Dear participants,
Ladies and gentlemen!

On behalf of the Ministry of Trade and Integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan let me welcome you on today’s event and let me thank the organizers of this Consultations – the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific – for the invitation to speak today.

Today, we are going to witness and participate the very important discussions on harnessing trade for faster recovery and sustainable development, right ahead the upcoming key event in the field of international trade – the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference. Kazakhstan has the honour and great responsibility to act as the Chair of the MC12.

For more than 25 years, the WTO has been a key pillar of global economic governance and an effective tool for inclusive growth and sustainable development. The rules-based trading system created by the WTO has also become an important basis on which all companies rely when conducting international business and has created the necessary predictable legal framework.

Now that the WTO is facing numerous challenges, it is the turn of the business community to help the Organization justify the economic feasibility of a rules-based trading system, encourage Governments to resolve differences and make progress on key issues that threaten the system, and identify issues and opportunities where the WTO can serve as a forum to support trade-related economic growth.

It is crucial that governments and the business community continue to cooperate, develop public-private partnerships in the multilateral trading system and hear each other's voices.

The WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference is going to take place at unprecedented times. The coronavirus pandemic has led to a large number of human casualties and caused a global recession.

The WTO member countries are in favor of reforming the Organization to strengthen its ability to respond to the current situation. In our opinion, an important issue is preserving the relevance of the WTO for the business community.
Today's consultations demonstrate the importance of ongoing problems of international trade and upcoming discussions on seeking possible solutions for its rules-based multilateral approach to trade.

I hope that the participants of today's Consultations will be able to comprehensively discuss the prospects and opportunities of world trade, as well as such important issues as the strengthening the role of trade in sustainable development, viability of the WTO negotiation function, WTO reform and its Dispute settlement mechanism problems.

I wish you successful Consultations!