

CHINA WTO ACCESSION INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

ALUMNI STORIES

Assel, please tell us....

Where are you from, and what have you studied before joining the China Programme?

I come from a small city called Ayagoz, East Kazakhstan. For my studies, I have moved around quite a lot. I lived in Almaty, Kazakhstan's largest city, where I attended the Kazakh National University and earned a Bachelor's degree in International Relations. The United Kingdom was my next port of call. First, I went to London, where I undertook a Master's Qualifying Programme at Bellerbys College in Greenwich. Then, I went to Scotland, where I obtained a Master's (LL.M.) in International Economic Law from the Edinburgh University in 2012.

Why did you apply?

I always aspired to work in an International Organization and multicultural environment. It started as a dream and then the goal was to work at the WTO. However, due to the fact that Kazakhstan was not a Member of the WTO clearly limited my dreams.

When I first found out about this programme in 2013, I was naturally happy, as this programme was the key for giving a special opportunity to work in the WTO Secretariat not only for nationals from developing and least-developed countries but also for nationals of states or separate customs territories engaged in the WTO accession process. As we all know that was not possible for intern candidates from acceding states or separate customs territories until 2011. This changed with the 2011 launch of the China WTO Accessions Programme.

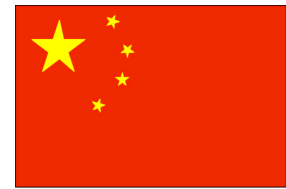
I want to reiterate my sincere gratitude to the Government of China and to the WTO Secretariat for launching this initiative and sponsoring this programme since 2011.



Assel
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work at the
WTO, Geneva,
Switzerland,
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WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU COMMERCE
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL COMERCIO



What kind of work were you assigned to during your internship?

I began my WTO internship in June 2014 under the China WTO Accessions Internship Programme. In the first two months of my internship, I assisted the Accessions Division in various tasks, including working on Kazakhstan's WTO accession. After, I was moved to the Trade Policies Review Division, Regional Trade Agreements Section. As a part of my new functions, I assisted the Division in the preparation of a factual presentation on the Eurasian Economic Union, which eventually was to be distributed to the full WTO membership.

Looking back, what do you think of your work experience at the WTO, and as participant of the China Programme?

The experience has been life-changing and I have been working with really extraordinary and dedicated people. The brilliance of the internship program, the competence of staff, and the diverse working community provided me with a breathtaking 10 months.

I was also lucky enough to attend very important and high-level meetings – namely: the WTO's General Council and last year's Public Forum, entitled "Why trade matters to everyone?" which demonstrated the importance of trade in our daily lives. I also attended the 12th review of the trade policies and practices of the world's leading economy, as the United States of America and the meeting of the Dispute Settlement Body. Being at the WTO has given me the great opportunity to attend meetings, which I was interested in. I found this very useful for my future career as a trade negotiator as it enabled me to learn how to act at these kinds of meetings.

While I was attending my training, I became acquainted with other WTO interns, including from Nigeria, Uganda, Liberia, Afghanistan and China. I was told that I was the first ever intern from Kazakhstan at the WTO since its inception. That was a great honour and, at the same time, it was a huge responsibility on my shoulders.

I can confidently say that this internship programme provided me with a first-hand insight into international trade policy, international economics as well as international relations in general.

What have you done since?

I have completed my internship at the WTO in April 2015 and have now returned to Kazakhstan.

Currently, I am in the process of applying for new positions.

Thank you, Assel!