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Rationale and Purpose of WTO Accessions

- Instrument to foster and consolidate domestic reforms, trade openness, economic diversification and modernization.
- Achieve economic growth, development, poverty reduction and “graduation” from LDC status.
- Strengthening the rule of law and good governance.
- Improving transparency, the business environment and increasing competitiveness.
- Positive signalling to foreign and domestic investors.
- Framework for inter-governmental coordination.
- Check and counter protectionism & rent-seeking.
LDC Accessions
Mandate and Policy Framework

- Art XII of Marrakesh Agreement Establishing WTO
- Doha Mandate to “facilitate and accelerate negotiations with acceding LDCs” (para. 42).
- 2002 Guidelines for LDCs’ Accessions (WT/L/508):
  - Market Access, WTO Rules, Process, TRTA and CB.
- 2012 GC Decision to strengthen, streamline and operationalize the 2002 Guidelines (WT/L/508/Add.1):
  - Benchmarks on Goods and Services; Transparency in Accession Negotiations: “Facilitation” roles by the Chairs of SCLDC & LDCs’ Accession WPs; S&D and Transition Periods; and TA.
20 Years of Accessions’ Results

- Actual market access expansion for goods and services.
- Modernization of WTO rules (e.g., State-trading Enterprises and export duties).
- Improvement of business environment.
- Strengthened bilateral, regional and international cooperation.
20 Years of Accessions’ Results

* 34 Governments have acceded via Article XII Negotiations.
  * 7 acceded as LDCs (Cabo Verde and Samoa graduated afterwards)
* “Article XII Members” are 21% of WTO Membership
* Average length: 9 years and 11 months.
* 1548 accession-specific legal obligations (including AFG and LBR).
* Real market access expansion in goods and services:
  * 417 bilateral agreements on goods (including AFG and LBR); and
  * 265 bilateral agreements on services (including AFG and LBR).
Article XII Members

- Developing Countries and Economies in Transition: 7*
- Least-Developed Countries: 27

*Including Cabo Verde and Samoa.
LDCs' Accessions, Domestic Reforms and Growth

- LDCs which acceded pursuant to Article XII have:
  - Faster trade and GDP growth
  - More resilience in crises
  - Increased competitiveness
  - Greater attractiveness to FDI
  - Relationship to LDC graduation
    - Cape Verde (2008)
    - Samoa (2014)
    - Vanuatu (recommended for 2018)
## Specific Accession Commitments undertaken by LDC Article XII Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article XII LDC Members</th>
<th>Year of Membership to the WTO</th>
<th>Working Party Report/Accession protocol</th>
<th>Market Access commitments on Goods</th>
<th>Market Access commitments on Services: Number of services subsectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of Commitment Paragraphs</td>
<td>Transition commitments</td>
<td>Binding coverage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cabo Verde</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>99.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan <em>Formal action to be taken at MC10.</em></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td><em>Formal action to be taken at MC10.</em></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accession Results: Goods
Accessions Results: Services

Average number of services subsectors covered by commitments

- Original Members: 48.6
- Article XII Members: 102.1
Accession Results: Trade Growth

- Article XII LDCs: 12.8% (2009/2013), 10.8% (1995/2013)
- Other Article XII Members excluding China and LDCs: 9.5% (2009/2013), 8.7% (1995/2013)
- Original Members: 6.8% (2009/2013), 4.0% (1995/2013)
MC10 Deliverable: Liberia

- Accession Package adopted *ad referendum*, on 6 October 2015 and re-circulated on 9 October.
Accession Package adopted, *ad referendum*, on 11 November 2015
Next step: Formal action by Ministers, at MC10.
LDCs Accessions

Maintenance Category

- Comoros
  - Preparing replies to the first round of Members’ questions and inputs for the First Meeting of the Working Party.

Inactive/Dormant/Domestically Active

- Ethiopia
  - Domestically active
- Bhutan
  - Dormant
- Sudan
  - Dormant
- Equatorial Guinea
  - No negotiating inputs
- Sao Tome e Principe
  - No negotiating inputs
The next frontier...

* **Timor-Leste**
  * Application for WTO accession received in April 2015.
  * Next Step: A short statement on the Foreign Trade Regime is pending, before the application can be considered by the General Council.

* **South Sudan**
  * Application for WTO Observer Status received in March.
  * Secretariat met with Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment of South Sudan in March 2015.
  * Next Step: A short statement on the Foreign Trade Regime is pending, before the observership application can be considered by the General Council.

* **Somalia**
  * Expression of interest to accede to the WTO.
* Director-General ‘s priority – 2014 DG Report on Accessions

* Third China Round Table in Dushanbe, June 2015
  * Thematic Focus: “Post-Accession: Maximising the Benefits of WTO Membership and Global Economic Integration” and its outcome “Dushanbe Statement”

* Integrated Approach to Post-Accession Support by WTO Secretariat

  1. Post-Accession Implementation Strategy
     * Partnership between Acceding Government (Liberia, Afghanistan) and development community (WB, ITC), including organising Round Tables on Post-Accession, 16 and 17 December
     * List of Notification Obligations (WTO Secretariat)

  2. Secretariat Note on Post-Accession Best Practices

  3. Secretariat Note on Monitoring of Implementation of Accession Commitments (internal)

* China’s LDCs and Accessions Programme
Challenges

- “Low-hanging fruits” have already been harvested.
- War and post-conflict situations.
- Transition from centrally planned to market economy.
- Vested interests and domestic “inertia”.
- Geopolitical context.
- Recent statehood.
Thank you!

accessions@wto.org