

In The Name of God

# The Islamic Republic of IRAN

## Accession to the WTO

---

Presentation By  
Saman YOUSEFVAND  
WTO desk officer  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Accession to the World Trade Organization

Ashgabat, May 2016

# 1) Background

---

## □ Before the Islamic Revolution

- Observer status in the GATT since 1948 (being a signatory to ITO charter)
- Some Reasons Regarding non-accession of Iran to the GATT

## □ After the Islamic Revolution

- Commencement of GATT/WTO project in Iran (1991)
  - Reemergence of GATT/WTO in IRAN
    - End of the imposed war (1988)
    - Start of the First Economic Development Plan (1989-1993)
-

## 2) To make the decision

---

- ❑ Establishment of a Special Committee in the Ministry of Commerce (Consisting of representatives of several Ministries) in 1993
  - ❑ Exchanging of views from several ministries and experts in the Committee (1993-1995)
  - ❑ Application for Observer Status at WTO in 1995
  - ❑ Decision of Government of Islamic Republic of Iran to apply for WTO accession in 1996
-

### 3) Application for Accession

---

- ❑ Submission of Iran's Request for accession to WTO Secretariat (July, 1996)
  - ❑ The Political blockage against the request (1996-2001)
  - ❑ Introduction of Iran's request to the General Council Agenda by attempts of Developing Countries (May, 2001)
  - ❑ 22 GC meetings with no consensus (2001-2005)
  - ❑ Consensus on the request in the GC (26 May 2005)
-

## 4) Institutional setting

---

- ❑ Establishment of the Trade Representative office (IRTR) in 1996
  - ❑ Establishment of a Committee at the Deputy Ministerial level in 1999
  - ❑ Designation of the Minister of Commerce as the Plenipotentiary Trade Representative in 2001
  - ❑ Establishment of a high ranking council on WTO issues (Consisting of several Ministers) in 2000 and reestablishment as ministerial working group in 2010
  - ❑ Formation of expert groups in the relevant Ministries
-

## 5) Research Activities

---

- ❑ Publishing the Translation of the WTO Final Act in Jan., 1995
  - ❑ Publishing more than 30 WTO related books
  - ❑ Publishing a monthly newsletter on WTO since 1997 and a quarterly on World Trade Researches since 2006
  - ❑ Conducting research projects in cooperation with the relevant Ministries on WTO issues to evaluate the impact of Iran's membership to WTO on various sectors and to meet accession's requirements
  - ❑ Preparing the Memorandum of Foreign Trade Regime and answering the questions raised by the Working Party
-

## 6) Training Activities

---

- ❑ Holding WTO training courses since 1994
  - ❑ Holding various seminars on WTO issues in the capital and all provinces
  - ❑ Holding specialized workshops on WTO issues in cooperation with regional and international agencies
  - ❑ Launching E-learning Web-site to run virtual training programs on WTO issues
-

## 7) Capacity Building

---

- Training about 20 full time experts with master and PhD degrees as IRTR experts
  - Training lots of experts in the relevant Ministries as expert groups
-



## 8) Economic Reforms

---

- ❑ Unification of exchange rates
  - ❑ Tariffication of non-tariff barriers
  - ❑ Elimination of import licenses
  - ❑ Enactment of the new foreign investment act
  - ❑ Reforming of the direct tax law
  - ❑ Speeding up the privatization process
  - ❑ Enactment of Electronic Commerce Act
  - ❑ Reforming the tariff and subsidy structure
  - ❑ Concluding bilateral and regional PTAs
-

## 9) Progress in accession process

---

- ❑ Submission of Iran's Memorandum of foreign trade régime to the Secretariat (Nov., 2009)
  - ❑ Circulation of the MFTR among members (Nov., 2009)
  - ❑ 697 questions raised by some members
  - ❑ Submission of the consolidated questions to Iran (Feb., 2010)
  - ❑ Circulation of the questions among relevant internal organizations (April, 2010)
  - ❑ Submission of the answers to the questions (Nov., 2011)
  - ❑ Appointment of Chairperson to the Iran's Working Party is still pending
-

## 10) Activities in process...

---

- Establishment of an internet-based network for covering the last updates on trade régime among different ministries (with different level of access)
  - Updating Iran's Memorandum of foreign trade régime
-

- 
- The Islamic Republic of Iran took all necessary technical steps in its accession process. Having done all the required tasks and also demonstrating our government's seriousness and readiness in the accession process, this is our high and reasonable expectation to see that the WTO and its distinguished members reinforce the consultations leading to a tangible output. We do hope that the designation of the Working party Chair and convening its first working group session at the earliest convenient time would be realized. In this context, we count on the cooperation and support of all WTO Members in this complicated process, in a way that the non-economic factors will not adversely affect the accession of countries.
-

---

*Thank You for  
Your Kind Attention*

---