



CHINA WTO ACCESSION INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME ALUMNI STORY

please tell us...

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



I am from Comoros. I completed my undergraduate studies in International Relations at the International Islamic University and my first master's degree in Strategy and Defence at the University of Malaya, both in Malaysia. Passionate about the nexus between peace and development, I went on pursuing a second master's degree in Development Studies at the Geneva Graduate Institute in Switzerland where I specialized in Conflict, Peace and Security. Towards the end of my studies, I got interested in international trade, particularly how it can be leveraged to support development efforts and promote stability. Hence I

took key courses on supply chains and international trade law to deepen my understanding in this area.

Why did you apply?

I applied to the WTO Accession Internship Programme to gain, on one hand, a better understanding of the WTO Accession processes and what WTO membership means for acceding governments in terms of their respective development aspirations. Following the recent accession of my country after 17 years of negotiations, I was motivated to learn about its journey and supporting countries that are on a similar path.

On the other hand, I was interested in the exposure to the multilateral trading system, particularly how the WTO, as the leading institution in this area, facilitates and ensures the compliance of rules, supports LDCs and overcomes the various challenges and criticisms it is facing. I was also curious to know more about the Trade for Peace (T4P) Programme and how it is integrated in the WTO ecosystem. Considering my interest in the peace and development nexus, where trade is increasingly seen as a key development mechanism and peacebuilding pathway, this programme offered the ideal platform to acquire the relevant skills and knowledge to grow in this field and figure out the answers to my questions.

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

During my internship, I supported a wide range of files. I served as co-secretary for the accession files of Somalia and Equatorial Guinea, which involved preparing and reviewing various policy and legal documentations to ensure coherence, identify inconsistencies and meet documentation requirements to advance in the accession process. Moreover, I also supported the technical coordination that took place through consultative meetings and capacity building activities. I was also assigned as co-focal point for the post-accession dossier of Comoros. My main contributions include preparing presentation materials for a National Awareness Raising Workshop, held in Moroni in 2024. All of these roles required me to put my linguistic capabilities at use, navigating English, French and Spanish. I also supported the various events and activities of the T4P programme which involved preparing and reviewing communication materials and various reports.

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

I think this work experience at the WTO and as part of the China Programme met my expectations to a large extent. I got the exposure, the knowledge, the skills, the confidence to advance in my career and I built lifelong connections. It was a transformative and unique learning journey that opened my eyes to the dynamics of international trade and the different priorities that are negotiated. I observed first-hand the complexities of trade negotiations (the technical elements and the human side of it), particularly how acceding governments and WTO members broadly align their national objectives with international expectations and commitments.

Some of the highlights include attending Somalia's first Working Party Meeting and working behind the scenes with my team to prepare and reach this milestone. Supporting African accessions files and the T4P Programme was a defining moment. It provided an opportunity to work in an area I am passionate about. I am particularly grateful for the mentorship and trust I have received from my supervisor and other inspiring colleagues across the Accessions Division.

What have you done since?

I graduated from my second master's degree and joined UNDP's Regional Service Center for Africa (RSCA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia as part of the African Young Women Leaders (AfYWL) Fellowship Programme. As a fellow, I am supporting UNDP's African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) portfolio which focuses specifically on facilitating intra-African trade and reinforcing the capacity of MSMEs, especially women- and youth-led to participate meaningfully in regional and global trade. To me, this is a good continuity of my WTO background allowing me to refine and sharpen my specialization.

Thank you!