

4.422. On the bilateral front, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam have signed double taxation avoidance agreement in 2005 and it came into operation from 2007/2008. There is a bilateral investment treaty between the two countries, which came into force on 22 October 2019.

4.423. With a view of exchange of views and discuss on the issues of the topics of Political relations, Security and defense Cooperation, Economic, Trade and Investment Cooperation, Industry, Tourism, Civil Aviation, Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Oil and Gas, Banking and Finance, Cooperation in Information and Communications, Cooperation in Education and Training, Cooperation in Culture, Legal and Judicial Cooperation, Cooperation in Regional and International Fora, Cooperation between the two countries, the Viet Nam-Sri Lanka Joint Economic Commission was established.

4.424. The Sub-Committee on Trade (SCT) between Sri Lanka and Viet Nam was established to explore the new avenues for further strengthening and fostering bilateral relations in the field of trade and industry related matters. The second Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Trade was held in 2019.

4.425. Discussions were held on several areas for cooperation agreed upon by the two sides and included the signing of the Agreement between the two Governments on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs, extending the implementation of cooperation plans in the agricultural sector for the period of 2020-2022, implementation plan for the period of 2020-2022 of the MoU on bilateral cooperation in fisheries, strengthening cooperation in the field of textile and garment and manufacturing industrial machineries, reviewing and fully implementing the existing Agreements on Aviation Cooperation and Investment Promotion and Protection.

4.426. In concluding, my delegation appreciates Viet Nam's highly valued contribution to the multilateral trading system and its active engagement in the negotiations. We wish the Vietnamese delegation a successful deliberation on its second Trade Policy Review.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

4.427. The Kyrgyz Republic welcomes the delegation of Viet Nam, led by Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Head of the Vietnamese TPR delegation.

4.428. We express our thanks to the WTO Secretariat and the Government of Viet Nam for preparing such comprehensive and detailed Trade Policy Review reports. We would also like to thank the discussant, H.E. Mrs. Monique T.G. Van Daalen, for her insightful comments.

4.429. Since the beginning of its Membership to the WTO, Viet Nam has demonstrated the high dedication to the WTO rules and as it has been said at the last TPR in 2013, has convincingly shown its commitment to trade liberalization under the multilateral trading system centered on the WTO continuously.

4.430. Among many other successful steps on the WTO platform are acceptance of Trade Facilitation Agreement and Protocol amending the TRIPS Agreement. Viet Nam is also the member of the Information Technology Agreement.

4.431. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kyrgyz Republic and Viet Nam on 4 June 1992, the two states have carried out and developed political and economic affairs. The parties exchanged delegations of various levels, meetings of officials were held within the framework of participation in multilateral cooperation through the organizations such as the WTO, the United Nations, international conferences, etc.

4.432. The Free Trade Agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and Viet Nam was signed on 29 May 2013 and took effect from 5 October 2016. After more than 4 years of adoption, the EAEU and Viet Nam organized number of sessions of the Join Committee for the implementation of the FTA between the parties. The conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement between EAEU from one side and the Kyrgyz Republic from another had a positive impact on strengthening and expanding trade in goods and services.

4.433. It was voiced at the Committee on the Regional Trade Agreements in 2019, cooperation between the EAEU and ASEAN, to which Viet Nam is a member, remains modest and does not correspond to the potential of the parties.¹ The Kyrgyz Republic stands ready for deepening and strengthening the cooperation both bilaterally and multilaterally.

4.434. Our countries have established beneficial mutual trade. The dynamics of trade turnover from 2016 to 2019 demonstrates this positive trend. From the beginning of 2016 to the end of 2019, the volume bilateral trade between the Kyrgyz Republic and Viet Nam increased above 2.5 times (from USD 3,3 million to USD 8,5 million). The consecutive positive annual dynamics of growth gives optimism for future trade.

4.435. The Kyrgyz Republic's exports mainly to Viet Nam meat products, dry plants used in pharmaceuticals. In turn, Viet Nam exports to the Kyrgyz Republic mainly cellular telephones (42%), clothing items, rubber shoes, fish products and other goods.

4.436. In terms of services, it is worth to note that tourism has the mutual potential to increase share of trade in services.

4.437. The Kyrgyz Republic is interested on further fruitful economic cooperation and deepening trade economic relations with Viet Nam.

4.438. The Kyrgyz Republic wishes a successful second Trade Policy Review to Viet Nam.

BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

4.439. The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to extend a warm welcome to the delegation of Viet Nam, headed by the Vice Minister of Industry and Trade, Mr Tran Quoc

¹ Committee on CRTA 2019, Ref: East Economic Forum in Vladivostok, 2019.

Khanh. We thank the discussant, Ambassador of the Netherlands, Ms Monique T.G. Van Daalen, for her context-setting analysis, and the Secretariat for its organization and documentation.

4.440. We would like to open our statement by highlighting the ties of brotherhood and trade cooperation that unite us with Viet Nam. During 31 years of diplomatic relations between Venezuela and Viet Nam, as well as 15 years of full partnership between the two nations, we have signed more than 50 recovery projects in various fields: science and technology, education, information, agriculture and culture.

4.441. In the area of agricultural research between the two nations, we highlight that good results have been obtained in the creation of rice varieties, which will guarantee food security in Venezuela. Progress has also been made in the area of clothing and footwear production. It is noteworthy that in 2020 the Venezuela-Viet Nam Binational Business Chamber was established, which will collaborate and support entrepreneurs from both nations.

4.442. Regarding the report submitted by the WTO Secretariat for Viet Nam's second trade policy review covering the period from 2013 to 2020, we note many positive points that demonstrate the country's commitment to honouring its WTO obligations by applying best practices in all areas of its international trade management.

4.443. We appreciate that Viet Nam has maintained high GDP growth rates, which has transformed the country into an emerging lower-middle income economy. We welcome the reduction of the poverty rate from above 70% in the early 1990s to below 6% in 2019. We highlight the Export and Import Strategy for 2011-20, Vision 2030, which sets out trade-related targets, with a view to achieving a surplus in the next decade.

4.444. Another element we would like to highlight is the role of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Viet Nam's economic transformation, which accounts for 20% of GDP, created 5 million jobs in 2019 and represents a significant improvement in the country's productivity.

4.445. Like all Members of this Organization, Viet Nam suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic due to weakening demand and reduced trade. However, we are comforted that preliminary data indicate that Viet Nam's trade in goods, particularly in the consumer electronics and clothing sectors, appears not to be losing momentum, compared to the performance of these sectors in 2019, in part reflecting the Government's proactive measures.

4.446. In wishing Viet Nam a successful trade policy review, we would like to conclude our statement by acknowledging Ambassador Le Thi Tuyet Mai and her team, while reaffirming our bonds of cooperation, as well as our shared commitment to the establishment of a strong, fair and predictable multilateral trading system based on solidarity and on common and transparent rules.

5 REPLIES BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF VIET NAM AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

5.1. We would like to express our sincere gratitude for all comments from Ambassador Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme, Chairperson, from Ambassador of the Netherlands Monique Van Daalen – discussant, and from the representatives of 43 WTO Members at the first session of the TPR of Viet Nam. We would also like to thank WTO Members for their positive remarks on the efforts and achievements that Viet Nam has made in the socio-economic development over the past years, as well as for acknowledging our contributions towards multilateral activities.

5.2. Upon acknowledgment of all such comments, we would like to present and explain more clearly about a number of major groups of issues presented as follows.

5.3. First of all, we affirm that Viet Nam's consistent policy is to promote the "Doi Moi" process as well as to continue deep and comprehensive international integration, towards the goal of turning Viet Nam into an upper-middle-income developing country with a modern industry by 2030, and into a high-income, developed country by 2045. Viet Nam's Socio-Economic Development Strategy for the period 2021-2030 asserts the necessity to closely link international integration with strengthening institutional capacity in a modern and synchronous manner; to enhance the level and quality of international integration, and to strictly comply with international commitments as well as trade agreements signed.

5.4. We would like to reaffirm that Viet Nam always respects and fully complies with our principles and commitments in the WTO. Commitments on market opening, including elimination of tariffs on goods and allowing foreign investors to provide services in Viet Nam, have always been fully enforced by our government and in compliance with the roadmap committed, and in some cases we have been even more open than committed. At the time of the accession to the WTO, Viet Nam committed to reduce the average tariff rates for all agricultural products from the current 23.5% to 20.9% by the end of the tariff reduction roadmap period in 2019. In 2019, however, Viet Nam's average applied MFN tariff rate on agricultural products is 17.6%, which is significantly lower than the committed level in the WTO. In 2020, Viet Nam also applied MFN import duties reduction for a number of agricultural products such as chicken, almonds, fresh apples, fresh grapes, raisins, wheat, potatoes, milk, so on and so forth. Statistics also show that the growth rate of merchandise imports and exports during the period of 2013-2019 are nearly equivalent to each other. To be specific, the average merchandise export growth during this period is 12.7% annually, while the corresponding figure for imports is 12.1%. This proves that Viet Nam is keen on boosting exports as much as ensuring imports conducted openly and conveniently for all WTO Members.

5.5. In terms of creating favourable conditions for the business and investment environment, the Vietnamese Government has always considered this as one of the top priorities, thus has continuously been conducting reviews and assessment to promptly revise or issue new legal documents to support businesses and investors. In 2020, the National Assembly of Viet Nam issued the revised Law on Investment, and soon after, the government issued an enforcement decree providing much more liberalized conditions for foreign investors. The Law on Investment has, in particular, provided supplemented regulations on announcing the list of industries and sectors with limitations on market access for foreign investors. Accordingly, many areas include services and manufacturing will be now more open for foreign investors compared to when Viet Nam joined the WTO. This Law also addresses overlapping and inadequacies among business- and investment-related regulations, ensuring consistency and unity of the legal system, reforming investment order and procedures, and abolishing some requirements that previously must be submitted to the Prime Minister for approval.

5.6. In addition, the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) under the Law on Investment has created a more effective and stable legal framework to improve the efficiency of PPP investment which will help to create preferential policies and mechanisms to ensure its attractiveness and to minimize risks for investors in infrastructure development and public services provision.

5.7. In addition to the amendment of the Investment Law, the Government of Viet Nam also pays special attention to the reform of administrative procedures. Between 2016 and 2020, the government has reduced 3,893 out of 6,191 business conditions; 6,776 out of 9,926 list of goods subject to specialized inspection; and 30 administrative procedures related to specialized inspection.

Also, during this period, 1,501 items subject to overlapping specialized inspection have also been processed.

5.8. In terms of trade facilitation, especially the implementation of WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation, Viet Nam Custom Authority has proactively enforced measures with the supports of some Viet Nam' trading partners during recent years, including adopting the mechanisms on electronic customs, risk managements, and business priorities. Furthermore, Viet Nam provided notifications updating our regulations on determination of customs valuation in accordance with the commitments stipulated in the Agreement on Customs Valuation.

5.9. Along with efforts to facilitate trade, Viet Nam has also implemented a series of measures to combat origin fraud and illegal transshipment. In 2019, the Prime Minister approved the Scheme on "Strengthening state management in preventing the circumvention of trade remedies and origin fraud" and Resolution No. 119/NQ-CP on a number of urgent measures to strengthen state management in preventing the circumvention of origin fraud and illegal transshipment. Accordingly, the General Department of Customs has been increasingly applying strict control measures at all stages of customs clearance procedures, requesting provincial and city customs departments to apply professional customs measures, including customs procedures, risk management, post-customs clearance inspection, customs control, etc.

5.10. In addition, Viet Nam also implements several solutions such as identifying groups of items at high risk of fraud or forging certificates of origin; reviewing and identifying transactions, import-export enterprises with spiking import and export turnover compared to their production capacities and scale in order to conduct analysis and inspection decisions. With the above specific efforts and measures, in the year 2020 alone, the General Department of Customs inspected over 100 suspected enterprises and detected 45 cases of violations of goods origin; coordinated with the Ministry of Public Security in investigating a case with signs of forging the certificate of origin; confiscated 3,590 bicycles, over 4,000 sets of bicycle components and over 12,000 sets of components and accessories for assembling kitchen cabinets as exhibits of violation. The activeness in coordination among domestic agencies, ministries and international agencies and organizations has contributed to ensuring the fairness of trade environment.

5.11. Regarding the reform and equitization of state-owned enterprises, the Government of Viet Nam is actively implementing necessary measures for these enterprises to operate more effectively while also facilitating other types of companies to participate more in industries previously dominated by state-owned enterprises, such as telecommunication and banking sectors. For example, in the banking sector, Viet Nam's banking system now has a diverse presence of various types of ownership, in which foreign investors can participate in many forms such as 100% foreign-owned banks, branches, joint ventures, capital contribution to buy shares in Vietnamese joint stock commercial banks and commercial banks held by the state with 50% or more of charter capital.

5.12. It can be said that although there are still state-owned enterprises operating here and there in different fields, these enterprises do not enjoy any privileges and incentives, and they must compete equally with other economic sectors, including foreign enterprises.

5.13. Regarding intellectual property, in recent years, Viet Nam has made efforts to amend relevant legal documents, namely the amendment of the Law on Intellectual Property and guiding documents to create a complete legal basis to strengthen combating and handling intellectual property infringement activities, including strengthening state management and effective enforcement of copyright and related rights, especially in the network environment. The Law amending the Law on Intellectual Property will be submitted to the National Assembly XV for assessment at the 2nd Session (in October 2021) and is expected to be passed at its 3rd Session (in May 2022).

5.14. The amendments of the Law on Intellectual Property aim to strengthen the management, combating and handling intellectual property infringements while ensuring Viet Nam's compatibility with high-level commitments when joining new-generation FTAs (including the CPTPP, EVFTA and UKVFTA). Accordingly, these regulations will apply not only to partner countries participating in these above-mentioned FTAs, but also to all WTO Members based on the MFN principle. In addition, in order to create favourable conditions for the implementation, especially the enforcement of intellectual property rights, Viet Nam is amending a number of decrees and circulars to detail and

provide guidance to the implementation of the amendments of the Law on Intellectual Property, for example, clarifying the grounds for determining acts, nature and seriousness of intellectual property rights infringement in the amended contents of the Law on Intellectual Property, and clearly identify the scope, responsibilities and fines of administrative agencies to avoid overlap and to be in line with the Law on Handling Administrative Violations.

5.15. Regarding copyright, currently, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism is actively developing a Dossier of proposals for accession to three international treaties on copyright and related rights, including: the Marrakesh Treaty; the World Intellectual Property Organization Copyright Treaty (WCT Treaty); and the World Intellectual Property Organization Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT Treaty). In addition, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and the Ministry of Information and Communications are also drafting a joint programme to collaborate in strengthening the protection of copyright and related rights in cyberspace for the period 2021-2025.

5.16. On draft legislations related to cybersecurity and personal information protection, Viet Nam is currently in the process of public consultation on the Portals of the Government. The Drafting Committee of the Decree will consolidate all feedback, listen to multidimensional opinions from both domestic and international stakeholders in the spirit of open-mindedness, in order to advise the government on developing, promulgating this Decree with comprehensive, feasible, strict content which is aligned with Viet Nam's characteristics, conditions and requirements while ensuring compliance to international laws and treaties of which Viet Nam is a member.

5.17. Regarding the Decree on management, provision and use of radio and television services, a draft revised Decree has been submitted to the Government of Viet Nam for consideration and adoption. Accordingly, the revised Decree was developed with the aim of promoting national cultural values, creating an equal business environment, towards simplifying administrative procedures, with clear, specific regulations and transparency.

5.18. Regarding the Decree on advertising, the draft Decree has been submitted to the Prime Minister for consideration and adoption. This draft has essentially addressed issues of concern to WTO Members, especially the requirement that cross-border advertising businesses must operate via cooperation with domestic advertising businesses.

5.19. On pharmaceuticals-related measures, Viet Nam has recently received feedback from a number of countries with regards to regulations on drug regulatory authorities as per Circular No. 32/2018/TT-BYT on marketing authorization of drugs and medicinal ingredients. Such regulations are to ensure quality monitoring of imported medicines in the ultimate pursuit of public health protection. This is the result of Vietnamese authorities having evaluated applications for medicine marketing authorization based on technical guidance from ASEAN, from international organizations such as the International Conference for Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH), and those amongst WHO's recommended list of agencies.

5.20. Concerning the effective duration of drug marketing authorizations, the Ministry of Health has issued documents allowing authorizations with expiry date on 31 December 2021 to be extended for another 12 months if they fulfill specific requirements. In addition, Viet Nam is making every effort to process applications for new and renewed drug marketing authorizations from businesses. In particular, the Ministry of Health has been prioritizing its resources and expertise to process renewal applications of drugs approaching expiry.

5.21. On export restraining measures, Viet Nam confirms that there exists no current export restriction on food products. Any restriction or restraining measure applied will only be circumstantial and on a temporary basis, in the short term with full notification to the WTO.

5.22. On SPS, Viet Nam always strives to strictly comply with regulations on transparency. All SPS measures, in principle, have been developed based on scientific evidence and recommendations from international organizations.

5.23. Regarding TBT, Viet Nam has been persistently promoting enhancement in harmonization rate between the national standards system and regional, and international counterparts. Since 2013, such rate in Viet Nam has raised from 40% to 60%. Viet Nam affirms the promulgation of technical

standards and regulations, and conformity assessment procedures are not to create barriers to trade.

5.24. In terms of fisheries subsidies, Viet Nam has been and will continue participating in active discussions on this issue, with the aim of reaching a substantial outcome at the incoming MC12.

5.25. On SME support measures, since most businesses in Viet Nam are SMEs with limited competitiveness, the Government has been exercising a number of support measures for this group of enterprises. These measures are in the form of consulting on procedures related to technical, quality, measurement standards, and regulations; piloting and fine-tuning new products, new business models; support on training and provision of market insights, etc. Nonetheless, Viet Nam affirms all of these measures are not out of line with WTO policies as well as Viet Nam's international commitments.

5.26. In terms of gender equality, the Government of Viet Nam always attaches great importance to and has been making every effort to implement it. Viet Nam has issued the National Strategy on Gender Equality for the period 2011-2020 with the aim of raising awareness, narrowing the gender gap and enhancing the status of women; actively implement international and regional initiatives to promote the protection of women's rights and combat discrimination against women. The goal of equality between men and women and empowering women, one of the three millennium development goals (MDG 2013), was completed by Viet Nam before the deadline of 2015, making Viet Nam one of the countries removing gender gap the fastest in the past 20 years.

5.27. Vietnamese women account for over 60% of the population and almost 50% of the work force, consistently increasing their involvement in every activity in society. The proportion of women participating in Viet Nam's 14th National Assembly (term 2016-2021) reached 26.8%, bringing Viet Nam into the group of countries with the highest female representation in the National Assembly in the region and the world. Women currently are empowered in many key executive positions of the state such as Members of the Politburo, Vice President of the State, Ministers, and Vice Ministers. In municipalities, many women take leading roles at various levels, fields, contributing to address important issues. Number of businesswomen from ethnic minorities has increased, especially in the fields of education, healthcare, public health. The role of women from ethnic minorities has increasingly expanded.

5.28. Notably, almost all state authorities have formed Gender Equity Working Groups. I myself am in charge of the Gender Equity Working Group of the MOIT and we have certain goals to achieve of female leadership in our workplace.

5.29. Regarding participation in the GPA and ITA2 as well as initiatives and negotiations on e-commerce, and investment facilitation, Viet Nam is actively, rigorously, and comprehensively looking into the benefits and Viet Nam's ability in fulfilling these requirements in order to make a final decision.

5.30. Finally, regarding detailed questions that Viet Nam has received in written form, we will make every effort to sending these answers to the Members as per WTO regulations. Viet Nam will continue to support the multilateral trading system with the WTO as the focal center; promote the liberalization of an open, transparent, rule-based trade; and to implement rigorously international commitments in the WTO and in the Free Trade Agreements of which Viet Nam is a member. We also wish to work closely with Members to promote cooperation as well as WTO reform in the coming time. Thank you very much.

DISCUSSANT

5.31. The first day of Viet Nam's Trade Policy Review has proven to be productive. WTO Members posed more than 850 written questions in advance of the meeting and I counted over 43 interventions last Tuesday. The active engagement of WTO Members in this Trade Policy Review is a clear indication of the growing importance of Viet Nam within the multilateral trading system. For many Members, Viet Nam has become an important trading partner and one of the most important in the region.

5.32. WTO Members commended Viet Nam for its strong economic growth over the past decades and in the period under review. The adoption of domestic reforms and further integration into the world economy have enabled Viet Nam to foster trade as a driver of economic growth and poverty reduction.

5.33. WTO Members praised Viet Nam's support to the rules-based multilateral trading system and to the work of this Organization. Members welcomed Viet Nam's engagement in the negotiations on fisheries and in the informal working group on MSMEs. Members referred to Viet Nam's accession to the Trade Facilitation Agreement and for the submission of its instrument of acceptance for the amendment of the TRIPS Agreement. Moreover, Viet Nam has become a party to numerous bilateral and regional trade agreements during the period under review.

5.34. During the first day of this Trade Policy Review, some WTO Members encouraged Viet Nam to consider becoming a party to the Government Procurement Agreement and participating in the informal working group on Trade and Gender. Furthermore, some Members invited Viet Nam to join the Joint Statement Initiative negotiations on E-commerce, Investment Facilitation and Domestic Regulation.

5.35. WTO Members commended Viet Nam for its domestic reforms to dismantle the largely planned economy, open up a closed economy to international markets and trade, and to initiate pro-business reforms. Viet Nam's reforms of its Enterprise and Investment Laws have resulted in a significant improvement of the business environment. This is also highlighted by the progress made in the WEF Global Competitiveness Index and the World Bank Ease of Doing Business ranking.

5.36. Some Members indicated that further action is warranted to allow Viet Nam to reach its full potential. Room for further improvement of Viet Nam's trade and investment climate still exists, for example through streamlining customs procedures, the use of international standards and the reform of Viet Nam's state sector. Members referred to the importance of the protection of intellectual property rights to facilitate innovation and economic development. Furthermore, Members encouraged Viet Nam to strengthen its attempts to combat fraud, corruption and illicit trade.

5.37. Madam Chair, this will conclude my summary of the first day of Viet Nam's second Trade Policy Review.

5.38. Deputy Minister, allow me to compliment you and the entire Vietnamese delegation with a successful Trade Policy Review. Thank you.

EUROPEAN UNION

5.39. Let me first thank Viet Nam for the comprehensive overview presented on Tuesday of the main economic and trade-related developments during the review period.

5.40. The EU is pleased to note that this Review has been very useful for better understanding of Viet Nam's trade policy and hopes that it will duly take into account some of the challenges highlighted by Members.

5.41. The EU appreciates the timely replies provided to most of our questions and would also be grateful to receive replies to the following EU questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 21, 26, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34.

5.42. The EU has submitted three follow-up questions related to Viet Nam's cybersecurity law and rules on alcoholic beverages and we look forward to the replies in due course.

5.43. On behalf of the EU, I would like to thank again the delegation of Viet Nam for undertaking this demanding but important transparency exercise despite of challenging circumstances and for the constructive participation.

UNITED STATES

5.44. The United States would very much like to thank Viet Nam's delegation, led by H.E. Deputy Minister Tran Quoc Khanh, for the work which has gone into Viet Nam's second Trade Policy Review. As mentioned on Day One, Viet Nam is a valued U.S. trading partner which is demonstrated by the continued strengthening of our bilateral trade relationship since Viet Nam's accession to the WTO in 2007.

5.45. We would like to again note our appreciation of Viet Nam's active engagement and partnership as a cosponsor of the proposed MC12, SPS Declaration and Work Program.

5.46. The United States reiterates our support for Viet Nam to fully implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, beginning with the establishment of Viet Nam's National Trade Facilitation Committee. We note with interest Viet Nam's partnership with the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation to develop a modern customs bond system for the conditional release of goods. With support from USAID's Trade Facilitation Project, Viet Nam is now regularly reviewing its progress to implement its TFA category B and C commitments and is developing a forward-looking plan to ensure timely notifications.

5.47. We would urge Viet Nam to consider joining the WTO Communication entitled Supporting the Timely and Efficient Release of Global Goods Through Accelerated Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (G/TFA/W/25).

5.48. The United States also recognizes that Viet Nam has issued a number of measures to address origin fraud and illegal transit of goods through Viet Nam. We look forward to updates on these measures and the actions taken by Viet Nam to address them.

5.49. We would like to again reiterate our significant concerns with certain existing and proposed measures that may undermine the provision of services foundational to the digital future, which are frequently provided on a cross-border basis. An example is the draft implementing decree for the Law on Cybersecurity that includes data localization and local presence requirements and a draft Decree on Personal Data Protection which we highlighted on day one. The United States would appreciate updates from Viet Nam on the status of these measures.

5.50. The United States maintains concerns regarding SPS measures by Viet Nam that restrict trade. We have posed a number of questions on food safety, pre-clearance and post-clearance inspections, animal health, maximum residue limits, pesticides, as well as the risk assessment and the proposed domestic ban for glyphosate. We look forward to receiving and reviewing Viet Nam's responses.

5.51. We also would like to stress the importance of Viet Nam responding to official questions submitted by the United States, and note our concern that more than a third of our official questions were unanswered. We request that Viet Nam provide responses to these questions, in addition to our follow-up questions, as soon as possible and no later than the deadline.

5.52. Further, the US recognizes efforts by the Government of Viet Nam to strengthen elements of its intellectual property regime, including efforts to amend the Law on Intellectual Property and continuing public awareness campaigns and training activities. However, the United States continues to have several concerns, including Viet Nam's heavy reliance on administrative enforcement actions, lack of coordination among ministries and agencies responsible for enforcement, and widespread counterfeiting and online piracy. We would appreciate updates on Viet Nam's plans to further strengthen its IP framework, including through upcoming revisions to the IP Law, and enhanced enforcement efforts.

5.53. The United States also recognizes Viet Nam's active engagement in the fisheries subsidies negotiations, and we welcome working together with Viet Nam and other Members to achieve a meaningful agreement. We recognize Viet Nam's efforts to reform its subsidy programs and prohibit the most harmful fisheries subsidies.

5.54. We appreciate the opportunity provided by this meeting to discuss Viet Nam's trade and investment policies. We look forward to Viet Nam's full responses to our questions, to working

together to resolve outstanding issues and further strengthen our bilateral relationship, and to continue good cooperation here at the WTO and in ASEAN, APEC, and other fora.

JAPAN

5.55. Japan really appreciates the efforts made by Viet Nam and also appreciates the remarks this morning made by H.E. Tran Quoc Khanh.

5.56. Japan provided additional written questions yesterday and we would like to receive the answers in due course.

6 CONCLUDING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON

6.1. This second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam has provided an excellent opportunity for the Trade Policy Review Body to deepen our understanding of the main developments in Viet Nam's economic, trade and investment policies since 2013. I would like to thank the delegation of Viet Nam, headed by H.E. Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, for its participation in this Review, which has taken place under unusual and challenging circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I also wish to thank our discussant H.E. Ambassador Monique Van Daalen for her insightful remarks, the 31 Members who submitted written questions and the 43 delegations that took the floor during this meeting. The large number of questions and the active participation during the meeting reflect Members' substantive interest in Viet Nam's trade and investment policies and practices.

6.2. Members appreciated Viet Nam's economic and trade performance during the review period and the progress made in poverty reduction through sustained export-led growth, which is a continuation to the structural reform initiated 35 years ago. Members commended Viet Nam for its increased participation in global value chains and were keen to learn about its experience on how to facilitate an enabling business environment in this regard. Members noted that Viet Nam recently moved to the group of 20 largest traders among WTO Members. They expressed the hope that Viet Nam will keep the momentum of its reform agenda, maintain its active engagement in the multilateral system, and make its trade inclusive for all.

6.3. Viet Nam's economic resilience to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, as exemplified by the 2.9% GDP growth in 2020, was also recognized. Delegations expressed interest in learning Viet Nam's policies to foster women's participation in the economy; this information was considered to be useful for Members to develop best practices. Members were also interested in Viet Nam's support for small- and medium-sized enterprises.

6.4. Members appreciated Viet Nam's contribution to the multilateral trading system and welcomed its ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in 2015 and of the amendment to the TRIPS Agreement in 2017. Some Members invited Viet Nam to make substantive commitments in the ongoing fishery subsidies negotiations and the MC12 deliverables. Viet Nam is a party of the Joint Statement Initiative on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Members invited Viet Nam to explore the possibility of joining other initiatives, such as on investment facilitation for development, e-commerce, and domestic regulation on services.

6.5. Several delegations noted that some notifications from Viet Nam are missing or not up-to-date in the areas of, *inter alia*, agriculture domestic support and export subsidies, and customs procedures and valuation. Members looked forward to improvements in this regard.

6.6. Members noticed improvements in the business environment since the last Review. Some Members expressed concern that the structural reform is not yet complete and urged Viet Nam to further reduce red tape, adopt more predictable tax policies, increase transparency in administrative procedures, and simplify appraisal procedures for investment projects.

6.7. A robust manufacturing sector has become the main driver of Viet Nam's trade competitiveness in recent years. Members highlighted that the services sector may also be a source for sustained productivity and economic growth. For instance, the expanding trade in ICT apparatus and equipment was coupled with a rapid development of the telecommunications market. Furthermore, the government announced its interest in promoting and developing a thriving market for ICT-related services. Despite these positive developments, Members raised concerns about potential restrictions in draft legislation, including personal data protection, data localization, and local presence requirements, which might limit the market access for foreign service providers. Regarding ICT products, Viet Nam was urged to join the expanded ITA.

6.8. Acknowledging that state-owned enterprises still have a predominant role in key sectors, such as banking, telecommunications, and transport, Members welcomed the recently enacted framework for public-private partnerships (PPP), notably for the development of transport infrastructure. Members called for further relaxation of foreign equity caps in restricted sectors to fully exploit their potentials while offering new opportunities for foreign investors.

6.9. Members appraised the adoption of modern regimes for public procurement and intellectual property during the review period. Taking note of Viet Nam's commitments made under recent regional trade agreements, delegations encouraged Viet Nam to consider becoming a party to the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA). Recent efforts to promote IP awareness and use in Viet Nam were recognized, while delegations encouraged it to step up actions to combat IP infringement, particularly given the rise of the digital economy.

6.10. The development of e-government initiatives in Viet Nam, the modernization of customs administration through the national single window, and the electronic customs clearance, were also praised by Members. Nonetheless, Members perceived that further simplifying and streamlining the implementation of some border measures, such as tariff rate quotas on specific products, reference pricing, and customs valuation methods, still require further attention by the authorities.

6.11. Viet Nam's commitment towards harmonization of its national standards with international ones was welcomed. In this regard, Members suggested Viet Nam to continue increasing the harmonization of its standards, in particular for pharmaceuticals products, as well as to reconsider the implementation of standards and regulations which may become obstacles to trade.

6.12. Prior to the meeting, Viet Nam received more than 850 written questions and answered most of these questions. Viet Nam's responses were much appreciated and its replies to any late submissions and follow-up questions are expected in a month, at which time the second Trade Policy Review of Viet Nam will successfully conclude. I trust that the Vietnamese authorities will take into account the many constructive comments and specific issues raised in this Review, as they continue to adapt their trade and investment policies in light of their policy objective of becoming a developed and high-income country by 2045.
