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Q1: Respondent details

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Q2: Country or Customs territory

MYANMAR

Q3: Organization

Public sector

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Q4: Title of case story

Ministry of Commerce, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, handed over the Ratification for the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)

Q5: Case story focus

Trade Facilitation.

Q6: Case story abstract

H.E U Win Myint, Myanmar's Union Minister of the Ministry of Commerce who attended the WTO's 10th Ministerial Conference, which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15 to 19 December 2015, presented the country's instrument of acceptance and handed over Ratification over Trade Facilitation Agreement to the Director- General Mr. Roberto Azevedo at the KICC Hall, Nairobi, Kenya on 16th December 2015.

Q7: Who provided funding?

Other (please specify)
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Q8: Project/Programme type

Multi-country

Q9: Your text case story

H.E U Win Myint, Myanmar's Union Minister of the Ministry of Commerce who attended the WTO's 10th Ministerial Conference, which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15 to 19 December 2015, presented the country's instrument of acceptance and handed over Ratification over Trade Facilitation Agreement to the Director- General Mr. Roberto Azevedo at the KICC Hall, Nairobi, Kenya on 16th December 2015.

Additional instruments of acceptance were received from Vietnam and Brunei on 15th December and from Ukraine, Zambia and Norway on 16th December.

Concluded at the WTO's 2013 Bali's Ninth Ministerial Conference, the Trade Facilitation contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. It also sets out measures for effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues. It further contains provisions for technical assistance and capacity building in this area.

The Trade Facilitation Agreement will enter into force once two-thirds of the WTO membership has formally accepted the Agreement. In addition to Myanmar, Norway, Vietnam, Brunei, Zambia and Ukraine, the following WTO members have accepted the TFA: Hong Kong China, Singapore, the United States, Mauritius, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, Botswana, Trinidad and Tobago, the Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, Niger, Belize, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, China, Liechtenstein, Lao PDR, New Zealand, Togo, Thailand, the European Union (on behalf of its 28 member states), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Pakistan, Panama, Guyana, Côte d'Ivoire, Grenada, Saint Lucia and Kenya.

In accordance with the studies, the Trade Facilitation Agreement broke new ground for developing and least-developed countries in the way it will be implemented. The Trade Facilitation Agreement is the first multilateral trade agreement to be concluded since the WTO was established 20 years ago. Once it enters into force, the Agreement is expected to reduce total trade costs by more than 14 percent for low-income countries and more than 13 percent for upper middle-income countries by streamlining the flow of trade across borders.

The Trade Facilitation Agreement will be of benefit to all members of the WTO because the costs of implementing the Agreement are likely to be far less than the expected benefits from improving the flow of goods across borders. The Agreement will help improve transparency, increase possibilities to participate in global value chains, and reduce the scope of corruption. Studies showed that reducing these unnecessary or overly burdensome administrative barriers can have significant economic benefits in terms of added export potential, increased foreign investment and greater access to a wider variety of goods for consumers.

H.E. U Win Myint, Minister of the Ministry of Commerce, delivered a statement at the plenary session of the Tenth Session of the Ministerial Conference (15-18 December 2015), held at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC), Nairobi, Kenya on 17 December, 2015. He said that that year's Ministerial Conference is unique and historic as it was conducted in Africa for the first time, and also celebrated the WTO's 20th Anniversary and on behalf of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, he would like to extend their profound thanks and sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Kenya for its warm welcome and the excellent arrangements made for the conference. He said that they also welcome the three new Members of the WTO since the last Ministerial Conference for completing their accession processes for WTO membership. Then he explained briefly on the current state and only a limited outcome seemed to be achieved despite member's engagement and intensified efforts. Even though this fell short of Member's expectations, they nevertheless acknowledge and appreciate any positive outcomes and Nairobi was not the end of the road, and they have opportunities to preserve the Credibility of Multi-literal Trading system. Myanmar has always been very supportive of the multilateral trading system. In this regard, despite their supply-side constraints, Myanmar has already sent the notification on the acceptance of the Protocol of Amendment to insert the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement into Annex 1 A of the WTO Agreement on 7 December. Myanmar have been striving into overcome their challenges and constraints and it hoped that international organizations, donor countries and other development partners can work alongside them to improve the socio-economic condition of their people.

Within the context of WTO, EIF is a gateway to Aid for Trade for the LDCs, Myanmar fully welcomes the EIF Phase (II) and his Excellency's delegation will be working closely with other EIF members to strengthen cooperation.

Q10: Lessons learnt

Economic research and field evidence show that removing administrative and regulatory Bottlenecks at borders can have powerful effects on reducing trade costs and increasing trade. The purpose of the new WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement is to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. Implementation should help developing and LDC members reduce border inefficiencies, and the resulting costs, so realizing these gains. One particular feature of the Agreement is the implementation flexibility that it accords to WTO members. The Trade Facilitation Agreement allows Myanmar, one of the LDC members to determine when it will implement each trade facilitation measure, and to determine the support needed for its implementation.
