

ANNUAL REPORT

WTO ACCESSIONS

2021

Annual Report by the Director-General



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This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or their rights and obligations under the WTO.

* Unless otherwise specified, this Annual Report takes account of confirmed accession-related developments from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021.

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Accession Working Party Meetings in 2021



5th Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Sudan
— 26 July 2021



2nd Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Timor-Leste
— 29 July 2021



6th Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of the
Union of the Comoros — 21 September 2021

I. OVERVIEW 2021 AND OUTLOOK 2022

- Overview of activities in 2021



1. I am delighted to present my first Annual Report on WTO Accessions as Director-General. In 2021, the world continued to encounter a high level of disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Such disruptions, accompanied by

continuous global economic uncertainty, have amplified the plethora of challenges faced by the WTO and its Members, including most notably the postponement of the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12). While acceding governments were confronted by challenges on multiple fronts, many of them, including the LDCs, did not lose sight of their objective to join the Organization. The trade for peace agenda gained further prominence in this period as many active accessions continued to face fragile and conflict affected situations.

2. Among the 23 ongoing accessions, LDCs were the most active. Three LDCs accounted for all Working Party meetings held in 2021: Comoros, Sudan and Timor-Leste. Comoros inched closer to the finalisation of its accession process at the 6th Working Party meeting in September. Sudan officially resumed its accession process after a four-year break at the 5th Working Party meeting in July, preceded by an informal meeting held in March. Timor-Leste continued moving at full speed by holding a 2nd Working Party meeting in July, just nine months after the first meeting. The sustained progress registered by acceding LDCs makes the thematic focus of this year's Report – "The Accessions of LDCs – Achievements and Outlook" – particularly relevant and timely.

3. Technical progress was also registered in non-LDC accessions in 2021. Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of the most advanced accessions, made progress on outstanding legislation, but its adoption ultimately stalled due to domestic turmoil. Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan worked intensively, including with the Secretariat, and prepared the necessary documentation for active engagement with Members in 2022. Curaçao - the latest accession applicant whose Working Party was established in March 2020 - prepared and circulated the initial documentary basis, which paved the way for the start of the Working Party

process in 2022. Furthermore, Iraq signalled the imminent submission of necessary documentation aimed at reactivating its accession process, which has been stalled since 2004.

4. In 2021, we welcomed new Chairpersons for the Working Parties of The Bahamas, Comoros, Curaçao, Lebanon, South Sudan, Sudan and Uzbekistan. These new Chairs are from geographically diverse regions and representative of the WTO membership. The Working Party Chairperson plays a key role in the accession process. Working closely with the Secretariat, the Chairperson sets the tone and rhythm for the Working Party's work, mobilises Members' support, especially technical assistance in case of LDCs, and assists in the acceding government's domestic consultations as necessary. The Chairperson's role in the final phase is particularly critical as all elements - political, technical and procedural - need to fall into place in a synchronised and timely manner.

5. 2021 ended with a new application for accession from Turkmenistan, which had previously been granted observer status in the General Council and its subsidiary bodies in July 2020. Due to the postponement of MC12, the application will be placed on the agenda of the General Council at its first meeting in 2022. If the application is positively considered, it would bring the total number of accession Working Parties to 24, an increase of five since 2016 when the last member joined the Organisation. It is important to note that each application is a vote of confidence in the multilateral trading system which continues to offer acceding governments an opportunity to lock in reforms, modernise and transform their economies, based on internationally agreed rules and best practices.

6. Technical assistance is not only a key input at each stage of the accession process, but also serves as an important tool that brings together acceding governments, Members and partners to address the multiple needs of acceding governments. In 2021, the Secretariat continued to deliver tailored-made training activities on a range of accession-related topics. The use of virtual platforms resulted in almost doubling the number of activities from the previous year. Significantly, many of the activities resulted in the submission of negotiating inputs by acceding governments and contributed to substantive technical

progress. In addition, global training activities, such as a 2-week long specialised training course on Bilateral Market Access Negotiations in Trade in Services, combining lectures and experience-sharing sessions, brought together all acceding governments to discuss challenges and best practices. Furthermore, we witnessed greater responsiveness from WTO members and partners to the demands for technical assistance, especially from LDCs and fragile conflict-affected states (FCS) in accession. In this regard, the Secretariat often played a coordinating role which included, *inter alia*, the compilation of technical assistance needs (e.g. Iraq) and the organisation of Technical Assistance Roundtables with development partners (e.g. Comoros, Sudan and Timor-Leste). I would like to take this opportunity to express the Secretariat's appreciation to WTO members and all partners, especially the Asian Development Bank, IMF, ITC, UNCTAD, and the World Bank, for stepping up accession support in 2021.

7. The Secretariat continued to invest time and resources to provide greater transparency in WTO accessions, through regular briefings to members and observers, press releases, newsletters and enhanced social media engagement. In addition to providing periodic briefings to the Informal Group on Accessions (for Members) and the Informal Group of Acceding Governments (for observer governments), the Secretariat also enhanced its communications on accession-related news and activities. These included four newsletters (March, July, October and December); 23 press releases on accession; and 327 tweets (including 158 on Trade for Peace), to keep the accession community abreast of developments on a day-to-day basis. In addition, the Secretariat organised outreach activities aimed at increasing the understanding of the benefits and opportunities provided by WTO accession and membership. Three anniversary events were organised in collaboration with Afghanistan and Liberia (to commemorate 5 years of membership) and China (20 years of membership).

8. One of the key features of accession work in 2021 was a significant increase of interest in the Secretariat's work on Trade for Peace. Inspired by the vision presented by the g7+ WTO Accessions Group, a

small group of FCS-LDCs which are committed to using WTO membership as an instrument to promote peace and security, the Trade for Peace initiative was transformed into a programme with the launch of a Trade for Peace Network in March. Activities under the Trade for Peace Programme were implemented through four pillars, often in collaboration with partners from the peace, humanitarian and development communities: (i) political engagement and partnerships; (ii) outreach and dialogue; (iii) research; and (iv) training and capacity building. Major outputs from the Programme included, *inter alia*, the launch of the Trade for Peace Podcast which aired a total of 16 episodes involving 27 guests; the establishment of a Trade for Peace Research and Knowledge Hub, which issued a "call for papers" for a future Trade for Peace publication; and the organization of the second edition of the Trade for Peace Week on "Trade, Peace and Security" with a focus on Eurasia.

9. I have chosen LDC accessions as the thematic focus for my first Report on WTO Accessions against the following background: first, this year marks the 20th anniversary of the Doha Ministerial Conference in 2001 where Ministers committed to accelerating the accession of least-developed countries, leading to the adoption of the LDC Accession Guidelines of 2002; and second, in the context of the upcoming 5th UN Conference on LDCs, the WTO has concrete deliverables to report, that is the addition of six new LDCs to our membership since the 4th Conference held in 2011. The section, entitled "The Accessions of Least Developed Countries – Achievements and Outlook", is prepared on the basis of a study presented at the 10th China Round Table held on 18-20 January 2022. It provides (i) a review of the nine LDC accessions concluded between 2004 and 2016; (ii) an examination of their post-accession performance, particularly their participation in different pillars of the WTO's work; and (iii) a set of recommendations on how to harness the accession process to realise their developmental goals. Let me also add that this Report provides, for the first time, an analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Article XII Members as part of the review of their trade and economic performance.

- Outlook for 2022

10. In my first meeting with the Informal Group of Accessing Governments in November 2021, I indicated my plan to devote some of my time this year to develop a Secretariat's work programme on accessions. I am concerned that not only no new accession has been concluded for more than five years, but that the average duration of ongoing accessions has reached almost 19 years, which is almost as twice as long compared to the 36 accessions completed to date. Each accession is unique, and it is important for the Secretariat to understand and identify obstacles in each accession process. I hope that such a work programme can help the Secretariat to target and scale up its engagement and support for specific accessions, including through the intensification of cooperation with partners in certain areas in accession, particularly in the context of broader economic reforms and/or the Trade for Peace Programme. I shall be assisted by Deputy Director-General Zhang Xiangchen, the Accessions Division, and of course, Working Party Chairpersons and members.

11. In terms of accession work for the year ahead, I believe that several accessions can advance substantively, building on the technical progress registered in 2021. The accession of Comoros, which is technically advanced, is expected to enter the final phase of negotiations. In this regard, Comorian President Azali Assoumani has assured me that Comoros would carry out all the necessary legislative work to conclude its accession by the end of 2022, while placing an emphasis on technical assistance, including to prepare for post-accession. Depending on political developments at the domestic front, the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina could also cross the finishing line, as only a handful of issues remain to be finalised. The Secretariat stands ready to assist the acceding governments and Working Party Chairpersons in the finalisation process. It is my firm belief that welcoming a new Member would not only bring the WTO closer to its stated universality goal, but also inject new energy and dynamism into the work of the Organisation.

12. The accessions of Azerbaijan, Curaçao, Timor-Leste and Uzbekistan are well positioned to make substantive progress by potentially holding more than one Working Party meeting in 2022, if they remain technically engaged and focused. In this regard, in addition to technical readiness, political will would determine the pace of negotiations. Moreover, depending on domestic developments, progress could

also be expected in the accession of Iraq, building on the work started in 2021. The Secretariat remains committed to work with acceding governments, including Algeria, The Bahamas, Lebanon, Serbia, South Sudan and Somalia, which have indicated their interest to reactivate or stay engaged in their respective accession processes. Finally, we look forward to the start of the accession of Turkmenistan, once its application is accepted by the WTO membership.

13. Given the important role played by technical assistance and training, the Secretariat plans to step up its coordination role with Members and partners which provide various support to acceding governments. The plan includes the establishment of a TA coordination group to exchange information on accession-specific needs and assistance on a periodic basis. The aim of such a group would be to ensure that the evolving TA needs of acceding governments are met in a timely, coordinated and tailor-made manner, building on the format of the TA Roundtables organised in 2021. This coordination role could also support post-accession integration, especially for LDCs. Furthermore, the Secretariat will continue to provide experience-sharing platforms through the organisation of our flagship activities, including the China Round Tables and dialogues with the focus on strategic regions for accessions, among them Africa, the Arab region and Eurasia.

14. As always, transparency remains a central pillar in the Secretariat's work on accessions. We will continue to enhance and expand our transparency and communication tools, especially on social media, to keep the accession community abreast of new developments. In addition, a modern and user-friendly accession portal will be launched to facilitate engagement with users. As our knowledge contribution to the international community, we also plan to finalise two book projects for publication by Cambridge University Press, one entitled "Eurasian Perspectives on Trade and the WTO: Lessons from Accessions, Regional Integration and Economic Transformation", and the other entitled "Handbook on Accession to the WTO", which updates the 2008 edition to include a further ten accessions concluded since that year.

15. On the Trade for Peace front, I would like to see 2022 as the year of consolidation of a fully-fledged programme. A number of initiatives taken under the four pillars of the T4P Programme are expected to deliver more outputs and outcomes, with increased quality and visibility, especially in the areas of

research, capacity building and training. These activities will culminate in a high-level Trade for Peace Conference to bring together all stakeholders from the trade, peace, humanitarian and development communities in the latter part of the year. It is hoped that this Conference - together with a first publication on Trade for Peace, which would bring together the latest research and knowledge on the trade for peace nexus - would provide new perspectives on how trade and the WTO could contribute to peace and stability, especially in FCS, in the contemporary fragile global environment.

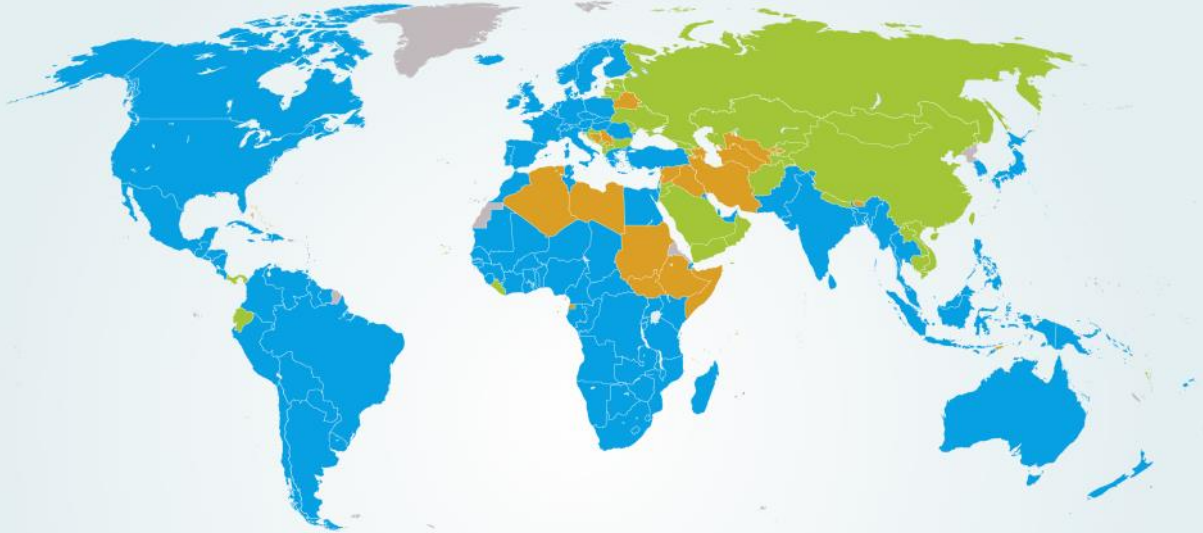
16. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts made by acceding governments, WTO Members, Working Party Chairpersons, development partners and other stakeholders in advancing the accession agenda in these exceptional circumstances. I encourage you to persevere in your efforts in 2022

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
Director-General



Meeting between DG Ngozi Iweala-Okonjo and Deputy Prime Minister
Sardor Umurzakov (Uzbekistan) — 20 May 2021

Map of Acceding Governments and Article XII WTO Members



ORIGINAL WTO MEMBERS (128)

WTO MEMBERS WHICH NEGOTIATED PURSUANT TO ARTICLE XII (36)

ACCEDING GOVERNMENTS (24)

Ecuador
Bulgaria
Mongolia
Panama
Kyrgyz Republic
Latvia
Estonia
Jordan
Georgia
Albania
Oman
Croatia

Lithuania
Moldova, Republic of
China
Chinese Taipei
Armenia
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Nepal
Cambodia
Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of
Tonga
Ukraine

Cabo Verde
Montenegro
Samoa
Russian Federation
Vanuatu
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Tajikistan
Yemen
Seychelles
Kazakhstan
Liberia
Afghanistan

Algeria
Andorra
Azerbaijan
The Bahamas
Belarus
Bhutan
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Comoros, Union of the

Curaçao
Equatorial Guinea
Ethiopia
Iraq
Lebanese Republic
Libya
Sao Tomé and Príncipe

Serbia
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syrian Arab Republic
Timor-Leste
Turkmenistan
Uzbekistan

II. DEVELOPMENTS IN 2021

1. ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES: AN OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

17. At the start of the year, 23 governments were in the process of WTO accession. These negotiations were managed through various accession-related meetings and events in virtual, in-person or hybrid modes.

18. In the year under review, three formal Working Party meetings were held. These were on the accessions of Sudan (fifth meeting), Timor-Leste (second meeting) and Comoros (sixth meeting).¹

19. Progress in the accession Working Parties was documented as follows:

- A Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) was circulated for the Working Party on the Accession of Curaçao.
- Factual Summaries of Points Raised were circulated and revised for the Working Parties on the Accession of Sudan, Timor-Leste and Uzbekistan.
- Draft Reports of the Working Party were revised by the Secretariat for the Working Parties on the Accession of Azerbaijan and Comoros.

20. In total, 61 accession documents were issued under document symbols WT/ACC, WT/ACC/SPEC and JOB/ACC series, for three Working Party meetings held in 2021 (Comoros, Sudan and Timor-Leste) and four Working Party meetings that could be held in 2022 (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Curaçao and Uzbekistan) (see Annex 1)



Meeting with new Working Party Chairpersons from Egypt, Morocco and France



2. NEW APPLICATION

21. On 22 November 2021, Turkmenistan, which had been granted observer status in the WTO since July 2020, submitted an application for accession pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO for consideration and action at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) initially scheduled from 30 November to 3 December 2021. Following the postponement of MC12, Turkmenistan requested that its application be considered for action by the General Council at its next regular meeting.

3. WORKING PARTY CHAIRPERSONS

21. As of December 2021, fifteen Working Parties had Chairpersons, including vacancies on accessions at their initial stages, where no documentary basis for work existed (see Annex 3). Of the fifteen Chairpersons, thirteen were Geneva-based and three were women.²

There were nine changes in the status of accession Working Party Chairpersons during the period under review:

- Appointments of new Chairpersons for seven Accession Working Parties:
 - * Ambassador Ahmed Ihab Gamaleldin (Egypt) for the Working Party on the Accession of South Sudan in March;
 - * Ambassador Omar Zniber (Morocco) for the Working Party on the Accession of Comoros in March;

¹ The meetings were held on 26 July, 29 July, and 21 September, respectively. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings were held in hybrid mode (with in-person attendance and simultaneously on the Interprefy platform).

² More information on the selection process of accession Working Party Chairpersons can be found in Section 2.4 "Chairperson of Accession Working Party" of document WT/ACC/33/Rev.1.

* Ambassador Cheryl K. Spencer (Jamaica) for the Working Party on the Accession of The Bahamas in April;

* Ambassador Taeho Lee (Republic of Korea) for the Working Party on the Accession of Uzbekistan in August;

* Ambassador Chad Blackman (Barbados) for the Working Party on the Accession of Curaçao in November;

* Mr. Etienne Oudot de Dainville (France) for the Working Party on the Accession of the Lebanese Republic in November;

* Mr. Naoki Hikota (Japan) for the Working Party on the Accession of Sudan in November.



Meeting with new Working Party Chairpersons from Japan and Barbados

- The positions of Chairperson of the Working Parties on the Accession of Azerbaijan and Belarus remain under consultation, following the resignation of Ambassador Walter Werner (Germany) and Ambassador Kemal Madenoğlu (Turkey), respectively.

24. In 2021, Working Party Chairpersons remained actively engaged. They consulted with Members and acceding governments in various formats and configurations, including virtually, and participated in outreach activities to improve technical and policy understanding on WTO accessions. The active engagement of Chairpersons played a significant role in advancing the accession processes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions, no country visits could take place in 2021. At the same time, some non-resident Chairs made regular visits to Geneva to identify specific steps to move the accession process forward and mobilize support. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Iraq, Ambassador Omar Hilale (Morocco) visited Geneva on three occasions in 2021 (in January, June and September).

4. TRANSPARENCY IN THE ACCESSION PROCESS

25. Ensuring transparency and predictability in the accession process remains a key priority for the Secretariat and Members. Various transparency measures continued to be implemented in 2021.

i. Informal Group on Accessions (IGA)

26. The IGA held four meetings in 2021, on 26 February, 4 June, 8 September and 14 December. All meetings took place virtually on Interprefy. Consultations in the IGA focused on: (i) Secretariat reports on state of play in eighteen accessions and one observer; (ii) Secretariat reports on technical-assistance and outreach activities, including on Trade for Peace; (iii) planning of accession meetings and activities; and (iv) addressing specific concerns raised by Members;



Informal Group on Accessions in Interprefy – 14 December 2021

ii. WTO Accessions Newsletter

27. In 2021, the Secretariat issued four WTO Accessions Newsletters, in March, July, September and December. The Newsletter ensures transparency on accession matters, including recent developments, calendar of activities, issues of interests to the accession community and activities under the Trade for Peace Programme. It also aims to enhance communication with acceding governments, Chairpersons, Members, partners and the broader trade policy community. The number of subscribers to the Newsletter at the end of 2021 was 1606 (excluding subscribers from the Secretariat). A separate Newsletter is envisaged for the Trade for Peace Programme in 2022.

iii. Annual Outreach Dialogue with WTO Regional Groups

28. The Secretariat regularly organises outreach dialogues with various WTO Regional Groups to strengthen communication channels with Members and acceding governments. The dialogue also provides a platform to exchange region-specific information on WTO accessions. In 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no such dialogue could be organised. At the same time, the Secretariat provided a briefing on the state of play in LDC accessions at the 91st session of the Sub-Committee on LDCs held on 2 July 2021.³



Sub-Committee on LDCs — 2 July 2021

iv. Accessions Transparency Toolbox

• WTO Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP)

29. The Accessions Intelligence Portal (<https://www.wto.org/accessions>) forms an integral part of the Secretariat's initiative to enhance transparency on WTO accession negotiations. The AIP provides access to documentation and data on the WTO accession processes, including 36 completed and 23 ongoing accessions. The Portal is regularly updated based on documentation received from acceding governments and produced by the Secretariat with respect to ongoing accessions.⁴ A new, more user-friendly layout of the AIP is under development, to be launched in 2022.

• Accession Commitments Database (ACDB)

30. The Accession Commitments Database (<http://acdb.wto.org>) provides access to all accession-specific commitments and related information contained in Accession Working Party Reports and Protocols of the 36 Article XII Members. The ACDB is available to the general public in the three WTO official languages.

• Register of Bilateral Market Access Agreements

27. The Register of Bilateral Market Access Agreements contains basic information regarding signed bilateral market access agreements on goods and services that have been deposited with the Secretariat. The Register lists the type of the agreement (goods; services; or both), and the dates of signature and deposit. The content of bilateral market access agreements remains confidential to the signatories and the Secretariat, which acts as the depository of the Agreements. Reports generated by the Register are available to WTO Members via a password-protected access: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/xacc_e/register_e.htm



Signing bilateral agreement between Canada and Comoros —
26 November 2021

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OUTREACH

i. Technical Assistance

32. Technical assistance is important in supporting the advancement of accession negotiations, especially for LDCs. One of the four key results of the Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan⁵ (TA Plan) for 2020-2021 focuses on the participation of acceding governments in accession negotiations. Based on lessons learnt from the implementation of TA in 2018-2019, the Plan prioritizes the needs of LDCs, reflecting the limited capacity in many of these countries. The new TA Plan 2022-23 aims to give continuity to previous TA Plans, including promoting fully inclusive activities that respond to the needs of the weakest and most vulnerable beneficiaries.

33. In 2021, a total of 45 technical assistance and capacity building activities were delivered involving all observers.⁶ Most of these activities were conducted

³ WT/COMTD/LDC/M/91.

⁴ While the AIP is open to the public, some parts of the website, including access to documents of ongoing accession negotiations, remain password-protected and are only accessible to Members and acceding governments.

⁵ The plan for 2020-21 is contained in document WT/COMTD/W/248/Rev.1.

⁶ In total, over 545 participants took part in these activities.

virtually according to COVID-19 related guidance and included, *inter alia*, (i) technical sessions; (ii) tailored national training sessions and seminars; (iii) missions; and (iv) roundtables.

34. The Accessions Division, in collaboration with other Secretariat Divisions and/or other partner institutions, delivered technical assistance and advice to The Bahamas, Belarus, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Comoros, Curaçao, Iraq, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan:

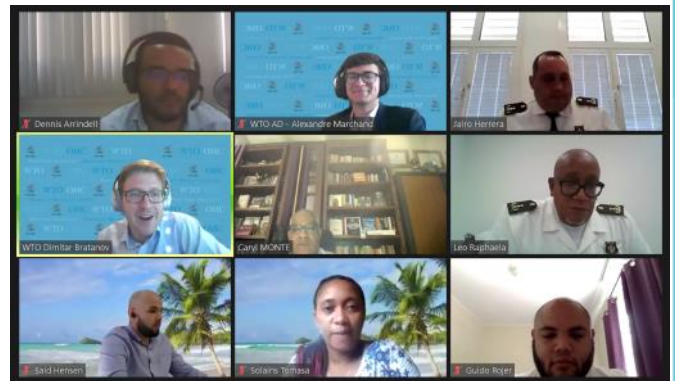
- i. At the request of the Government of the Bahamas, the Secretariat conducted two activities: (i) a virtual training course on TBT transparency and ePing on 4 March; and (ii) a workshop on intellectual property training on 7 September.
- ii. At the request of the Government of Belarus, the Secretariat held a seminar on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) on 12 May.
- iii. At the request of the Government of Bhutan, the Secretariat provided a virtual training course on ePing for government officials and representatives of the private sector on 28 May.
- iv. At the request of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Secretariat conducted technical sessions centred on the Draft Working Party Report on 7, 9 and 12 July.



Meeting with Bosnia and Herzegovina — 7 July 2021

- v. At the request of the Government of Comoros, the Secretariat organized technical sessions on bilateral market access of goods and services on 22 June and 5 October, respectively.

- vi. At the request of the Government of Curaçao, the Secretariat delivered 9 technical assistance activities from 8 January to 5 July.⁷ These focused on: (i) services; (ii) TRIPS; (iii) government procurement; (iv) Trade Policy Review; (v) dispute settlement; (vi) regional trade agreements (vii) status of small island developing states (SIDS) and small vulnerable economies (SVEs); (viii) Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR); and (ix) goods. Two further training sessions were organized on their goods schedule and services initial offer on 20 October and 13 December, respectively.



Accession of Curaçao—Training session on MFTR — 5 July 2021

- vii. At the request of the Government of Iraq, the Secretariat held a meeting regarding its Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) on 6 October.
- viii. At the request of the Government of Sudan, the Secretariat held a meeting regarding its goods offer on 18 May.
- ix. At the request of the Government of Timor-Leste, the Secretariat hosted 12 meetings⁸ to finalise technical documents and two training sessions⁹ on its services offer and revised market access offer on goods. A technical session and two workshops on bilateral market access negotiations and multilateral negotiations were held on 14 June, 16 July and 23 July, respectively. On 2 December, the Secretariat held a roundtable for 31 delegates, including government officials and representatives of the private sector and civil society followed by a technical training session focused on bilateral market access negotiations in services on 3 December.

⁷ Held on: 8 January; 12 January; 5 February; 12 February; 19 February; 12 March; 26 March; 4 June; 5 July.

⁸ Held on: 6 May; 10-12 May; 17-20 May; 14 June.

⁹ Held on: 5 March; 29 March; 21, 24 and 26 May.

x. At the request of the Government of Turkmenistan, the Secretariat held a session focused on "Sustainability of transport and trade connectivity in the Caspian Sea region in the age of pandemics" on 24 February.

xi. At the request of the Government of Uzbekistan, the Secretariat participated at the International Scientific-Practical Conference session on "Organizational and legal issues of Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO: current status, problems and perspectives" on 10 March and at an international conference on "Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity: Challenges and Opportunities" on 16 July. The Secretariat also participated in a training session on WTO accession negotiations on 23 July (organized by ITC) and provided in-depth and tailored support during a mission to Tashkent from 26-28 October. During the mission, high-level discussions took place with government officials on the state of play and next steps in Uzbekistan's accession process and two roundtables were held with the academic and business community.



Accession of Uzbekistan — Meeting with the Delegation — 23 July 2021

35. As for global and regional TA activities, a virtual services training was held from 15 to 26 March for all observer governments, in collaboration with ITC.¹⁰ Seventy-six officials from 15 governments participated in this activity. During the two-week course, participants enhanced their understanding of disciplines contained in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), including scheduling practices as well as the services commitments in WTO accessions. They received training on issues such as the classification of services sectors, schedules of commitments, most-favoured nation (MFN) exemptions and domestic regulation of services. They also deepened their knowledge on specific services sectors, including business and professional services,

telecommunication services, financial services, and postal and courier services. Furthermore, participants had the opportunity to share experiences with accession negotiators in a roundtable format.

36. The second Regional Dialogue for the Arab Region and the fourth Regional Dialogue for Africa, originally planned for November and December 2021, respectively, had to be postponed due to COVID-19. The second Regional Dialogue for the Arab Region will now be held virtually on 7-9 February 2022.

37. The 10th China Round Table on WTO Accessions and a technical assistance roundtable for LDC Accessions (Comoros, Timor-Leste) was envisioned for 28-29 November, however, both activities had to be postponed to January 2022 due to COVID-19 related restrictions.

ii. Outreach

38. The Secretariat continued to provide support to informal groups related to accessions, including the Informal Group of Acceding Governments (IGAG) and the g7+ WTO Accessions Group. In addition, outreach activities focusing on WTO membership anniversary events for Afghanistan, Liberia and China were organized.

• Informal Group of Acceding Governments (IGAG)

39. The IGAG, which comprises 24 observer governments, held five meetings in 2021, including a meeting with Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in November.¹¹ An additional meeting was planned at the ministerial level on 2 December; however, it was postponed due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the Group discussed, among others: (i) accessions and Joint Statement Initiatives (i.e., Investment Facilitation for Development, MSMEs and Services Domestic Regulation); (ii) accession-specific technical assistance and outreach activities; (iii) achievements, challenges and the way forward, including the DG's closer involvement in accessions. In November, Uzbekistan took over the role of IGAG coordinator from Belarus which had coordinated the Group since its establishment in March 2018.



IGAG Meeting with DG Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala — 12 November 2021

¹⁰ More information can be found here: https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/tra_26mar21_e.htm

¹¹ In 2021, the IGAG met on 22 January (virtual), 26 February (virtual), 28 May (hybrid), 4 November (virtual) and 12 November (hybrid, with the Director-General).

- g7+ WTO Accessions Group

40. The g7+ WTO Accessions Group, which comprises nine fragile and conflict affected LDCs associated with WTO accession, held eight meetings in 2021.¹² An additional meeting was planned at the ministerial level on 1 December; however, it was postponed due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the Group focused on, *inter alia*, the development of a Work Programme on Trade for Peace¹³ and a Joint Declaration referencing the importance of trade for peace strategies ahead of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference. In January, Liberia and Timor-Leste jointly assumed the coordination of the Group, taking over from Afghanistan which had served as the Group coordinator since in 2017.

- Other outreach activities

41. In 2021, the Secretariat organised three events commemorating WTO membership anniversaries for Afghanistan, Liberia and China, in partnership with the respective governments. These events took place on 29 July for Afghanistan's 5th anniversary¹⁴, on 4 October for Liberia's 5th anniversary¹⁵ and on 10 December for China's 20th anniversary.¹⁶ For Afghanistan and Liberia, two separate studies were prepared for the assessment of their respective membership and were launched at the anniversary events.¹⁷



5th Anniversary of Afghanistan WTO Membership — 29 July 2021

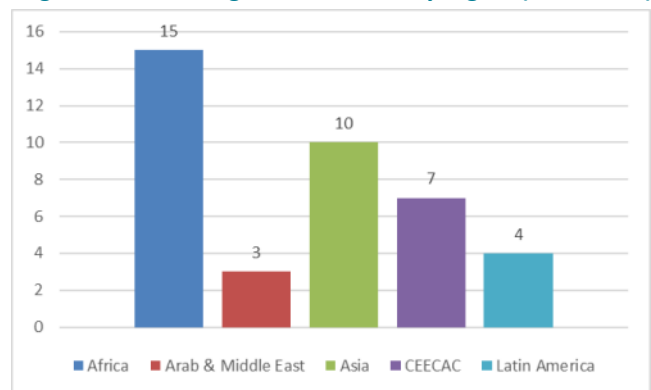
iii. China's LDCs and Accessions Programme (The China Programme)

42. The "China's LDCs and Accessions Programme" (the China Programme) was established by the Government of China and the WTO on 14 July 2011. The China Programme is aimed at

strengthening LDCs' participation in the WTO and at assisting acceding governments in joining the WTO. Out of the five pillars, the Accessions Division is responsible for the implementation of Pillar I "WTO Accessions Internship Programme"; and Pillar II "Annual China Round Tables on WTO Accessions".¹⁸

43. Under the WTO Accessions Internship Programme (Pillar I), 7 interns worked in the Accessions Division in the year under review.¹⁹ Of the 39 interns that have participated in the Programme since its launch in 2011, 13 have been from LDCs and 25 from non-LDCs.²⁰ 13 men and 26 women have participated in the Programme. The breakdown of interns per region is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: China Programme interns by region (2012-2021)



44. Under Pillar II, the 10th China Round Table on WTO Accessions was planned for 28-29 November as an in-person event back-to-back with MC12, but had to be postponed due to COVID-19 related restrictions. The event was changed to virtual format on 18-20 January 2022. The theme of the 10th China Round Table was "10 Years of Capacity-Building under the China Programme: Reflections on LDC Accessions". The objectives of the event were to (i) celebrate the 10 years anniversary of the China Programme and (ii) reflect on LDCs accessions as well as ways in which the China Programme can continue to assist LDCs in their accession journey.

45. A total of 141 participants participated in the high-level opening session which highlighted the key achievements of the China Programme since its establishment in July 2011. The opening session was

¹² Held on: 23 March; 16 April; 30 April; 11 June; 1 October; 5 October; 17 November; and 6 December.

¹³ More information can be found here: https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/tfp_05oct21_e.htm; WTO document WT/GC/W/830.

¹⁴ More information on the event can be found here: https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/acc_09aug21_e.htm

¹⁵ More information on the event can be found here: https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/acc_04oct21_e.htm

¹⁶ More information on the event can be found here: https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/acc_10dec21_e.htm

¹⁷ The study on Afghanistan is available here: [Microsoft Word - Final - Afghanistan report \(intracen.org\)](#). The study on Liberia is available here: [Microsoft Word - Liberia Report - Final \(1\) \(intracen.org\)](#)

¹⁸ More background and information on the five pillars can be found here: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/china_programme_e.htm.

¹⁹ The 2021 China WTO Accessions Internship Programme participants were from Brazil, China, Ghana, India, Kenya, Venezuela and Viet Nam.

²⁰ An overview of former and current participants, including alumni stories, can be found here: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/pillar1_e.htm.

followed by a round table where LDC ministers/chief negotiators from Comoros, Timor-Leste, Yemen, Lao PDR and Cambodia discussed their respective accession and post-accession experiences as well as the challenges faced by LDCs in the accession process.



10th China Round Table on WTO Accessions — 18-20 January 2022

46. Other registered participants included representatives of acceding governments, WTO Members, former and current Chief Negotiators on WTO accession, Working Party Chairpersons etc. Session 2 and 3 were attended by 105 and 92 participants respectively. In session 2, experts examined the accession outcomes of the nine WTO members that have joined the organization as LDCs under Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement. In session 3, participants reflected on ways in which the China Programme can continue to provide targeted support to LDCs across its five main pillars.

III. STATE OF PLAY IN ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES

47. Table 1 provides an overview of 23 accessions by the status of accession negotiations, as of January 2022. In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect progress in many accessions. In addition, as in the past, a range of factors remain in play. They include, but are not limited to, ongoing negotiations with Members; technical complexities; domestic challenges; political choices to delay for more impact analysis; re-ordered priorities; and/or post-conflict situations. Despite these challenges, progress was registered in several LDC accessions, especially of Comoros, Sudan and Timor-Leste where the respective Working Parties held meetings in 2021. Technical progress was also made in non-LDC accessions, especially in Azerbaijan, Curaçao and Uzbekistan. This section provides the state of play on the ongoing accessions, as of December 2021. More details of the state of play are provided and regularly updated in the Accessions Newsletter.

48. Algeria: Algeria applied for WTO accession in June 1987. The Working Party was established in June 1987 and held its first meeting in 1998. The 12th meeting of the Working Party was held in March 2014. To date, six bilateral market access agreements have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat while several bilateral negotiations remain outstanding. The draft Working Party Report is in its third revision that was circulated in February 2014. The 13th meeting of the Working Party will be convened subject to the submission of required negotiating inputs.

Table 1: Current accessions by general status

General Status	Accession
Strategic focus	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Comoros*
Work in progress	Azerbaijan, The Bahamas, Belarus, Ethiopia*, South Sudan*, Sudan*, Timor-Leste*, Uzbekistan
Reactivation	Iraq, Lebanese Republic, Serbia
Activation	Curaçao, Somalia*
Inactive	Algeria, Andorra, Bhutan*, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Libya, Sao Tomé and Príncipe*, Syrian Arab Republic

Notes: *LDCs.

"Strategic focus" indicates accessions which could be concluded in 2022, based on the level of technical advancement of the dossiers.

"Work in progress" indicates technical advancement and regular exchange of information with WTO Members and the Secretariat.

"Reactivation" indicates exchange of information with the Secretariat and/or WTO Members with the objective of early resumption of activities at the level of the Working Party after a period of dormancy/inactivity.

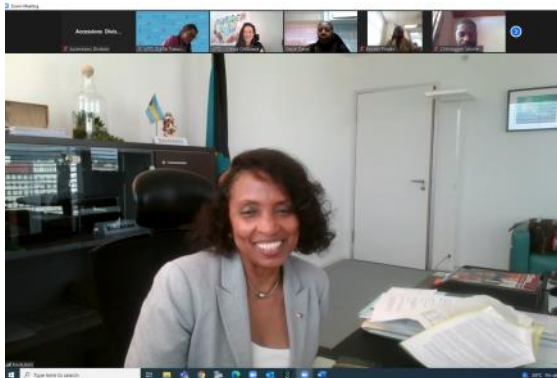
"Activation" indicates exchange of information with the Secretariat with the objective to begin the Working Party process.

"Inactive" indicates no activities at the level of the Working Party for at least three years.

49. Andorra: Andorra applied for WTO accession in July 1997. The Working Party was established in October 1997. The Working Party held its first and only meeting in October 1999. This accession process is inactive, and there are no indications of any intention to re-start the process.

50. Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan applied for WTO accession in June 1997. The Working Party was established in July 1997 and held its first meeting in 2002. The 14th meeting of the Working Party was held in July 2017. To date, four bilateral market access agreements have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat, while bilateral negotiations are ongoing with several interested Members. In preparation for the 15th meeting of the Working Party, the fourth revision of the draft Working Party Report was circulated in July 2021. The 15th meeting is envisaged for the first half of 2022.

51. The Bahamas: The Bahamas applied for WTO accession in May 2001. The Working Party was established in July 2001 and held its first meeting in 2010. The fourth meeting of the Working Party was held in April 2019. To date, one bilateral market access agreement has been concluded, while bilateral negotiations are ongoing with several interested Members. On the multilateral level, the Working Party agreed to transform the Factual Summary of Points Raised into an Elements of a draft Working Party Report. The fifth meeting will be convened subject to the submission of required negotiating inputs.



Accession of The Bahamas — Meeting with the Delegation — 27 July 2021

52. Belarus: Belarus applied for WTO accession in September 1993. The Working Party was established in October 1993 and held its first meeting in 1997. Following a period of inactivity, during which no formal Working Party meetings were held between 2005 and 2016, the Working Party resumed its work in January

2017. The most recent (12th) meeting took place in July 2019. The 13th meeting was scheduled for March 2020 but had to be postponed due to the COVID-related restrictions. To date, 16 signed bilateral market access agreements have been deposited with the Secretariat. Bilateral negotiations are ongoing with a limited number of Members. The draft Working Party Report is in its fourth revision.



Accession of Belarus — Workshop on TRIMs — 12 May 2021

53. Bhutan: Bhutan applied for WTO accession in September 1999. The Working Party was established in October 1999 and held its first meeting in 2004. The fourth meeting of the Working Party was held in January 2008. The first version of the draft Working Party Report was circulated in December 2007. The most recent market access offers on goods and services were circulated in November 2007. There has been no activity in the Working Party since the fourth meeting.

54. Bosnia and Herzegovina: Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for WTO accession in May 1999. The Working Party was established in July 1999 and held its first meeting in 2003. The 13th meeting of the Working Party was held in February 2018. To date, 16 bilateral market access agreements have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat, while bilateral negotiation is outstanding with one Member. Multilateral negotiations are underway on the basis of the eighth revision of the draft Working Party Report circulated in October 2017. The 14th meeting will be convened after the conclusion of the remaining bilateral market access negotiation.

55. Comoros: Comoros applied for WTO accession in March 2007. The Working Party was established in October 2007 and held its first meeting in December 2016. The sixth meeting was held on 21 September 2021. To date, four bilateral market access agreements

have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat. Bilateral negotiations are reportedly ongoing with two Members. Multilateral negotiations are ongoing on the basis of the second revision of the draft Working Party Report circulated in June 2021. The seventh meeting is envisaged for the 2nd quarter of 2022, following the submission of required negotiating inputs.

56. Curaçao: Curaçao applied for WTO accession in October 2019. The Working Party was established in March 2020. Curaçao's Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime was circulated in September 2021. The first meeting of the Working Party will be convened following the submission of replies to questions raised by Members on the Memorandum.



Accession of Curaçao —Deposit of the MFTR — 31 August 2021

57. Equatorial Guinea: Equatorial Guinea applied for WTO accession in March 2007. The Working Party was established in February 2008. No Working Party meeting has been held to date. Equatorial Guinea is currently preparing the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime.

58. Ethiopia: Ethiopia applied for WTO accession in January 2003. The Working Party was established in February 2003 and held its first meeting in May 2008. The fourth meeting of the Working Party was held on 30 January 2020. Bilateral negotiations are ongoing with several interested Members. On the multilateral level, the Working Party agreed to transform the Factual Summary of Points Raised to an Elements of the draft Report of the Working Party. The fifth meeting will be convened subject to the submission of required negotiating inputs.

59. Islamic Republic of Iran: The Islamic Republic of Iran applied for WTO accession in July 1996. The Working Party was established in May 2005. Following

the circulation of the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime in November 2009, Iran submitted technical inputs, including replies to Members' questions on the Memorandum, in 2011. The first meeting of the Working Party will be convened, following consultations of the Chairperson of the General Council with Members on the designation of a Chairperson of the Working Party.

60. Iraq: Iraq applied for WTO accession in September 2004. The Working Party was established in December 2004 and held its first meeting in 2007. The second meeting of the Working Party was held in April 2008 and an informal meeting of the Working Party was held in November 2017. In preparation for the third meeting of the Working Party, an updated MFTR was circulated in February 2018. The third meeting will be convened following the submission of required negotiating inputs which should be circulated soon.



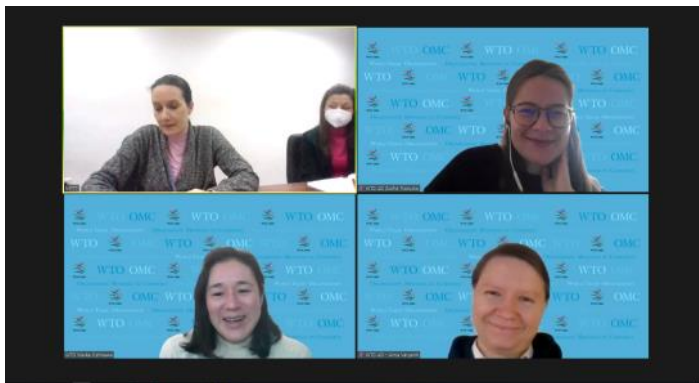
Accession of Iraq —Meeting with the Delegation — 6 October 2021

61. Lebanese Republic: The Lebanese Republic applied for WTO accession in January 1999. The Working Party was established in April 1999 and held its first meeting in 2002. The seventh meeting of the Working Party was held in October 2009. In preparation for the eighth meeting of the Working Party, negotiating inputs as well as the second revision of the draft Working Party Report, were circulated in April-June 2017. The eighth meeting will be convened subject to the submission of updated negotiating inputs to reflect changes introduced since 2017. In addition, the submission of new revised market access offers on goods and services, last circulated in 2004, will be required.

62. Libya: Libya applied for WTO accession in June 2004. The Working Party was established in September 2004. No Working Party meeting has been held to date as Libya has not submitted any inputs to initiate the process. Libya is subject to Category III administrative measures.²¹

63. Sao Tomé and Príncipe: Sao Tomé and Príncipe applied for WTO accession in February 2005. The Working Party was established in June 2005. No Working Party meeting has been held to date. Sao Tomé and Príncipe is currently preparing the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime. Sao Tomé and Príncipe is subject to Category III administrative measures.²²

64. Serbia: Serbia applied for WTO accession in December 2004. The Working Party was established in February 2005 and held its first meeting in 2005. The 13th meeting of the Working Party was held in June 2013. To date, 13 bilateral market access agreements have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat, while bilateral market access negotiations remain with a limited number of Members. Multilateral negotiations are based on the seventh revision of the draft Working Party Report circulated in October 2012. The 14th meeting will be convened subject to outstanding domestic legislative action and the submission of required negotiating inputs.



Accession of Serbia —Meeting with Capital — 27 January 2021

65. Somalia: Somalia applied for WTO accession in November 2016. The Working Party was established in December 2016. No Working Party meeting has been held to date. In May 2020, the Memorandum on Foreign Trade Regime was circulated to all Members of the WTO. The first meeting of the Working Party will be convened subject to the Somalia's submission of replies to questions raised by Members on the Memorandum. Somalia is subject to Category III administrative measures.²³

66. South Sudan: South Sudan applied for WTO accession in December 2017. The Working Party was established in December 2017 and held its first meeting in March 2019. The second meeting of the Working Party will be convened subject to South Sudan's submission of required inputs, including: the response to Members' questions and update of the MFTR; and the preparation of initial market access offers on goods and services, accessions checklists and questionnaires and a revised Legislative Action Plan.

67. Sudan: Sudan applied for WTO accession in October 1994. The Working Party was established in October 1994 and held its first meeting in 2003. After years of dormancy, the Working Party resumed its work in January 2017 and held the fourth meeting in July 2017. In 2021, the Working Party met in informal mode in March and held the fifth meeting in July. The Working Party reviewed Factual Summary of Points Raised along with other provided inputs and mandated the Secretariat to prepare the Elements of a draft Working Party Report. To date, three bilateral market access agreements have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat, while bilateral market access negotiations are ongoing with several interested Members. The sixth meeting will take place, following the submission of required negotiating inputs.



Accession of Sudan —Meeting with the Delegation— 29 June 2021

68. Syrian Arab Republic: The Syrian Arab Republic applied for WTO accession in October 2001. The Working Party was established in May 2010. No Working Party meeting has been held to date as the Syrian Arab Republic has not submitted any negotiating inputs to initiate the process. The Syrian Arab Republic is subject to Category II administrative measures.²⁴

69. Timor-Leste: Timor-Leste applied for WTO accession in November 2016. The Working Party was established in December 2016 and held its first

²¹ As of December 2021.

²² As of December 2021.

²³ As of December 2021.

²⁴ As of December 2021.

meeting on 1 October 2020. The second meeting of the Working Party took place on 29 July 2021. The Working Party reviewed the Factual Summary of Points Raised along with other provided inputs and the state of play in the bilateral market access negotiations with Members, and mandated the Secretariat to prepare a revised Factual Summary / Elements of a draft Working Party Report. The third meeting is envisaged for the first quarter of 2022, subject to the submission of required inputs.



Accession of Timor-Leste—2nd Working Party Meeting— 29 July 2021

70. Uzbekistan: Uzbekistan applied for WTO accession in December 1994. The Working Party was established in December 1994 and held its first meeting in 2002. The fourth meeting of the Working Party took place in July 2020. Bilateral negotiations are ongoing with several interested Members. In preparation for the fifth meeting of the Working Party, a Factual Summary of Points Raised was circulated in July 2021. The fifth meeting is envisaged for the first quarter of 2022 subject to the submission of outstanding negotiating inputs.

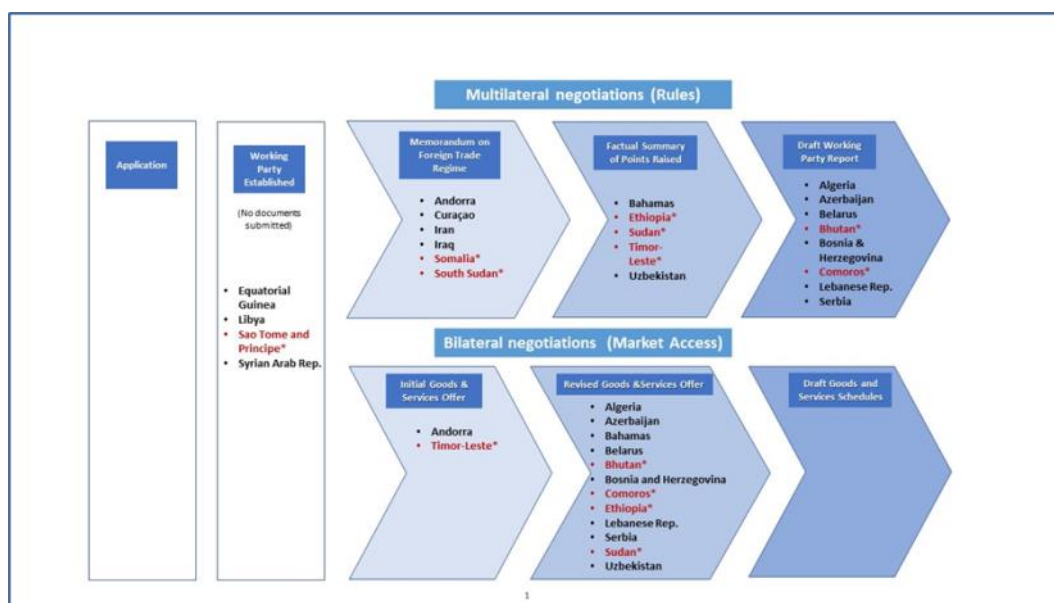
71. Figure 2 provides a snapshot of the state of play in accession negotiations, as of 31 December 2021.

IV. "TRADE FOR PEACE PROGRAMME"

72. Over a half of the countries acceding to the WTO are LDCs and/or classified as fragile and conflict affected states (FCS). The ideas behind the Trade for Peace (T4P) Initiative, which has now become a fully fledged programme, originate from the establishment of the g7+ WTO Accessions Group during the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2017. The Group consists of nine FCS-LDCs associated with accession²⁵, and its vision is to use trade and economic integration through WTO accession as tools to promote peace and stability. The Group is currently co-coordinated by Liberia (WTO Member) and Timor-Leste (acceding government). This vision is now shared by non-LDC acceding FCS, including Iraq, Lebanon, Libya and Syrian Arab Republic.²⁶

73. In addition to supporting the g7+ WTO Accessions Group, the Secretariat has undertaken a number of activities, including the first edition of the Trade for Peace Week in December 2020, to bring together the trade, peace and humanitarian communities to have a better understanding of the relationship between the multilateral trading system, peace and security. These activities generated interests from various partners to collaborate with the WTO to support FCS that are in the process of accession.

Figure 2: State of play in ongoing accession negotiations



²⁵ Include six acceding LDCs (Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Timor-Leste) and three Article XII LDCs (Afghanistan, Liberia and Yemen).

²⁶ The Secretariat has used the World Bank list of FCA states, which is updated annually. The following acceding governments are included: high-intensity conflicts - Libya, Somalia, and the Syrian Arab Republic; medium-intensity conflict - Iraq and South Sudan; and high institutional and social fragility - Comoros, Lebanon, Sudan and Timor-Leste. In addition, other acceding governments, including Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Iran, have been affected by conflicts, manifesting fragility in different ways.

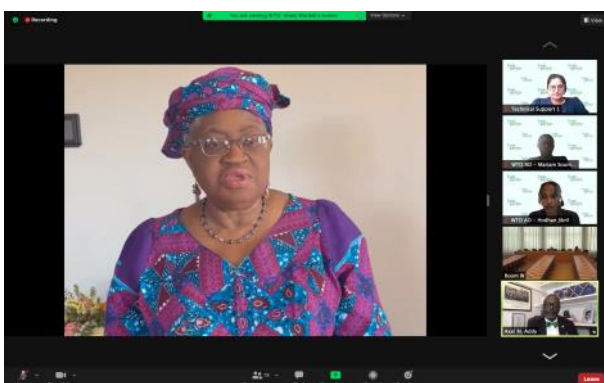
74. In 2021, a number of activities took place under the T4P Programme, starting with the launch of the T4P Network in March. These activities can be divided into four pillars: (i) political engagement and institutional partnerships; (ii) outreach and dialogue; (iii) research; and (iv) training and capacity building. A large part of the activities that have taken place so far fall under Pillar 1 to 3.

Pillar 1: Political engagement and institutional partnerships

75. This pillar aims at maintaining regular contacts and exchange between the WTO and key bodies in the international community to support the integration of FCS in the multilateral trading system. Since the first contact was established with the g7+ Secretariat, based in Timor-Leste, in early 2018, the number of partners interested in collaborating with the WTO in the T4P context has increased in the trade, peace and humanitarian communities.

76. In March 2021, the Trade for Peace Network was launched with over 70 participants, to provide a platform:

- for regular exchange between policymakers and experts from the trade, peace and humanitarian communities to explore the nexus between the multilateral trading system, peace and security;
- to explore areas of collaboration and actions by members of the Network, within their respective mandates, to support FCS seeking to join the WTO and to transition from a state of fragility towards stability and prosperity through integration into the multilateral trading system; and
- to set the agenda and work programme for the Trade for Peace Programme, including collaborative research, training, outreach activities, and information and experience sharing among members of the Network.



Launch of the Trade for Peace Network — 25 March 2021

77. The meeting brought together over 70 partners and experts from the trade, peace, and humanitarian communities, including heads of international organisations, representatives of FCS countries associated with accession, accession Working Party Chairpersons and delegates including ambassadors from WTO Members. Key outcomes of the meeting included *inter alia*: the preparation of the White Paper to be finalized in time for the T4P Conference; the continuation of Trade for Peace activities under the four pillars and the organisation of the Trade for Peace Conference to adopt a work programme, which may be supported by a multi-donor trust fund.

Pillar 2: Outreach and Dialogue

78. This pillar builds on the various outreach activities organised before the launch of the T4P Network and aims at increasing and deepening the understanding of the trade-peace nexus through greater interaction between the trade, peace and humanitarian communities on issues of common interest. In 2021, the following outreach activities were organized:

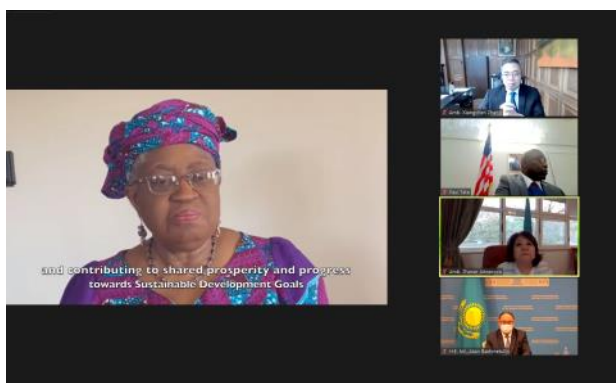
- UN High-Level Political Forum 2021
 - * Trade for Peace: Addressing Fragility Through Economic Integration and Shared Prosperity, 8 July 2021



UN High-Level Political Forum — 8 July 2021

- Geneva Trade Week 2021
 - * Opening Plenary Session, 27 September 2021
 - * Trade for Peace: Back to Basics, 29 September 2021
- International Leadership Association Conference 2021
 - * Trade for Peace: how can the WTO be an active promotor of peace through positive and peaceful world trade? 22 October 2021

- Geneva Peace Week 2021
 - * Closing Session: From seeds to systems of peace: Weathering today's challenges, 5 November 2021
- World Summit on Information Society (WSIS)
 - * ICTs and Peace, 10 November 2021
- Trade for Peace Week 2021
 - * Trade and Security, Eurasian Perspectives, 15-19 November 2021



Trade for Peace Week — 15 November 2021

79. The full list of trade for peace events is available here: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/trade4peace_events_e.htm

80. The most important and innovative outreach tool developed by the Secretariat in 2021 was the Trade for Peace Podcast which was launched in March. Hosted by Mr. Axel M. Addy, former Minister of Commerce and Industry of Liberia and Chief Negotiator for WTO Accession, the T4P Podcast is aimed at providing an open platform to exchange various perspectives on trade and peace, whether from policy makers or those on the ground in FCS. The Podcast is aired on a bi-monthly basis and 16 episodes were released in 2021. The episodes of the T4P Podcast are available on [Apple Podcast](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Amazon Music](#), [Spotify](#), [Podbean](#) and [Castbox](#). As of December 2021, the 16 episodes registered a total of 2364 downloads across 104 countries.

Pillar 3: Research

81. This pillar aims to gather, generate and deepen knowledge on the linkages between trade and peace through the establishment of a "Research and Knowledge Hub", a subset of the T4P Network. The first meeting of the Hub was held on 6 July where experts from various institutions exchanged views on the direction and areas of potential research.



Trade for Peace Research and Knowledge Hub Meeting—6 July 2021

82. As a follow-up to this meeting, a Call for Papers for a publication examining the linkage between trade and peace was issued by the WTO Secretariat in August 2021. Several expressions of interest were received, and the selection process will be concluded in the first quarter of 2022. The development of a Trade for Peace Index also began in collaboration with the Institute for Economics and Peace. The Index aims to shed light on the linkages between trade and peace, reflecting their various drivers and precepts.

Pillar 4: Training and Capacity Building

83. This pillar aims to foster mutual learning and experience sharing among trade experts and peace practitioners. The development of specific activities is dependent, partly on the work in Pillar 3. At the same time, joint training activities with interested partners, including with the Graduate Institute, are being planned for 2022.

V. THE ACCESSION OF LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES — ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTLOOK

1. INTRODUCTION

84. 2021 marked 50 years since the establishment of the least developed countries (LDCs) category by the United Nations. LDCs, defined as countries that have low levels of income and face severe structural impediments to sustainable development, are identified on the basis of three criteria: income, human assets, and economic and environmental vulnerability. Today, the LDC list includes 46 countries including 33 from Africa, nine from Asia, three from the Pacific and one from the Caribbean.²⁷

85. In the multilateral trading system, the necessity of paying special attention to the needs of LDCs gained prominence in the GATT shortly after the 1971 UN resolution establishing the LDC category. This included, *inter alia*, the 1979 Decision on Differential and More Favourable Treatment, Reciprocity and Fuller Participation of Developing Countries (the Enabling Clause).²⁸

86. Since then, several initiatives aimed at increasing the trade opportunities of LDCs have been introduced, especially after the WTO was established in 1995.²⁹ Accession was identified as one of the areas where WTO Members made commitment to support the meaningful integration of LDCs into the multilateral trading system. At the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in November 2001, Ministers stated that "accession of LDCs remains a priority for the Membership" and "agree[d] to work to facilitate and accelerate negotiations with acceding LDCs". The LDC Accession Guidelines, approved by the General Council in December 2002, has been one of the initiatives aimed at facilitating LDCs' accessions.³⁰ Following the adoption of the Guidelines, nine LDCs have joined the Organisation between 2004 and 2016, while eight more LDCs are still in the process of acceding.

87. As the WTO marks the 20th anniversary of the LDC Accession Guidelines, the thematic section of the 2021 DG's Annual Report will: (i) review the achievements in integrating LDCs in the multilateral trading system through WTO accession; (ii) examine

the post accession performance of the LDCs that joined the WTO between 2004 and 2016; and (iii) recommend ways in which LDCs can harness the WTO accession process to make progress towards realizing their developmental goals. The thematic section is based on a paper³¹ titled "Accession of Least Developed Countries to the WTO: Challenges and Opportunities" prepared for the 10th China Round Table (CRT-10), and the discussions at the Roundtable held virtually on 18-20 January 2022.

2. OVERVIEW OF LDC ACCESSIONS

88. Since the establishment of the WTO in 1995, 36 economies have joined the Organisation pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO, and nine of them concluded accession negotiations as LDCs. These were Nepal and Cambodia in 2004, Cabo Verde in 2008, Samoa and Vanuatu in 2012, Lao PDR in 2013, Yemen in 2014, and Liberia and Afghanistan in 2016. Three of these countries – Cabo Verde, Samoa and Vanuatu – since graduated from LDC status, in 2007, 2014 and 2020, respectively.

89. As of January 2022, eight LDCs are in the process of accession³², accounting for over one-third of ongoing accessions. On average, they have been in the process of accession for 14 years and 7 months. This long duration can be attributed to the complex nature of the accession process which requires institutional and legal reforms that are aligned with international best-practices in addition to goods and services trade liberalization. Such a process requires substantial resources and focused internal coordination which are often deficient in most LDCs facing inherent developmental challenges.

90. Table 2 lists the Article XII members that joined the WTO as LDCs as well as LDCs in the process of accession. It should also be noted that four of the acceding LDCs, i.e. Bhutan, Comoros, Sao Tomé and Príncipe and Timor-Leste, have met the criteria to graduate from LDC status.³³ In addition, six of the acceding LDCs are also considered fragile and conflict affected states (FCS), according to the World Bank.

²⁷ The list of LDCs can be found here: <https://www.un.org/ohrls/content/profiles-ldcs>

²⁸ In the Decision of 28 November 1979 (L/4903), GATT contracting parties decided (i) to accord special LDC treatment in the context of special and differential treatment measures (paragraph 2 (d)); (ii) to exercise the utmost restraint in seeking any concessions or contributions for commitments made by LDCs (paragraph 6); and (iii) to recognize the particular difficulties that may be faced by LDCs in making concessions and contributions in trade negotiations (paragraph 8).

²⁹ See a report by the WTO Secretariat providing some information on the decisions in favour of LDCs here: https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/boosting_trade_opportunities_for_ldcs_e.pdf.

³⁰ WT/L/508. The guidelines were updated in 2012, contained in WT/L/508/Add.1.

³¹ The final version of the paper is contained in WT/ACC/41.

³² LDCs which are yet to apply for WTO accession include: Eritrea, Kiribati and Tuvalu.

³³ Bhutan and Sao Tomé and Príncipe are scheduled to graduate in 2023 and 2024, respectively. Timor-Leste has met the graduation criteria at least two consecutive times, but the decision has been deferred by the UN's Committee for Development Policy. Comoros has met the criteria for the first time in 2021.

Table 2: LDC Article XII Members and Observers, as of January 2022

Article XII Members				LDC Observers		
	Member	Date of Application	Date of Accession		Observer	Date of Application
1	Afghanistan	11/2004	07/2016	1	Bhutan	10/1999
2	Cabo Verde*	11/1999	07/2008	2	Comoros ⁺	10/2007
3	Cambodia	12/1994	10/2004	3	Ethiopia ⁺	02/2003
4	Lao PDR	07/1997	02/2013	4	Sao Tomé & Príncipe	05/2005
5	Liberia	06/2007	07/2016	5	Somalia ⁺	12/2016
6	Nepal	05/1989	04/2004	6	South Sudan ⁺	12/2017
7	Samoa*	04/1998	05/2012	7	Sudan ⁺	10/1994
8	Vanuatu*	07/1995	08/2012	8	Timor-Leste ⁺	12/2016
9	Yemen ⁺	04/2000	06/2014			

* Cabo Verde, Samoa and Vanuatu graduated from LDC status in 2007, 2014 and 2020, respectively.

+ Afghanistan, Yemen, Comoros, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Timor-Leste are on the World Bank's FY22 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected States (FCS).

91. The most recent Members to accede to the WTO were Liberia and Afghanistan, in July 2016. They are not only LDCs, but FCS that have suffered years of civil wars. For them, WTO membership represented a pathway to stability and peace, as the accession process served as an institution-building tool and provided a basis for establishing an internationally recognized legal framework to develop their trade policy and conduct trade relations with the rest of the world. Their accession story inspired the accession application of other FCS i.e. Somalia, South Sudan and Timor-Leste, and led to the creation of the g7+ WTO Accessions Group, as well as the establishment of the Trade for Peace Programme (see section IV).

3. LDC ACCESSION RESULTS TO DATE

92. The results of the accession negotiations of the

nine LDCs are noteworthy, both on the multilateral and bilateral tracks. Table 3 provides a summary of the number of questions responded, commitments undertaken, and legislation enacted/amended during the multilateral negotiations. On average, these LDCs answered 722 questions, undertook 30 rules-related commitments,³⁴ and enacted/amended 91 legislative instruments.³⁵ These numbers are lower than the overall average of the 36 Article XII members which stood at 1019 questions answered, 43 commitments undertaken, and 188 legislative instruments enacted/amended. As the implementation of some commitments was recognised as particularly challenging, they were often granted transition periods taking into account their individual development, financial and trade needs. Areas where they were granted transition periods include TBT, SPS and TRIPS.

Table 3: Results of Article XII LDCs' Multilateral Negotiations

Article XII Member	Date of accession	Number of questions	Number of commitment	Number of legislative
Afghanistan	30/07/2016	466	37	75
Cabo Verde	23/07/2008	460	26	73
Cambodia	13/10/2004	888	29	85
Lao PDR	02/02/2013	914	26	159
Liberia	14/07/2016	343	31	102
Nepal	23/04/2004	1,224	25	24
Samoa	10/05/2012	1,164	37	123
Vanuatu	24/08/2012	264	30	123
Yemen	26/06/2014	773	28	58
Average for Article XII LDCs		722	30	91
Average for all Article XII members		1,019	43	188

Source: WTO

³⁴ In total, they made commitments in 35 out of the 38 specific sections covered in the Working Party Report (see more details in Annex 5-1).

³⁵ The total number of legislation submitted to the Secretariat in the process of accession, including bills, draft and proposed versions of the legislation. Source of the information is Annex 1 of the WPR.

93. In the bilateral market access negotiations, the nine Article XII Members which negotiated as LDCs, on average, concluded 10 and 7 agreements on goods and services, respectively. Table 4 gives an indication of the level of their tariff concessions in goods, which are much more extensive than those of original LDC Members. For instance, the binding coverage of tariff concessions on goods is 100% for almost all these Members, while for original LDC Members, it stood at 53.7%. For the final bound rates, Article XII LDC Members have an average of 22.4%, compared to 65.2% for original LDC Members.

Table 4: Results of Article XII LDCs' Bilateral Market Access Negotiations

Article XII LDC Members	Date of Membership	GOODS				SERVICES	
		Binding coverage (%)	Average final bound rate (%)			Number of services sub-sectors	
			All products	Agricultural products	Non-agricultural products		
1	Afghanistan	30/07/2016	96.6	13.5	33.6	10.3	104
2	Cabo Verde	23/07/2008	100	15.8	19.3	15.2	103
3	Cambodia	13/10/2004	100	19.1	28.1	17.7	94
4	Lao PDR	02/02/2013	100	18.8	19.3	18.7	79
5	Liberia	14/07/2016	100	26.7	23.8	27.2	102
6	Nepal	23/04/2004	99.4	26	41.5	23.7	77
7	Samoa	10/05/2012	100	21.1	25.8	20.4	80
8	Vanuatu	24/08/2012	100	39.7	43.7	39.1	69
9	Yemen	26/06/2014	100	21.1	24.9	20.5	78
AVERAGE							
Article XII LDCs			99.6	22.4	28.9	21.4	87
Original LDCs Members			53.7	65.2	79.9	45.4	20

Source: WTO

94. Article XII LDCs have also made significant commitments to reduce regulatory barriers in trade in services (see Table 4). On average, they undertook specific commitments in 87 services sub-sectors. In general, these commitments have been undertaken across all 12 services sectors as defined by the WTO, with the exception of Cabo Verde and Samoa, that did not commit in the health-related and social services sectors, and Vanuatu and Lao PDR, that did not commit in recreational, cultural and sporting services. This is a much broader level of commitment than that of the Original LDC members which, on average, had undertaken specific commitments in 20 services sub-sectors.

4. POST ACCESSION: PARTICIPATION OF ARTICLE XII LDCs IN THE WORK OF THE WTO

95. The WTO accession process sets the foundation for a country to exercise rights and obligations as a Member under different pillars of WTO's work. The onus is on the country itself to leverage membership benefits to achieve its economic development goals. Regular participation in WTO meetings, either as an individual Member or through relevant Regional

Groups such as the LDC group, is the most effective way to build post-accession capacity, deepen WTO knowledge and pursue own offensive and defensive interests. This section provides highlights of the participation of Article XII LDCs in selected areas of work of the WTO.

- *Participation in WTO Councils and Committees*

96. While responding to a large number of questions from Members is an essential cornerstone of every accession (see paragraph 92), "questions and replies" is also an important part of the work of WTO councils and committees which oversee the implementation of specific WTO rules. As part of this work, all nine Article XII LDCs have received and responded to questions from other WTO Members (see Annex 5-2) with the majority of these relating to trade facilitation and customs valuation. Article XII LDCs have also used the WTO as a platform for raising several concerns about other WTO Members. For example, Lao PDR raised a concern in relation to Canada's investigation on silicon metal in 2017 and Cambodia raised a concern with respect to the EU's safeguard measures on Indica Rice from Cambodia in 2019.

97. In the TBT and SPS Committees, while Article XII LDCs have not raised any specific trade concerns (STCs) against other WTO Members, two of them were subject to STCs raised by other Members. Four STCs were brought up in the TBT Committee against the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Yemen.³⁶ Nepal was subject to two STCs, one raised in the TBT Committee, the other one in the SPS Committee.

98. In addition, several Article XII LDC Members have actively contributed to the Organisation's regular work by chairing various bodies. These include Afghanistan, which chaired the Committees on Rules of Origin (2021), Trade and Development (2020), and Trade Facilitation (2019), the Working Group on Trade, Debt and Finance (2018), and the Working Party on the Accession of South Sudan (2019-2020); and Nepal which chaired the Committee on Customs Valuation (2021). In addition, Nepal and Cambodia served as Coordinators of the WTO LDC Group in 2013 and 2017, respectively, representing and speaking for the Group in WTO bodies, including on negotiating issues. In 2021, Liberia became the Co-coordinator of the g7+ WTO Accessions Group, together with Timor-Leste. Among other issues, this Group is calling on the WTO to pursue a Trade for Peace agenda, especially for fragile and conflict-affected states in the process of accession (see section IV).

- *Transparency*

99. Transparency is a key principle of the multilateral trading system underpinning all WTO agreements. Article XII LDCs submitted a total of 591 notifications to different committees (on average 66 notifications each). Some 265 notifications were submitted by the Members of the GCC Standardization Organization, including also Yemen. As individual notifiers, Nepal and Cambodia submitted the most notifications, 77 and 73, respectively. Afghanistan, Lao PDR, Samoa and Vanuatu submitted 30 plus notifications to various WTO committees. Annex 5-3 summarizes this information.

100. The trade policy review mechanism is an important function of the WTO and key in strengthening transparency within the system. Out of the nine Article XII Members, six had at least one trade policy review: Cambodia in November 2011 and

November 2017; Nepal in March 2012 and December 2018; Cabo Verde in October 2015; Lao PDR in November 2019; Samoa in April 2019 and Vanuatu in October 2018. In addition, Article XII LDCs have participated in TPRs of other Members, including through making statements, with Nepal and Cambodia registering the highest number of participation (20 each). See Annex 5-4 and 5-5 for more details.

- *Using WTO platforms for disputes*

101. The dispute settlement mechanism is key to preserving the rights and obligations of the WTO Members under the covered agreements. To date, none of the Article XII LDC Members have filed a dispute or had a dispute filed against them. Only Afghanistan was a third party to three disputes (DS576, DS538, DS526)³⁷ and Yemen to two disputes (DS567, DS526)³⁸ involving other countries. See Annex 5-7.

- *Participation in Plurilateral Agreements and negotiations*

102. It should be noted that some Article XII LDCs joined plurilateral agreements as part of their accession package. These include Afghanistan and Cambodia which are participant to the Information Technology Agreement (ITA-I). In 2021, Lao PDR joined the ITA-I and the ITA Expansion (ITA-II), becoming the first LDC to do so. Afghanistan became the first LDC to become an observer to the Government Procurement Agreement in 2017.³⁹ See Annex 5-6 for details.

103. In addition, several Article XII LDCs have been participating in the various on-going Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs) since the 11th Ministerial Conference. These include: the JSI on Investment Facilitation for Development (Afghanistan, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Liberia and Vanuatu); the JSI on Micro-, Small and Medium Enterprises (Afghanistan and Lao PDR) and the JSI on Electronic Commerce (Lao PDR). More recently, some have joined three new environment initiatives, launched in December 2021, including on the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (Cabo Verde); the Informal Dialogue on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vanuatu); and Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform (Vanuatu).

³⁶ While Yemen is not a Member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), it is a member of the GCC Standardization Organization (GSO) which is a standards organization for the member states of the GCC plus Yemen.

³⁷ DS576 (Qatar — Certain measures concerning goods from the United Arab Emirates); DS538 (Pakistan — Anti-Dumping Measures on Biaxially Oriented Polypropylene Film from the United Arab Emirates); DS526 (United Arab Emirates — Measures Relating to Trade in Goods and Services, and Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights).

³⁸ DS567 (Saudi Arabia — Measures concerning the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights); DS526 (United Arab Emirates — Measures Relating to Trade in Goods and Services, and Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights).

³⁹ Afghanistan was interested in joining the GPA as an observer for two reasons: i) Afghanistan's procurement law is open to international companies without any discrimination; ii) to build the capacity of the procurement agency of the government by utilizing technical assistance from the WTO.

- *Technical assistance and capacity building*

104. Technical assistance and capacity building (TA/CB) remain critical after accession as there is a continuing need to build knowledge and expertise on all WTO matters. Article XII LDCs are active users of various WTO TA/CB activities, including those delivered in collaboration with other partners and within the framework of the China Programme (see section II.5.iii). A total of 7,356 participants from the nine Article XII LDCs have been involved in capacity building programmes – both online and face-to-face – offered by the WTO directly or with partners. Nepal registered the highest number of participants in WTO TA/CB programmes at 1,432, followed by Samoa and Cambodia with more than 1,000 participants in the programmes. On average, 817 participants per country took part in capacity building programmes. See Annex 5-8 for more details.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

105. Since its establishment in 1995, the WTO has welcomed nine LDCs to the multilateral trading system. Despite going through complex and sometimes challenging negotiating processes, these LDCs have undertaken accession commitments reflecting their goal of using WTO membership for domestic reforms and economic transformation. The economies of several of these LDCs have performed particularly well, as exemplified by their graduation from the LDC status.

106. However, the benefits of WTO membership can only be fully realised if LDC members become active participants in the work of the WTO, building on the experience gained in the WTO accession process. Drawing on the track record of the Article XII LDCs, it is possible to identify key lessons and best practices in accession and post-accession for consideration by acceding LDCs as well as other acceding governments.

- *Undertake reforms that would have been difficult otherwise*

107. The accession process is accompanied by trade-related reforms, and such reforms are often an integral part of the country's structural reform agenda. While each accession is unique, the existing accession *acquis* can serve as an instrument for acceding governments to launch the structural transformation of their economies aimed at improving the business environment and attracting foreign direct investment. During the accession process, significant technical and financial assistance is made available to acceding LDCs to support domestic reforms.

- *Establish an effective national consultation and coordination structure*

108. The accession process is a nation-wide endeavour as it covers various policy issues. Therefore, it requires acceding governments to establish a functional intra-governmental coordination and stakeholder consultation structure. While this is crucial during the accession process, it becomes even more so after accession as active participation in the work of the WTO requires regular domestic consultation and coordination, in addition to effective Geneva-based representation. To ensure the continuity of engagement, consideration may be given to transform the national coordination mechanism used during the accession process for the membership phase, with necessary modification of its mandate, especially regarding its relationship with Geneva-based representative(s).

- *Build the technical capacity of trade officials during and post accession*

109. Tailor-made technical assistance and training are provided to LDCs during accession by the WTO Secretariat, partner organisations or WTO Members. Furthermore, engagement in accession negotiations itself is one of the best forms of training and technical assistance available to acquire WTO knowledge through "learning by doing". After accession, demands for technical expertise tend to grow, in particular if LDCs choose to participate actively in all pillars of WTO work and in discussions on new issues, such as the JSIs. In addition to making best use of the training provided by the WTO Secretariat, it is also important to ensure that the trade officials who benefit from such training stay involved in WTO-related work throughout accession as well as post accession. LDCs can also tap into the technical and financial assistance provided by development partners to facilitate their accession and post-accession journeys.

- *Rebuild and rebrand*

110. The majority of the current acceding LDCs are classified as fragile and conflict affected states (FCS). For these LDCs, the pursuit of WTO membership is an integral part of their institution-building, nation-building or reconstruction process, as demonstrated by the most recently completed accessions of Afghanistan and Liberia. The challenges faced by these FCS require greater understanding of their special circumstances as well as their human capacity, financial and institutional needs. The Trade for Peace Programme has been developed for FCS in accession (see section IV).

VI. POST-ACCESSION

111. The post-accession implementation support framework consists of five pillars:

- i. Country-Specific Post-Accession Implementation Strategy;
- ii. Specialized training and outreach on WTO post-accession;
- iii. Secretariat Note on "Best Practices on WTO Post-Accession" (document WT/ACC/27);
- iv. Dedicated webpage on "Post-accession — what next?" on the WTO website;⁴⁰
- v. Internal Secretariat Note on Post-Accession Implementation and Monitoring.

112. In 2021, the Secretariat continued monitoring the participation of Article XII Members in the work of the WTO and organized dedicated outreach sessions on post-accession (pillars ii and v). As part of this work, dedicated sessions were organized focusing on post-accession experiences of governments celebrating accession anniversaries in 2021 – Afghanistan, Liberia and China (see paragraph 41).

113. The 10th China Round Table on WTO Accessions, organized on 18-20 January 2022, reviewed a study assessing the accession outcomes and post accession performance of the nine countries that joined the WTO as LDCs: Nepal, Cambodia, Cabo Verde, Samoa, Vanuatu, Lao PDR, Yemen, Liberia and Afghanistan.⁴¹

114. Additionally, representatives of Article XII Members continued taking part in discussions in various accession-related TA and outreach activities, as reported under Section II.5, to discuss their post-accession experiences and give advice to current acceders.



Liberia—Launch of Study commemorating 5th Anniversary WTO Membership — 4 October 2021



China 20th Anniversary of WTO Membership — 10 December 2021

⁴⁰ Available at https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/post_acc_e.htm

⁴¹ The study is available here: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/10thcrt_e.htm

VII. TRADE AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF ARTICLE XII MEMBERS⁴²

115. This section provides an overview of 2020 developments in world trade, highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy and on Article XII Members. Further, it casts light on the export diversification and economic resilience of acceded governments. As outlined in the 2021 World Trade Report,⁴³ trade diversification can be an important determinant of a country's ability to cope with and recover from shocks. In this regard, this section explores Article XII Members' diversification indicators based on the study and methodology developed in the 2017 World Tariff Profiles with regards to the average number of exported product categories, geographical coverage, stability of exports and related product diversification index.⁴⁴

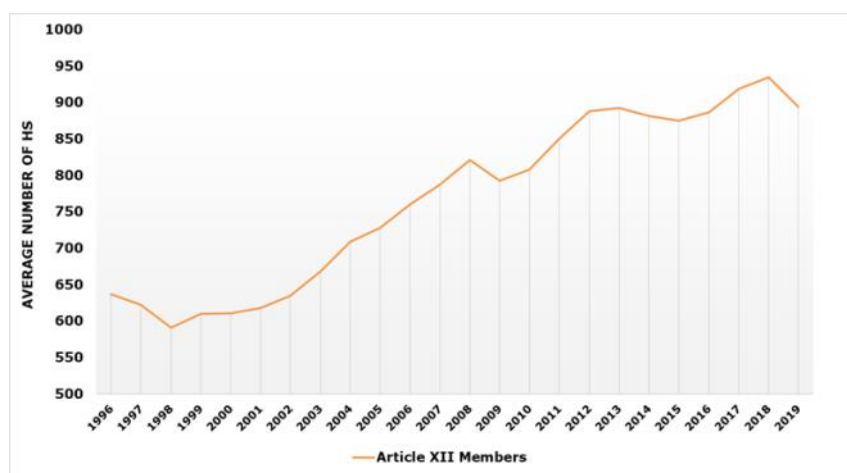
116. According to the World Trade Statistical Review 2021⁴⁵, world merchandise trade volume, measured by the average of exports and imports, decreased by 5.3% in 2020. This was largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its severe disruptions on global economic activity. The nominal value of world trade in goods and services declined by 12% in 2020 and amounted to US\$ 22 trillion. The fall in the nominal merchandise trade value was even larger, with the value of exports decreasing by around 8% to US\$17.58 trillion in 2020. World trade in commercial services contracted by 21% in 2020, having been more severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic than merchandise trade. World merchandise trade volume was predicted to grow 10.8% in 2021, followed by a 4.7% rise in 2022, with moderate growth rates as merchandise trade reaches its pre-pandemic long-term trend.⁴⁶

117. The trade and economic performance of Article XII Members has also been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the merchandise trade of Article XII Members decreased by 2.1%, reaching a nominal value of US\$ 7.44 trillion. Notably, the overall impact of the pandemic on recently acceded governments' merchandise trade was less severe than the world average. However, trade in commercial services for Article XII Members followed the world trend, having declined by 23.1% in 2020.

118. For many acceded countries, accession to the WTO provided an opportunity to implement wide-ranging reforms aimed at structural transformation and economic diversification.⁴⁷ The diversity of exports is seen as a sign of economic competitiveness and increased participation in the global value chains.

119. The range of Harmonized System (HS) product codes covered by a country's exports is a simple and transparent indicator of export diversification. Figure 3 shows an increase in the range of product categories⁴⁸ exported by Article XII Members from 1996 to 2019, which closely mirrored the overall world trend. Figure 4 focuses specifically on how Article XII Members diversified their exports in the years before and after accession to the WTO. It shows that Article XII Members have, on average, achieved higher export product diversification post-accession, with three-fourths of acceded governments having increased the number of product categories covered in their exports.

Figure 3: Export product diversification for Article XII Members over time



⁴² See Annexes 6 and 7 to this Report.

⁴³ Available at https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/wtr21_e.htm

⁴⁴ See methodology at https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/tariff_profiles17_e.pdf. For the purposes of this report, data for Article XII Members (excluding Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) has been updated until 2019.

⁴⁵ Available at https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/wts2021_e/wts21_toc_e.htm.

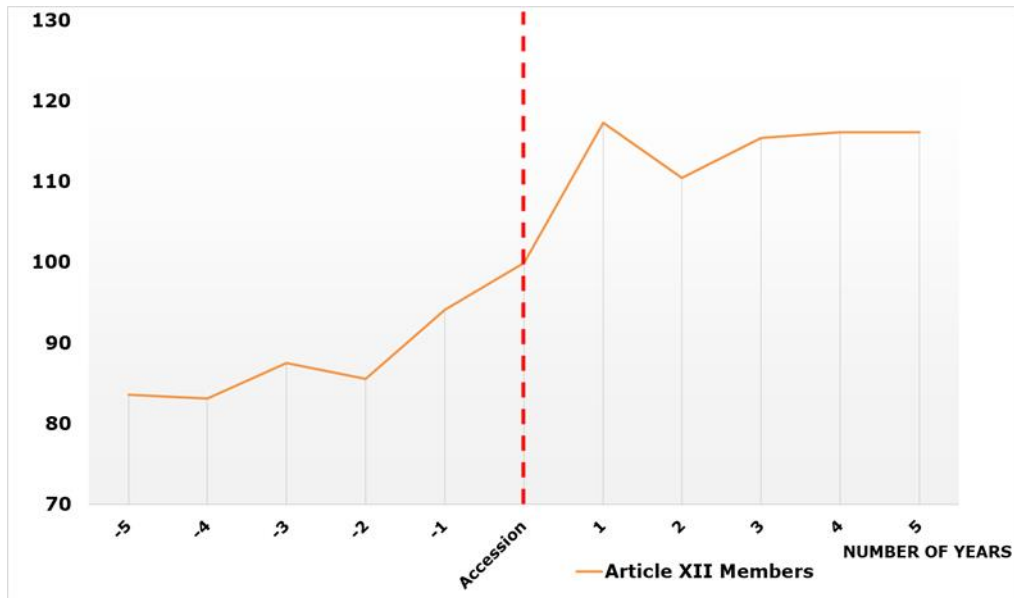
⁴⁶ https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres21_e/pr889_e.htm.

⁴⁷ 2016 Annual Report by the Director-General on WTO Accessions (WT/ACC/28)

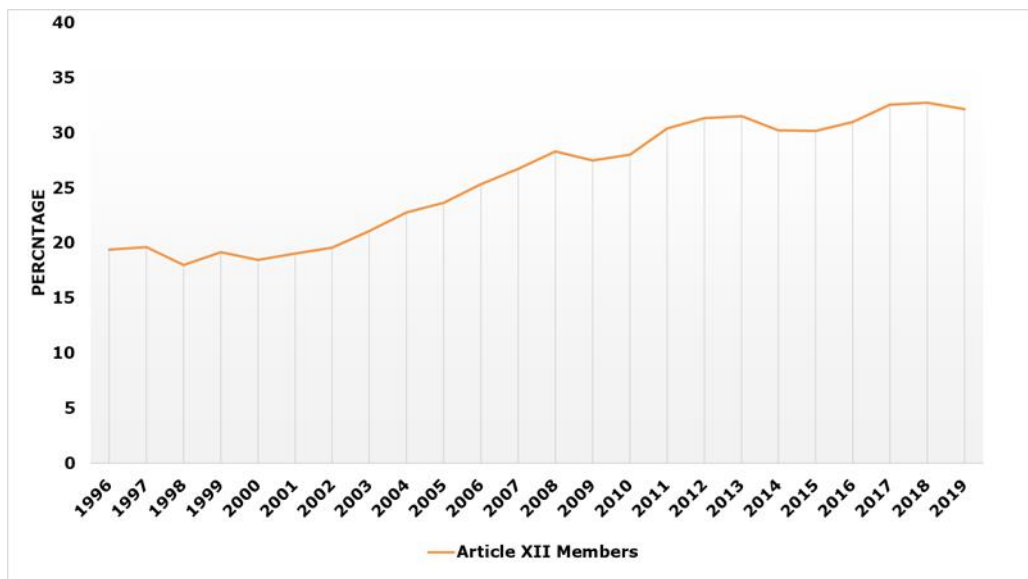
⁴⁸ Measured at the HS six-digit level (comprising about 5,000 products).

Figure 4: Export product diversification before and after accession

(Indices, WTO accession year = 100)



120. Figure 5 shows the stability of product categories traded by Article XII Members across years. This index is calculated by comparing the number of product categories traded continuously over a certain period with the number of individual product categories traded at any time over the reference period (1996-2019). The figure demonstrates that, on average, the stability index of Article XII Members increased over time, with about three-fourths of Article XII Members having experienced a rise in this indicator since accession.

Figure 5: Average stability index for Article XII Members

121. Geographical diversification of exports is also an important indicator of a country's integration in the global economy. Geographical export diversification can be assessed by calculating the average number of trading partners per product category. Figures 6 and 7 reveal that the average number of trading partners per product category of Article XII Members has increased historically as well as after accession as opposed to the years before accession. Almost 85% of acceded governments increased the average number of trading partners per product category since joining the WTO.

Figure 6: Average number of trading partners per product category

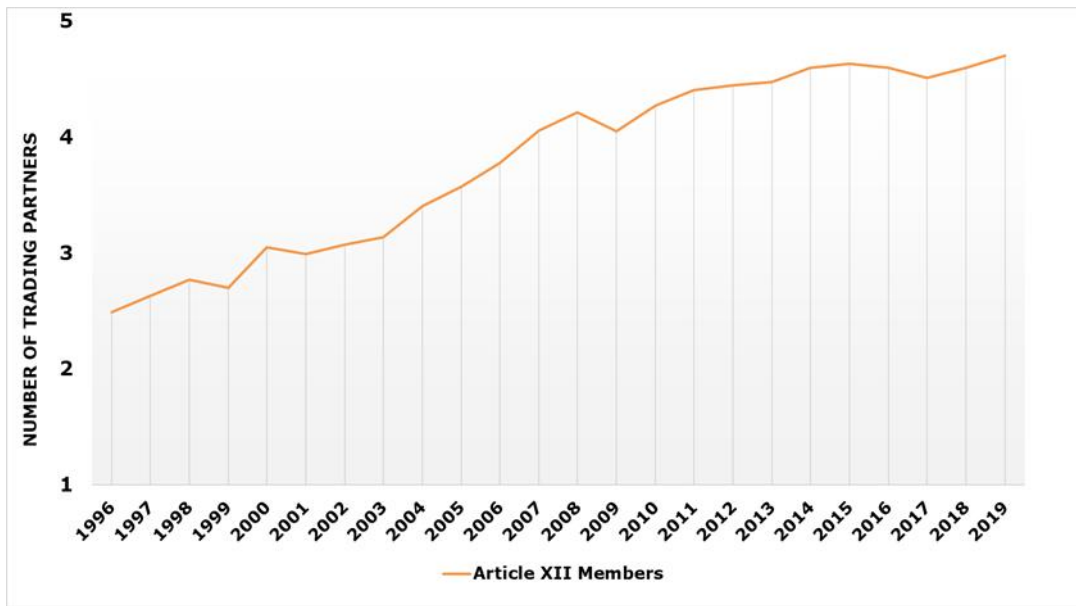
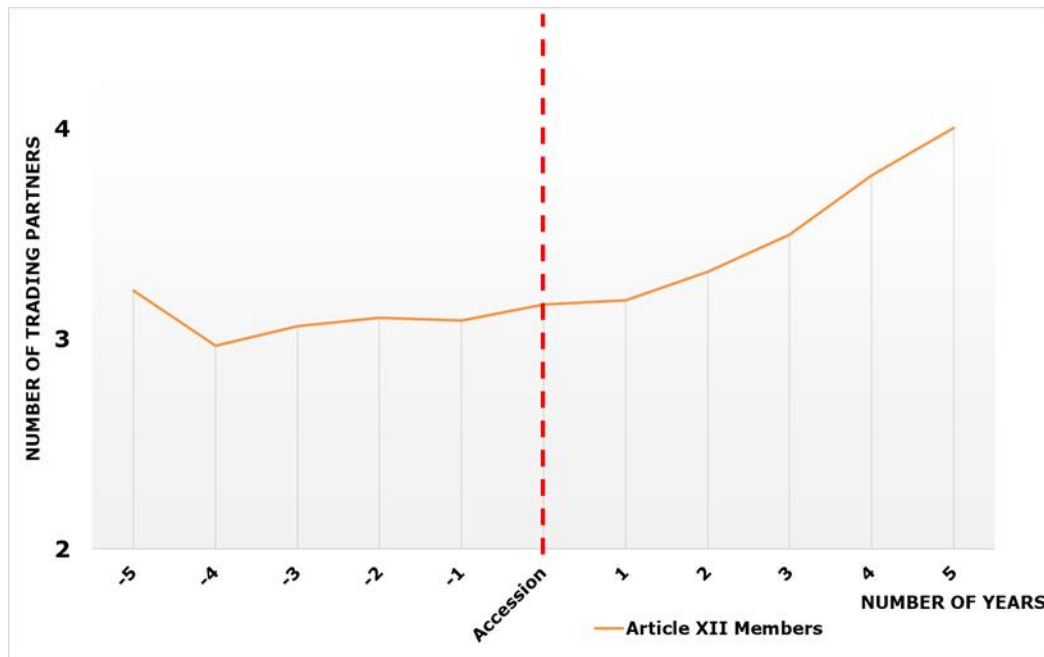
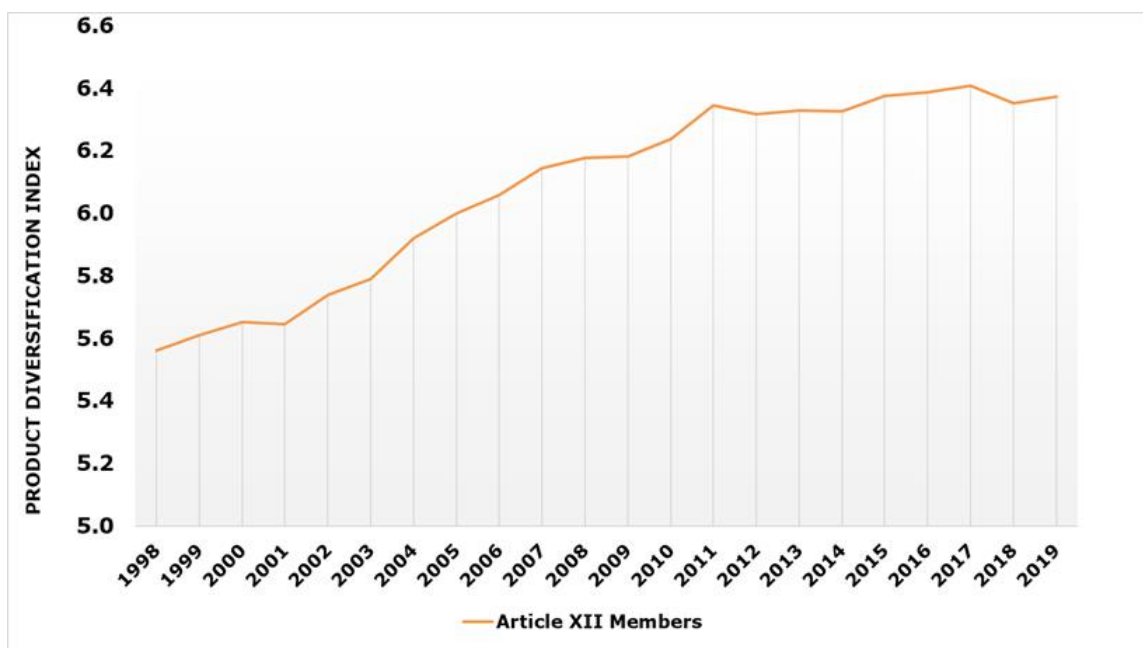


Figure 7: Average number of trading partners per product category before and after accession



122. Lastly, a product diversification index has been constructed by taking into account (i) the number of product categories (HS items) covered by a country's exports; (ii) the range of markets (the number of trading partners per product category); and (iii) the historical performance (the share of product categories exported consistently over a long-term period). Figure 8 depicts the evolution of the average product diversification index for Article XII Members which has consistently followed an upward trajectory from 1998 to 2019. In addition, more than 87% of Article XII Members have witnessed an increase in the product diversification index since acceding to the WTO. These observations lend support to the view that the WTO accession process and subsequent WTO membership have a positive effect on the trade and economic diversification and resilience of acceded Members.

Figure 8: Product diversification index for Article XII Members over time



WTO Accession Newsletters in 2021



WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WTO ACCESSIONS NEWSLETTER

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- **2020 DG Annual Report on WTO Accessions**
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Accession of Sudan - Informal Meeting of the Working Party, 17 March

The Working Party on the Accession of Sudan held an informal meeting on 17 March 2021. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Katsuro Nagai (Japan). The delegation of Sudan was led by H.E. Ali Giddo Adam Bashir, Minister of Trade and Supply and Chief Negotiator. It also included 12 senior officials from various ministries as well as the Permanent Representative of Sudan in Geneva, H.E. Ali bin Abi Talib Abdelattman Mahmoud, Deputy Chief Negotiator.

Sudan updated Members on recent political and economic developments in Khartoum, following the revolution in December 2018 and the establishment of a Transitional Government led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok in August 2019. The Minister reaffirmed the Government's strong commitment to conclude the accession process during the transitional period ending in 2023. The Government strongly believes that WTO membership can serve as a tool to accelerate growth, economic diversification, attract foreign investment as well as help Sudan benefit from a rules-based system based on the benefits of international trade and trade-led development.

Thirteen WTO Members attended to express support for the reactivation of Sudan's accession process. Some Members referenced the 2002/2012 LDC Accessions Guidelines, which are relevant to Sudan as an LDC, and indicated their willingness to provide technical assistance. A few Members requested that Sudan submit the technical inputs as a prerequisite for holding the 5th Working Party meeting. Moreover, the application of the Trade for Peace Programme in supporting the accession of Sudan was also noted by several Members.

Regarding the next steps, Sudan plans to submit the negotiating inputs in preparation for the 5th Working Party meeting, including inputs to update the Fiscal Summary of Receipts Raised, revised market access offers on goods and services, revised Agriculture Support Tables, and a revised Legislative Action Plan.

The Secretariat is organizing a Round Table with development partners on 29 March. The Roundtable will provide an opportunity for Sudan



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 - Afghanistan 30th Anniversary of WTO Membership, 29 July 2021
 - 4th National Dialogue on WTO Accessions for Africa, August 2021
 - Accessions Newsletter Editorial Team

Trade for Peace

Launch of the Trade for Peace Network, 25 March 2021

The Trade for Peace Network was officially launched on 25 March 2021. In welcoming the establishment of the Network to support fragile and conflict-affected (FCA) states in accession, Director-General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala emphasized the role of trade in breaking the vicious cycles of fragility, conflict and poverty, trade can raise incomes and interdependence between communities and countries contributing to shared prosperity. Working across the usual jurisdictional boundaries of the trade, peace and humanitarian communities, the Network would provide an important platform for collaboration among partners to achieve tangible and effective change on the ground, the DG noted.

In his last official public statement outgoing Deputy Director-General Alan Wolff stated that the T4P initiative was an area of work that stood out in his time at the WTO. He saw the launch of the Network as a step towards transforming the T4P initiative into a fully-fledged Programme. He invited partners to provide inputs in the development of the White Paper, which set out activities for the Trade for Peace Programme under four pillars: (i) political engagement and institutional partnerships; (ii) outreach and dialogue; (iii) research; and (iv) training and capacity building. He also invited partners to consider the relevance of the T4P Programme beyond acceding governments, noting that 23 WTO Members are also classified as FCA states by the World Bank. DG's Wolff's intervention was followed by a productive exchange by all participants on the White Paper.






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...safeguarding, enlarging and strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading system

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 - 10th High Level Arab Regional Dialogue on Sustainable Development 2021, 8 July 2021
 - Geneva Trade Week 2021, "Opening Plenary on Trade for Peace", 27 September 2021
 - Geneva Trade Week 2021, "Trade for Peace: Back to Basics", 29 September 2021
 - Trade for Peace Podcast
 - Pillar II: Research
- **Accessions Evolving Work Programme, as of 20 September 2021**
- **Accessions Newsletter Editorial Team**

LDC Accessions advance

Since the end of July, three LDCs – Sudan, Timor-Leste and Comoros – held their Working Party meetings, registering concrete progress.

On 26 July, the Working Party on the Accession of Sudan held its 5th Meeting, after a four-year break. [Click here](#) to read the news item. Members welcome formal resumption of Sudan WTO accession talks.



H.E. Ali Giddo Adam Bashir, Minister of Trade and Supply and Chief negotiator for WTO Accession - 26 July 2021

On 21 September, the Working Party of the Union of the Comoros held 6th meeting. [Click here](#) to read the news item. Members commended considerable progress by the Comoros to secure WTO membership.



H.E. Mta Abdou Muhamad Charifou, Minister of Economy, Industry and Investment, and WTO Chief Negotiator - 21 September 2021

In addition, on 7 September, the Secretariat met with Mr. Jorge Borlén, Trade Director at the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism of Sao Tomé and Príncipe. Sao Tomé and Príncipe is



WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WTO ACCESSIONS NEWSLETTER

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 - Geneva Peace Week closing session, 5 November 2021
 - World Summit on the Information Society Forum on ICTs and Peace, 10 November 2021
 - Trade for Peace Week, 15-19 November 2021
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Highlights of 2021

2021 has been a dynamic and action-packed year for the Accessions Division. While this is the second year of the pandemic, accession-related meetings and events have taken place virtually, in-person or in hybrid form. In particular, we have witnessed good progress registered on the accessions of three LDCs this year. First the Union of the Comoros, which is one of the strategic focus accessions for 2021 as identified in the 2020 Director-General Report on WTO Accessions, has moved closer to WTO membership by holding the 6th Working Party meeting in September. Second, after a four-year break, the Working Party on the accession of Sudan officially resumed its work, by holding the 5th WTO meeting in July, preceded by an informal meeting held in March. Third, Timor-Leste, which started its accession process in 2016, is moving at full speed after holding the 5th Working Party meeting in July, only nine months after the 1st meeting.

In addition, technical progress was registered in

The Division has been also active on the Technical Assistance and Outreach front. In March, together with the Trade in Services and Investment Division, we organized a 2-weeks Virtual Training Course on Trade in Services for Acceding Governments, in addition to delivering several tailored-made training activities to acceding governments on a range of different topics depending on the stage of the accession process. At the same time, several activities, such as the 10th China Roundtable, initially scheduled on the margins of the now postponed 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), have been deferred due to various reasons.

The year 2021 marked the 30th WTO membership anniversaries of Afghanistan and Liberia in July, as well as China's 20th anniversary in December, celebrating their important milestones. In addition, the Division has continued to provide periodic briefings to the Informal Group on Accessions, and served the Informal Group of Acceding Governments

ANNEX 1 - ACCESSIONS DIVISION WORK INDICATORS (2018-2021)

	2018	2019	2020	2021		
Membership & Accessions						
New WTO member	0	0	0	0		
Acceding Government	21	22	23	23		
(New application)	(0)	(1)	(1)*	(1)		
Active Accessions	16	14	16	16		
Accession-related Meetings & Missions						
Working Party (WP) meetings	5	4	4	3		
Informal Group on Accessions (IGA)	10	8	6	4		
Informal Group of Acceding Govern-	3	7	5	5		
Technical assistance & outreach	25	20	27	45*		
Trade for Peace (T4P) Programme	-	-	-	30*		
g7 plus WTO Accessions Group	-	-	-	8		
Missions	19	17	3	1		
Media coverage			Accessions	T4P	Accessions	T4P
Press Releases	10	12	15	5	12	11
Tweets	-	100	243	-	169	158
Document Outputs						
Newsletter	10	7	6	4		
Pages of acc. documents to WPs	2,647	2,106	1,759	1,645		

* Turkmenistan applied as Observer

* Counting methodology: all activities in 2021 including specific sessions covering different topics

Source: Accessions Division internal data.

ANNEX 2 - ACCESSIONS NEGOTIATED PURSUANT TO ARTICLE XII

	Government*	Membership Date	Working Party Report	Goods Schedule	Services Schedule	Protocol of Accession	General Council Decision
1.	Ecuador	21/01/1996	WT/L/77 & Corr.1	Add.1 & Corr.1, 2	Add.2	WT/ACC/ECU/6	WT/ACC/ECU/5
2.	Bulgaria	01/12/1996	WT/ACC/BGR/5 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/BGR/7	WT/ACC/BGR/6
3.	Mongolia	29/01/1997	WT/ACC/MNG/9 & Corr.1	Add.1 & Corr.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/MNG/11	WT/ACC/MNG/10
4.	Panama	06/09/1997	WT/ACC/PAN/19 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/PAN/21	WT/ACC/PAN/20
5.	Kyrgyz Republic	20/12/1998	WT/ACC/KGZ/26 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/KGZ/29	WT/ACC/KGZ/28
6.	Latvia	10/02/1999	WT/ACC/LVA/32	Add.1 & Corr.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/LVA/35	WT/ACC/LVA/34
7.	Estonia	13/11/1999	WT/ACC/EST/28	Add.1	Add.2 & Corr.1	WT/ACC/EST/30	WT/ACC/EST/29
8.	Jordan	11/04/2000	WT/ACC/JOR/33 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/JOR/35	WT/ACC/JOR/34
9.	Georgia	14/06/2000	WT/ACC/GEO/31	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/GEO/33	WT/ACC/GEO/32
10.	Albania	08/09/2000	WT/ACC/ALB/51 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2 & Corr.1, 2	WT/ACC/ALB/53 & Corr.1	WT/ACC/ALB/52 & Corr.1
11.	Oman	09/11/2000	WT/ACC/OMN/26	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/OMN/28	WT/ACC/OMN/27
12.	Croatia	30/11/2000	WT/ACC/HRV/59	Add.1	Add.2 & Corr.1, 2	WT/ACC/HRV/61	WT/ACC/HRV/60
13.	Lithuania	31/05/2001	WT/ACC/LTU/52	Add.1 & Corr.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/LTU/54	WT/ACC/LTU/53
14.	Moldova, Republic of	26/07/2001	WT/ACC/MOL/37 & Corr.1-4	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/MOL/40	WT/ACC/MOL/39
15.	China	11/12/2001	WT/ACC/CHN/49 & Corr.1 WT/MIN(01)/3	Add.1 Add.1	Add.2 Add.2	WT/L/432	WT/L/432
16.	Chinese Taipei	01/01/2002	WT/ACC/TPKM/18 WT/MIN(01)/4	Add.1 Add.1	Add.2 Add.2	WT/L/433	WT/L/433
17.	Armenia	05/02/2003	WT/ACC/ARM/23 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/506	WT/L/506
18.	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	04/04/2003	WT/ACC/807/27	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/494	WT/L/494
19.	Nepal	23/04/2004	WT/ACC/NPL/16	Add.1	Add.2	WT/MIN(03)/19	WT/MIN(03)/19
20.	Cambodia	13/10/2004	WT/ACC/KHM/21	Add.1	Add.2	WT/MIN(03)/18	WT/MIN(03)/18
21.	Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	11/12/2005	WT/ACC/SAU/61	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/627	WT/L/627
22.	Viet Nam	11/01/2007	WT/ACC/VNM/48	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/662	WT/L/662
23.	Tonga	27/07/2007	WT/ACC/TON/17 WT/MIN(05)/4	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/644	WT/L/644
24.	Ukraine	16/05/2008	WT/ACC/UKR/152	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/718	WT/L/718
25.	Cabo Verde	23/07/2008	WT/ACC/CPV/30	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/715	WT/L/715
26.	Montenegro	29/04/2012	WT/ACC/CGR/38 WT/MIN(11)/7	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/841	WT/MIN(11)/28 WT/L/841
27.	Samoa	10/05/2012	WT/ACC/SAM/30 WT/MIN(11)/1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/840	WT/MIN(11)/27 WT/L/840
28.	Russian Federation	22/08/2012	WT/ACC/RUS/70 WT/MIN(11)/2	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/839	WT/MIN(11)/24 WT/L/839
29.	Vanuatu	24/08/2012	WT/ACC/VUT/17	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/862	WT/L/823
30.	Lao People's Democratic Republic	02/02/2013	WT/ACC/LAO/45	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/865	WT/L/865
31.	Tajikistan	02/03/2013	WT/ACC/TJK/30	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/872	WT/L/872
32.	Yemen	26/06/2014	WT/ACC/YEM/42	Add.1	Add.2	WT/MIN(13)/24 WT/L/905	WT/MIN(13)/24 WT/L/905
33.	Seychelles, Republic of	26/04/2015	WT/ACC/SYC/64	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/944	WT/L/944
34.	Kazakhstan	30/11/2015	WT/ACC/KAZ/93	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/957	WT/L/957
35.	Liberia	14/07/2016	WT/ACC/LBR/23	Add.1	Add.2	WT/MIN(15)/38 WT/L/973	WT/MIN(15)/38 WT/L/973
36.	Afghanistan	29/07/2016	WT/ACC/AFG/36	Add.1	Add.2	WT/MIN(15)/39 WT/L/974	WT/MIN(15)/39 WT/L/974

* Sorted by date of membership.

ANNEX 3 - WTO ACCESSIONS WORKING PARTY (WP) CHAIRPERSONS

No	Government	Date Working Party established	WP Chairperson*	Geneva-based (Y/N)
	Algeria	17 June 1987	H.E. Mr. José Luis CANCELA GÓMEZ (Uruguay)	Y
	Andorra	22 October 1997	Pending	
	Azerbaijan	16 July 1997	Pending	
	The Bahamas	18 July 2001	H.E. Miss Cheryl K. SPENCER (Jamaica)	Y
	Belarus	27 October 1993	Pending	
	Bhutan	6 October 1999	H.E. Dr Elisabeth TICHY-FISSELBERGER (Austria)	Y
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	15 July 1999	H.E. Mr. Atanas PAPANIZOV (Bulgaria)	Y
	Comoros, Union of the	9 October 2007	H.E. Mr. Omar ZNIBER (Morocco)	Y
	Curaçao	3 March 2020	H.E. Mr. Chad BLACKMAN (Barbados)	Y
	Equatorial Guinea	5 February 2008	Pending	
	Ethiopia	10 February 2003	H.E. Mr Morten JESPERSEN (Denmark)	Y
	Iran	26 May 2005	Pending	
	Iraq	13 December 2004	H.E. Mr Omar HILALE (Morocco)	N
	Lebanese Republic	14 April 1999	Mr. Etienne OUDOT DE DAINVILLE (France)	Y
	Libya	27 July 2004	Pending	
	Sao Tomé and Príncipe	26 May 2005	Pending	
	Serbia	15 February 2005	H.E. Mrs. Marie-Claire SWÄRD CAPRA (Sweden)	N
	Somalia	7 December 2016	H.E. Mr Mikael ANZÉN (Sweden)	Y
	South Sudan	13 December 2017	H.E. Dr. Ahmed Ihab GAMALELDIN (Egypt)	Y
	Sudan	25 October 1994	Mr. Naoki HIKOTA (Japan)	Y
	Syrian Arab Republic	4 May 2010	Pending	
	Timor-Leste	7 December 2016	H.E. Mr. Rui MACIEIRA (Portugal)	Y
	Uzbekistan	21 December 1994	H.E. Mr. Taeho LEE (Republic of Korea)	Y

* As of January 2022.

ANNEX 4 – LENGTH OF TIME OF COMPLETED ACCESSIONS

No.	Article XII Member	Date of WP Establishment	Date of Membership	Total Time of Accession Process
1.	Ecuador	09/1992	01/1996	3 years 4 months
2.	Bulgaria	11/1986	12/1996	10 years 1 month
3.	Mongolia	10/1991	01/1997	5 years 3 months
4.	Panama	10/1991	09/1997	5 years 11 months
5.	Kyrgyz Republic	04/1996	12/1998	2 years 8 months
6.	Latvia	12/1993	02/1999	5 years 2 months
7.	Estonia	03/1994	11/1999	5 years 8 months
8.	Jordan	01/1994	04/2000	6 years 3 months
9.	Georgia	07/1996	06/2000	3 years 11 months
10.	Albania	12/1992	09/2000	7 years 9 months
11.	Oman	06/1996	11/2000	4 years 5 months
12.	Croatia	10/1993	11/2000	7 years 1 month
13.	Lithuania	02/1994	05/2001	7 years 3 months
14.	Moldova, Republic of	12/1993	07/2001	7 years 7 months
15.	China	03/1987	12/2001	14 years 9 months
16.	Chinese Taipei	09/1992	01/2002	9 years 4 months
17.	Armenia	12/1993	02/2003	9 years 2 months
18.	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	12/1994	04/2003	8 years 4 months
19.	Nepal*	06/1989	04/2004	14 years 10 months
20.	Cambodia*	12/1994	10/2004	9 years 10 months
21.	Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	07/1993	12/2005	12 years 5 months
22.	Viet Nam	01/1995	01/2007	12 years
23.	Tonga	11/1995	07/2007	11 years 8 months
24.	Ukraine	12/1993	05/2008	14 years 5 months
25.	Cabo Verde*	07/2000	07/2008	8 years
26.	Montenegro	02/2005	04/2012	7 years 2 months
27.	Samoa*	07/1998	05/2012	13 years 10 months
28.	Russian Federation	07/1993	08/2012	19 years 1 month
29.	Vanuatu*	07/1995	08/2012	17 years 1 month
30.	Lao PDR*	02/1998	02/2013	15 years
31.	Tajikistan	07/2001	03/2013	11 years 8 months
32.	Yemen*	07/2000	06/2014	13 years 11 months
33.	Seychelles	07/1995	04/2015	19 years 9 months
34.	Kazakhstan	02/1996	11/2015	19 years 9 months
35.	Liberia*	12/2007	07/2016	8 years 7 months
36.	Afghanistan*	12/2004	07/2016	11 years 7 months

Overall Average	10 years 2 months
LDCs Accessions	12 years 6 months
Non-LDCs Accessions	9 years 4 months

* LDCs. Cabo Verde, Samoa and Vanuatu acceded to the WTO as LDCs. They graduated from LDC status in 2007, 2014, and 2020, respectively.

ANNEX 5 – DATA ON LDC ACCESSION

Table 5-1: Policy Areas in which LDCs made commitments

Working Party Report	LDC Commitment Coverage
Monetary and Fiscal Policy	0
Foreign Exchange and Payments	2
Investment Regime	2
State Ownership, Privatization and State-trading Entities	9
Pricing Policies	9
Competition policies	0
Powers of Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches of Government	1
Government entities responsible for making and implementing policies affecting foreign trade; Right of appeal	9
Division of authority between central and sub-central governments	5
Registration requirements for import/export operations; Trading Rights	9
Ordinary customs duties, customs tariff	0
Other duties and charges	9
Tariff rate quotas, tariff exemptions	8
Fees and charges for services rendered	9
Application of internal taxes to imports	8
Quantitative import restrictions, including prohibitions, quotas and licensing systems	9
Customs valuation	9
Rules of origin	9
Other customs formalities	4
Pre-shipment inspection	9
Anti-dumping, countervailing duties, safeguard regimes	9
Registration requirements, customs tariffs, fees and charges for services rendered, application of internal taxes to exports	3
Export restrictions	6
Export subsidies	3
Industrial policy, including subsidies	8
Technical barriers to trade, standards and certification	9
Sanitary and phytosanitary measures	9
Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs)	9
Free zones, special economic areas	9
Government procurement	2
Transit	7
Agricultural policies	5
Textiles Regime	2
Trade Related Intellectual Property	9
Policies affecting trade in services	2
Publication of information on trade	9
Notifications	7
Trade agreements	8
Total	236

ANNEX 5 – DATA ON LDC ACCESSION

Table 5-2: Number of Members raising questions to Article XII LDCs on specific topics

Questions received on:	Trade Facilitation	Customs Valuation	Anti-Dumping	SCM	Import Ban	Total no. of Members asking questions
Article XII LDCs						
Afghanistan		1				1
Cambodia	4	1				5
Cabo Verde		1				1
Lao PDR	3	1	1	1		6
Liberia	2		1			3
Nepal	1	3			1	5
Samoa	1					1
Vanuatu	1	1				2
Total	12	8	2	1	1	24

Table 5-3: Notifications submitted by Article XII Members to different WTO committees

No.	Committees/Council	Afghanistan	Cabo Verde	Cambodia	Lao PDR	Liberia	Nepal	Samoa	Vanuatu	Yemen
1	Committee on Trade Facilitation	2	1	5	5	3	4	2	3	
2	Committee on Market Access	3	3		1					
3	Committee on Import Licensing	1	3	3	3		2	1		
4	Customs Valuation Committee	1	4	3	1		1		1	
5	Committee on Rules of Origin	1		2	2	1	1	3	2	1
6	Committee on Pre-shipment Inspection	2			1					
7	Anti-Dumping Committee	2	1	1	3	1	2		2	
8	Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures	4		3	4	1	3		2	
9	Committee on Safeguards	1		1	2	1	1		1	
10	TBT Committee	3		23	1	3	9	2	1	203
11	SPS Committee	3	4		3	1	31			61
12	TRIMS Committee	1		2	1	1	14	1		
13	Working Party on State Trading Enterprise	1	1	1	1			1	1	
14	Committee on Agriculture	6	1	15	2			14	10	
15	TRIPS Council	1	4	1	1	1	1	5	13	
16	Council for Trade in Services	2		5	3		6	1		
17	Committee on RTAs		1	7	2	1		2		
18	Committee on Trade and Development	1		1			2			
	Total Notifications	35	23	73	36	14	77	32	36	265

ANNEX 5 – DATA ON LDC ACCESSION

Table 5-4: Trade Policy Reviews of Article XII LDCs

Art. XII countries	Date of TPR	Number of statements made by WTO Members
Cabo Verde	6-8 October 2015	14
Cambodia	1-3 November 2011 21-23 November 2017	16 24
Lao PDR	18-20 November 2019	24
Nepal	13-15 March 2012 3-5 December 2018	18 22
Samoa	10-12 April 2019	18
Vanuatu	23-25 October 2018	18

Table 5-5: Article XII LDC participation in TPRs

Article XII LDCs	Participation in Trade Policy Reviews
Afghanistan	11
Cambodia	20
Cabo Verde	2
Lao PDR	10
Liberia	0
Nepal	20
Samoa	3
Vanuatu	11
Yemen	6
Total	83

Table 5-6: Participation of Article XII LDCs in JSIs and Membership of Plurilateral Agreements

	Art. XII LDC Member	Participation in JSIs	Submissions in JSIs	Plurilateral Agreements
1	Afghanistan	1. Investment Facilitation for Development 2. MSMEs	-	ITA GPA (Observer)
2	Cabo Verde	1. Investment Facilitation for Development 2. Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD) 3. Informal Dialogue on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (IDP)	-	-
3	Cambodia	1. Investment Facilitation for Development 2. Informal Dialogue on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (IDP)	INF/IFD/RD/83 INF/IFD/RD/79	-
4	Lao PDR	1. E-Commerce 2. Investment Facilitation for Development 3. MSMEs	INF/IFD/RD/81 INF/IFD/RD/84	ITA and ITA Expansion
5	Liberia	1. Investment Facilitation for Development	-	-
6	Nepal	-	-	-
7	Samoa	-	-	-
8	Vanuatu	1. Investment Facilitation for Development 2. Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform 3. Informal Dialogue on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (IDP)	-	-
9	Yemen	-	-	-

ANNEX 5 – DATA ON LDC ACCESSION

Table 5-7: Article XII LDC Involvement as Third Party to WTO Disputes

No	Country Name	As Complainant	As Respondent	As Third Party
1	Afghanistan	0	0	3 (DS576, DS538, DS526)
2	Yemen	0	0	2 (DS567, DS526)

Source: WTO

Table 5-8: Participants from Article XII LDCs in WTO capacity building programmes

Countries	UP to 2018 both online and face to face training	2019 -2021 face to face training	2019-2021 online training	Total CB/TA
Afghanistan	389	149	112	650
Cabo Verde	286	5	4	295
Cambodia	783	63	161	1,007
Lao PDR	873	55	64	992
Liberia	363	12	35	410
Nepal	1,137	32	263	1,432
Samoa	959	66	32	1,057
Vanuatu	551	57	125	733
Yemen	759	6	15	780
Total	6,100	445	811	7,356
Average	678	49	90	817

ANNEX 6 – BASIC ECONOMIC PROFILES OF ACCEDING GOVERNMENTS AND ARTICLE XII MEMBERS

Table 6-1: Acceding Governments

Acceding Government	Population ¹ (thousands)	GDP ² (millions USD)	GDP per Capita ³ (USD)	Trade per capita ³ (USD)	Trade as % GDP ³	Merchandise exports ² (millions USD)	Merchandise imports ² (millions USD)	Commercial services exports ² (millions USD)	Commercial services imports ² (millions USD)
Algeria	43,851.04	144,294	3,768	1,010	26.8	21,617	35,122	3,053	7,743
Andorra	77.27			No data available	No data available				
Azerbaijan	10,093.12	42,607	4,595	1,917	41.7	13,470	10,731	2,594	5,386
The Bahamas	393.25	11,250	33,115	10,750	32.5	354	1,937	1,253	1,196
Belarus	9,379.95	60,201	6,507	4,231	65.0	29,034	32,601	8,775	4,927
Bhutan	771.61	2,503	3,337	1,349	40.4	651	899	133	215
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,280.82	19,389	6,036	2,824	46.8	6,152	9,873	1,306	511
Comoros, Union of the*	869.60	1,222	1,370	277 ⁴	20.6 ⁴	21	280	65	96
Curacao	155.01			No data available	No data available	271	1,210	731	510
Equatorial Guinea	1,402.98	9,524	8,291	4,175 ⁵	41.8 ⁵	3,200	1,724	512 ⁶	2,009 ⁶
Ethiopia*	114,963.58	96,611	939	136	14.5	3,258	13,115	4,318	5,375
Iran	83,992.95	635,724	6,700	797	11.9	53,543	38,757	4,482	6,838
Iraq	40,222.50	172,119	5,210	1,763	33.8	41,738	44,484	3,499	13,679
Lebanese Republic	6,825.44	19,126	6,166	3,705 ⁴	47.3 ⁴	4,085	11,355	4,985	5,734
Libya	6,871.29	21,797	5,222	3,412 ⁴	59.8 ⁴	7,741	13,396	134 ⁷	6,538 ⁷
Sao Tome and Principe*	219.16	418	1,963	565	28.8	14	136	24	41
Serbia	6,908.22	52,960	7,426	4,011	54.0	19,498	26,233	7,042	5,758
Somalia*	15,893.22			No data available	No data available			415 ⁷	1,555 ⁷
South Sudan*	11,193.73	4,074	321	225	70.2	No data available	No data available	99	1,118
Sudan*	43,849.27	34,370	801	166	20.7	3,803	9,838	1,226	1,198
Syrian Arab Republic	17,500.66	60,043 ⁸	2,642 ⁹	867 ⁹	32.8 ⁹	868	5,418	2,434 ¹⁰	2,818 ¹⁰
Timor-Leste*	1,318.44	1,791	1,384	369	26.7	264	625	33	209
Uzbekistan	34,232.05	57,706	1,661	591	35.6	13,097	19,932	1,693	3,483

Table 6-2: Article XII Members

Article XII Member	Population ¹ (thousands)	GDP ² (millions USD)	GDP per Capita ² (USD)	Trade per capita ³ (USD)	Trade as % GDP ³	Merchandise exports ² (millions USD)	Merchandise imports ² (millions USD)	Commercial services exports ² (millions USD)	Commercial services imports ² (millions USD)
Afghanistan*	38,928.34	19,132	583	136	23.4	732	7,171	597	1,042
Albania	2,837.74	15,147	5,298	1,862	35.1	2,506	5,570	2,474	1,254
Armenia	2,963.23	12,339	4,319	1,865	43.2	4,544	4,559	1,076	947
Bulgaria	6,934.02	68,561	9,750	5,955	61.1	31,907	35,038	8,116	4,735
Cabo Verde	555.99	1,753	3,454	1,783	51.6	53	720	264	204
Cambodia*	16,718.97	25,953	1,649	1,376	83.5	17,215	19,131	1,815	2,045
China	1,410,929.36	14,722,840	10,216	1,797 ¹	18.6 ¹	2,590,221	2,057,217	278,084	377,528
Croatia	4,047.20	56,925	14,675	7,230	49.3	17,167	26,719	9,714	3,932
Ecuador	17,643.06	96,665	6,029	1,401	23.2	20,227	17,959	1,649	2,685
Estonia	1,331.06	31,005	23,410	16,634	71.1	16,381	17,341	6,419	6,190
Georgia	3,714.00	15,733	4,554	2,452	53.9	3,343	8,053	1,503	1,401
Jordan	10,203.14	43,481	4,342	1,723	39.7	7,943	17,011	2,322	2,903
Kazakhstan	18,754.44	164,792	9,406	2,913	31.0	46,447	37,222	4,837	7,969
Kyrgyz Republic	6,591.60	7,471	1,263	624	49.4	2,006	3,688	439	555
Lao PDR*	7,275.56	19,078	2,607	948	36.4	6,115	5,370	346	444
Latvia	1,901.55	33,478	17,700	10,735	60.6	16,201	18,363	4,989	2,940
Liberia*	5,057.68	3,033	682	194	28.4	608	1,102	10	224
Lithuania	2,794.70	55,688	19,551	14,215	72.7	32,767	33,140	12,253	6,504
Moldova	2,620.49	11,500	4,321	1,809	41.9	2,485	5,416	1,250	859
Mongolia	3,278.29	13,137	4,072	2,465	60.5	7,576	5,294	651	2,083
Montenegro	621.31	4,790	8,481	4,310	50.8	419	2,402	758	545
Nepal*	29,136.81	34,465	1,192	268	22.5	856	9,856	830	1,074
North Macedonia	2,072.53	12,288	6,025	4,016	66.7	6,635	8,710	1,643	1,118
Oman	5,106.62	63,192	16,049	8,340 ¹	50.7 ¹	31,685	20,960	1,830	5,539
Panama	4,314.77	52,938	14,589	5,942	40.7	9,483	14,740	8,502	3,009
Russian Federation	144,104.08	1,473,580	10,937	2,687	24.6	332,227	240,380	46,707	63,435
Samoa	198.41	804	4,134	1,833 ¹	43.5 ¹	37	312	214	110
Saudi Arabia	34,813.87	701,467	22,305	6,470	29.0	173,854	137,998	9,637	38,201
Seychelles	98.46	1,131	14,767	16,185	109.6	432	1,004	651	489
Chinese Taipei	¹¹	668,510	26,690	15,074	56.5	347,193	288,053	40,992	37,306
Tajikistan	9,537.64	7,997	848	242	28.5	1,407	3,151	136	404
Tonga	105.70	514	5,057	2,056	40.7	15	229	71	89
Ukraine	44,134.69	151,543	3,485	1,556	44.6	49,220	53,929	15,224	10,035
Vanuatu	307.15	864	3,093	1,522 ⁵	50.9 ⁵	46	301	130	141
Viet Nam	97,338.58	340,821	3,377	2,359 ¹²	100.0 ¹²	282,575	262,620	18,677	16,914
Yemen*	29,825.97	20,140	697	254 ¹³	18.5 ¹³	1,204	7,399	241 ⁷	1,848 ⁷

ANNEX 7 – DATA ON TRADE PERFORMANCE

Table 7-1: Value of merchandise trade and annual percentage change (1995–2020)

(Billion dollars and percentage)		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Article XII Members	Value	857	911	975	899	941	1,208	1,194	1,360	1,746	2,307	2,845	3,469	4,217
	Annual percentage change		6.2%	7.1%	-7.8%	4.6%	28.4%	-1.1%	13.9%	28.4%	32.1%	23.3%	21.9%	21.5%
World	Value	10,453	10,953	11,331	11,186	11,646	13,102	12,603	13,157	15,362	18,696	21,296	24,500	28,301
	Year-on-year percentage change		4.8%	3.4%	-1.3%	4.1%	12.5%	-3.8%	4.4%	16.8%	21.7%	13.9%	15.0%	15.5%

(Billion dollars and percentage)		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Article XII Members	Value	5,122	3,998	5,278	6,577	6,929	7,271	7,327	6,345	5,947	6,758	7,641	7,599	7,440
	Annual percentage change	21.5%	-21.9%	32.0%	24.6%	5.3%	4.9%	0.8%	-13.4%	-6.3%	13.6%	13.1%	-0.6%	-2.1%
World	Value	32,668	25,280	30,742	36,781	37,176	37,938	38,074	33,297	32,259	35,734	39,398	38,309	35,447
	Year-on-year percentage change	15.4%	-22.6%	21.6%	19.6%	1.1%	2.0%	0.4%	-12.5%	-3.1%	10.8%	10.3%	-2.8%	-7.5%

ANNEX 7 – DATA ON TRADE PERFORMANCE (Cont'd)

Table 7-2: Value of trade in commercial services* and annual percentage change (1995–2020)

(Billion dollars and percentage)		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Article XII Members	Value	155	168	189	177	179	200	210	237	274	349	411	488	639
	Annual percentage change		8.6%	12.5%	-6.3%	0.7%	12.1%	4.7%	12.9%	15.8%	27.2%	17.7%	18.8%	31.0%
World	Value	2,369	2,536	2,629	2,653	2,784	2,955	2,975	3,159	3,644	4,396	5,179	5,847	6,967
	Year-on-year percentage change		7.1%	3.7%	0.9%	4.9%	6.1%	0.7%	6.2%	15.4%	20.6%	17.8%	12.9%	19.2%

(Billion dollars and percentage)		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Article XII Members	Value	755	671	788	929	1,009	1,109	1,229	1,158	1,165	1,249	1,405	1,418	1,090
	Annual percentage change	18.1%	-11.0%	17.4%	17.8%	8.6%	10.0%	10.8%	-5.8%	0.6%	7.2%	12.5%	0.9%	-23.1%
World	Value	7,857	7,039	7,668	8,613	8,896	9,431	10,195	9,722	9,849	10,687	11,700	12,002	9,510
	Year-on-year percentage change	12.8%	-10.4%	8.9%	12.3%	3.3%	6.0%	8.1%	-4.6%	1.3%	8.5%	9.5%	2.6%	-20.8%

ANNEX 8 – ACCESSIONS MANAGEMENT
Accession Working Party Management—2021

Accession Working Party	Code	Secretary	Co-Secretary	Administrative Manager/ Support
Algeria	DZA	Tvarusko	<i>Miashiro</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Andorra	<u>AND</u>	accessions@wto.org - No Activity		
Azerbaijan	AZE	Rasulov	Marinov	Tandara-Stenier
Bahamas	BHS	Tvarusko	<i>Miashiro</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Belarus	BLR	Bratanov	Tvarusko	Wardak
Bhutan*	BTN	Rasulov	<i>Tran</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Bosnia and Herzegovina	BIH	Varyanik	Tvarusko	Tandara-Stenier
Comoros*	COM	Bratanov	Soumaré Tvarusko	Tandara-Stenier
Curaçao	CUW	Bratanov	<i>Miashiro</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Equatorial Guinea	GNQ	Perez-Esteve	Soumaré <i>Miashiro</i>	Wardak
Ethiopia*	ETH	Tvarusko	Soumaré <i>Jibril</i> <i>Miashiro</i>	Wardak
Iran	IRN	Varyanik	<i>Tran</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Iraq	IRQ	Hassan	<i>Jibril</i> <i>Avayiwoe</i>	Wardak
Lebanese Republic	LBN	Hassan	<i>Avayiwoe</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Libya	LBY	Bratanov	<i>Tran</i>	Wardak
Sao Tome et Principe*	STP	Pérez-Esteve	Soumaré <i>Miashiro</i>	Wardak
Serbia	SRB	Varyanik	Tvarusko	Tandara-Stenier
Somalia*	SOM	Perez-Esteve	Soumaré <i>Jibril</i> <i>Avayiwoe</i>	Wardak
South Sudan*	SSD	Perez-Esteve	Soumaré <i>Avayiwoe</i>	Wardak
Sudan*	SDN	Hassan	Soumaré <i>Jibril</i> <i>Avayiwoe</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Syrian Arab Republic	SYR	Perez-Esteve	<i>Tran</i>	Wardak
Timor-Leste*	TLS	Varyanik	<i>Tran</i>	Wardak
Uzbekistan	UZB	Rasulov	Marinov <i>Tran</i>	Tandara-Stenier

Notes: * Least-developed countries (LDCs)

Country	Code	Focal Point	Co-Focal Point	Administrative Manager/ Support
Turkmenistan	TKM	Varyanik	Marinov Rasulov	Tandara-Stenier

ACCESSIONS STAFF DISPOSITION 2021

- Director;
- Eight Professionals;
- Two Administrative Managers; and
- Four rotating interns under the WTO Accessions Internship Programme



Accessions Division

World Trade Organization
Centre William Rappard
Rue de Lausanne 154
CH-1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland