

# CHINA ROUND TABLE

## 9TH CHINA ROUND TABLE ON WTO ACCESSIONS

25 Years of WTO Accessions in Review

Programme

Virtual Conference - 11 December 2020



The Ninth China Round Table is funded by the Government of China and organized by the WTO Secretariat, as part of the agreed activities under the China-WTO MOU<sup>1</sup>.

For questions and inquiries on the Round Table, please contact:

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**Venue:**

Virtual conference livestreamed from the WTO

**Link:**

Please note that this event is open to the public and will be streamed on various platforms, including the WTO website and YouTube (links to be provided separately).

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<sup>1</sup> In July 2011, the Government of the People's Republic of China signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the WTO Secretariat on the China LDCs' and Accessions Programme ("The China Programme"). The Programme has been extended on a yearly basis, with the latest signed on 1 December 2020. The China Programme has five pillars, including the WTO Accessions Internship Programme and the annual Accession Round Table, designed to build capacity and technical skills in trade policy, including on accession negotiations, for acceding governments and Article XII Members, especially from least-developed countries.



## PREVIOUS ROUND TABLES



**First China Round Table: “Best-Practices in the WTO Accession Process”**  
Beijing, China, 29 May - 1 June 2012



**Second China Round Table: “The Future of the Multilateral Trading System: Perspectives of LDCs and Article XII Members”**  
Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, 15-18 October 2013



**Third China Round Table: “Post-Accession: maximizing the Benefits of WTO Membership and Global Economic Integration”**  
Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 2-5 June 2015



**Fourth China Round Table: “African Perspectives on the Future of Trading System: Domestic Reforms for Competitiveness and Deeper Trade Integration in the Global Economy”**  
Nairobi, Kenya, 13-14 December 2015



**Fifth China Round Table: “Best Practices on the Accessions of Least Developed Countries LDCs”**  
Siem Reap, Cambodia, 20-23 March 2017



**Sixth China Round Table: “Strengthening the Rules-based Multilateral Trading System And Building a Network to Promote Accessions”**  
Buenos Aires, Argentina, 10 December 2017



**Seventh China Round Table: “Eurasian perspectives on the Future of the Multilateral Trading System: Accessions and the evolution of WTO rules”**  
Astana, Kazakhstan, 26-27 September 2018



**Eighth China Round Table: “Accessions and WTO Reform: On the Road to MC12”**  
Moscow, Russian Federation, 4-6 December 2019

## BACKGROUND

Since 2012, the China Round Table (CRT) has served a platform for stakeholders' dialogue on WTO accessions, with the aim of sustaining discussions on the integration of new members in the rules-based multilateral trading system. To date, eight Round Tables have been hosted in three continents: CRT-01 in Beijing, China (May 2012); CRT-02 in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR (October 2013); CRT-03 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan (June 2015); CRT-04 in Nairobi, Kenya (December 2015); CRT-05 in Siem Reap, Cambodia (March 2017); CRT-06 in Buenos Aires, Argentina (December 2017); CRT-07 in Astana, Kazakhstan (September 2018), and CRT-08 in Moscow, Russian Federation (December 2019). These Round Tables have provided a forum for experience sharing on best practices on WTO accession and post-accession, and for exploring how WTO accessions could strengthen the multilateral trading system.

The China Round Table is organized by the WTO Secretariat within the framework of the "China's LDCs and Accessions Programme", with the aim of sustaining discussions on WTO accessions as well as increasing participation of LDCs and developing countries, especially of acceding governments, in the work of the WTO. The 9th China Round Table (CRT-09) will take place on 11 December 2020 in a virtual format, live-streamed from the WTO headquarters in Geneva. This Round Table will pay tribute to 25 years of WTO Accessions and will offer reflections on the road ahead<sup>2</sup>.

The 9th China Round Table will be organised by the WTO Secretariat (Accessions Division).

## OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

The principal objective of the 9<sup>th</sup> China Round Table is to review and pay tribute to the contribution of 25 years of WTO Accessions. The Round Table will also discuss the road ahead by spotlighting remaining challenges and emerging best practices, and exploring how the process could be made more effective, including with respect to the accession of LDCs.

The programme of the 9<sup>th</sup> China Round Table is structured into two sessions:

Session 1: **25 Years of WTO Accessions in Review: Reflections, Celebrations, and Lessons Learned**

Session 2: **The Future of WTO Accessions - Can We Achieve Universality in the Next 10 Years?**

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<sup>2</sup> The thematic focuses of the first eight China Round Tables were: "WTO Accession Best Practice" (CRT-01); "Future of the Multilateral Trading System: Perspectives of LDCs and Article XII Members" (CRT-02); "Post Accession: Maximizing the Benefits of WTO Membership and Global Economic Integration" (CRT-03); "Domestic Reforms for Competitiveness and Deeper Trade Integration in the Global Economy: African Perspectives on the Future of the Trading System" (CRT-04); "Best Practices on the Accessions of Least developed countries to the WTO" (CRT-05); "Strengthening the Rules-based Multilateral Trading System and Building a Network to Promote Accessions" (CRT-06); "Eurasian Perspectives on the Future of the Multilateral Trading System: Accessions and the Evolution of WTO Rules" (CRT-07); and "Accessions and WTO Reform: on the Road to MC12" (CRT-08).

## PROGRAMME

### SESSION 1: 25 Years of WTO Accessions in Review: Reflections, Celebrations, and Lessons Learned

The first session will adopt a retrospective lens by spotlighting the WTO accession anniversaries of China, Croatia, Saudi Arabia, and Kazakhstan. In the same commemorative vein, the panel will take stock of key accession achievements over the past quarter-century and broadly speak to the systemic relevance of the accession process and WTO membership.

<b>09:30-11:00 (CET)</b>	<p><i>Moderator: Ambassador Alan Wm. WOLFF, Deputy Director-General, WTO</i></p> <p><u>Opening remarks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambassador Alan Wm. WOLFF, Deputy Director-General, WTO</li> <li>• Mr WANG Shouwen, Vice Minister of Commerce of China</li> <li>• Mr Bakhyt SULTANOV, Minister of Trade and Integration of Kazakhstan</li> </ul> <p><u>Panel Discussion</u> (<i>panellists are invited to make 5-minute statements to be followed by a discussion led by the moderator</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambassador Zhanar AITZHANOVA, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the WTO</li> <li>• Ambassador Vesna BATISTIĆ KOS, Permanent Representative of Croatia to the WTO</li> <li>• Ambassador Saqer Abdullah ALMOQBEL, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the WTO</li> <li>• Ambassador ZHANG Xiangchen, Permanent Representative of China to the WTO</li> <li>• Mr Arif HUSSAIN, former Director, Accessions Division, WTO (1995-2008)</li> </ul>
<b>11:00-11:30 (CET)</b>	<p><i>Video Montage ("25 Years of WTO Accessions": Collection of videos by Article XII Members)</i></p>

### SESSION 2: The Future of WTO Accessions - Can We Achieve Universality in the Next 10 Years?

The rate of concluding WTO accessions has slowed down. It is now five years since WTO Members approved the terms of membership of the two most recent WTO Members. What could be done to address this trend? Are there ways to promote better engagement from acceding governments and WTO Members? Is there scope for developing further the underlying accession procedures to best serve the interests of Members and acceding governments? Could more be done to assist the most vulnerable applicants, including the LDCs? What is the role of the WTO's Guidelines on the Accession of LDCs?

The session will further investigate how the potential of WTO accession could be maximized in a time of uncertainty in the WTO and globally. This discussion will seek to examine the role of Working Party Chairpersons and the WTO Secretariat, the use of innovative technical assistance tools and novel work formats, as well as the potential for collaboration with other international institutions.

<b>11:30 – 13:00 (CET)</b>	<p><i>Moderator: Ms Maika Oshikawa, Director, Accessions Division, WTO</i></p> <p><u>Panel Discussion</u> (<i>panellists are invited to make 5-minute statements to be followed by a discussion led by the moderator</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Hilda AL-HINAI, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the WTO</li> <li>• Mr Alejandro JARA, Trade Consultant, former WTO Deputy-Director General (2005-2013)</li> <li>• Ms Cecilia KLEIN, Trade Consultant, former Senior Director for WTO Accessions, USTR</li> <li>• Ambassador Atanas PAPARIZOV, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the WTO</li> <li>• Mr Mozammil SHINWARI, former Chief Negotiator for Accession, Afghanistan</li> <li>• Ambassador Alfredo SUESCUM, Permanent Representative of Panama to the WTO</li> </ul>
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## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

To be included

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