



WTO ACCESSIONS NEWSLETTER

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

WTO ACCESSION DEVELOPMENTS – SECRETARIAT REPORT TO MEMBERS

Accessions Strategic Objectives

- ⇒ Domestic reform instrument
- ⇒ Systemic update
- ⇒ Market access expansion
- ⇒ International cooperation for trade

SIXTH INFORMAL GROUP ON ACCESSIONS

Thursday, 30 June 2016

AGENDA

Part I

- New WTO Members
- Working Parties in 2016 Focus: [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)
- Working Party Re-activation: [Lebanon](#)
- Accession Working Parties State-of-Play: [Azerbaijan](#), [Iran](#) and [Sudan](#)
- Technical Assistance and Outreach: Post-Accession Support
- Transitional Arrangements in the Accessions Division

Part II:

- Special Presentation by H.E. Ms Micheline Calmy-Rey

Chaired by the WTO Secretariat (Director of the Accessions Division)



Timothy Yeend, on behalf of Director-General Azevêdo, receives Liberia's Instrument of Acceptance of the Protocol of Accession from Minister Axel Addy



Director-General Azevêdo receives Afghanistan's Instrument of Acceptance of the Protocol of Accession from Ambassador Suraya DALIL

Welcome New WTO Members

The Director Accessions conveyed Director-General Roberto Azevêdo's appreciation to all Members for facilitating and supporting the conclusion of the Accessions of Liberia and Afghanistan. All Members had been instrumental in different capacities.

Liberia

On 14 June 2016, the Parliament of **Liberia** had ratified the Protocol of Accession. H.E. Axel M. Addy, Minister of Commerce and Industry, had deposited the instrument of acceptance with Chief of Staff. Timothy Yeend, who received it on behalf of DG Azevêdo. Liberia would become the 163rd WTO Member of the WTO on 14 July 2016.

Afghanistan

On 18 June 2016, the Parliament of **Afghanistan** had ratified the Protocol of Accession. This week, H.E. Dr. Suraya Dalil, Afghanistan's Permanent Representative to the UNOG, deposited the instrument of acceptance with Director-General Roberto Azevêdo. Afghanistan would become the 164th WTO Member on 29 July 2016.



Mission to Sarajevo – Meeting with President Izetbegović 21 June 2016



Special Session of the Informal Group on Accessions – Group photo with H.E. Mr. Remigi Winzap and H.E. Ms Micheline Calmy-Rey 30 June 2016

"WTO and Switzerland are identical in their role as mediators; and Switzerland and the WTO had a duty of neutrality and transparency as well as a mandate to foster dialogue and build consensus"

Madame Micheline Calmy-Rey

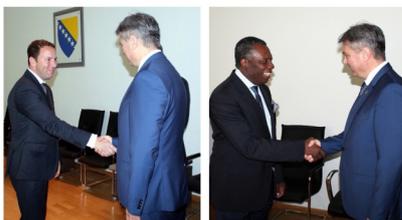
Working Parties in 2016 Focus

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Ambassador Rajmund Kiss (Hungary), Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina reported to the IGA that he had led a WTO mission to Sarajevo, with the Director Accessions and the WP Secretary, from 20 to 22 June 2016, at the invitation of the Government.

The purpose of the mission was threefold: to take stock of the progress that had been registered; review what remained outstanding; and, underscore for the Authorities in Sarajevo the vital necessity for urgent decision-making to conclude the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ambassador Lucija Ljubić-Lepine, Permanent

Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UNOG was present in Sarajevo to support the WTO Delegation and facilitate several meetings with key decision makers at the highest levels of Government. This was instrumental in facilitating a successful Mission outcome.



Mission to Sarajevo – Meeting with Chairperson of Council of Ministers – 21 June 2016

Working Parties in 2016 Focus (cont'd)



Mission to Sarajevo — Meeting with Parliamentary Assembly and the Negotiating Team
21-22 June 2016

"In spite of the Constitutional complexities and post-war challenges, the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has a vision. With purpose and determination, the aim is to close its 17-year WTO accession process in 2016."

H.E. Rajmund Kiss, WP Chairperson on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina (cont'd):

The WTO Delegation met with President Izetbegović. The Director Accessions delivered a letter from WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo to the President. The President asked the Delegation to convey his sincere appreciation to the WTO Director-General for his support, particularly, in this final stage of Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession.

The message from the leadership was to convey appreciation to the Members and underscore that WTO membership remained a fundamental priority for Sarajevo, and the aim was to conclude the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the WTO this year.

On "Next Steps", Bosnia and Herzegovina and Members with outstanding bilaterals would have to conclude their market access

negotiations by September. The next and final meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina was envisaged for the second half of this year (September/October). The Director Accessions said that this conclusion would be substance and not calendar-driven.

The Delegation drew attention to the "cost of delay" in any accession negotiation. The greater the delay, the greater the cost and increase in complexity. The Members were currently focused on the conclusion of this accession. This attention needed to be sustained. Although there was a supportive role by Members, the ultimate decision lay with the leadership of the Acceding Government.

The WP Chairperson said that in spite of the Constitutional complexities and post-war challenges, the Government of Bosnia and

Herzegovina had a vision. With purpose and determination, they aimed to close their 17-year WTO accession process.

Chairman Kiss concluded on two main points for the Membership, at this stage of the accession. *First* the Acceding Government needed to understand that since it was the party that applied for WTO membership, it bore the burden to work harder to offer a range of offers that would create the basis for a pragmatic win-win outcome. *Second* in relation to bilateral market access negotiations, for these negotiations to be successfully concluded, they had to be underpinned by pragmatism and compromise. The Acceding Government had to understand that it shouldered the burden of finding welfare-enhancing outcomes and compromise.

Working Party Re-activation

Lebanon:

The Director Accessions informed the IGA that Beirut was in touch with the Secretariat Team. Beirut planned to submit: a revised Legislative Action Plan; inputs to the Draft Working Party Report; revised Agriculture Supporting Tables; an Aide Memoire on the developments in the Foreign Trade Regime since 2009; and, updated Goods and Services offers in July.

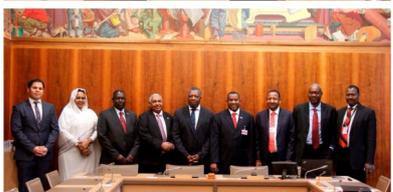
When submitted, these inputs would be the basis for a joint session between the Secretariat and the Lebanese Team, during which the Accessions Division would assist in updating the Draft Working Party Report and updated market access offers. Specific dates for this session would be agreed after required inputs had been received. The next

cycle of meetings was envisaged for the second half of 2016.

The Director Accessions mentioned that Lebanon could be a focus for MC11, although Beirut had decisions to make and much work remained to be done.



Informal Group on Accessions — 30 June 2016



Accession of Sudan — Meeting with Dr. Kamal Hassan Ali, Minister of International Cooperation
9 June 2016

Accession Working Parties—State-of-play

Azerbaijan:

The Secretariat had processed and circulated the documentation submitted by Baku namely: the revised Draft Working Party Report; the updated Agriculture Supporting Tables and Agriculture-specific Q&Rs; the replies to Members' questions; and, a revised Legislative Action Plan with the accompanying legislation.

Updated market access offers would not be provided at this stage by Baku.

On the basis of circulated inputs, the next cycle of meetings would take place on 21 and 22 July. The cycle would consist of a Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture and the 13th Meeting of the Working Party.

Although updated market access offers had not been provided, at this stage by Baku, Members were invited to schedule bilateral market access engagements with Azerbaijan during the next cycle of meetings.

The Director Accessions informed Members that Azerbaijan was currently facing economic challenges in the context of the uncertainties and challenges in the global and regional economy. External receipts had been affected by the fall in oil prices. Currency devaluation had

taken place. The Government was implementing an 8-point Reform Plan for recovery and growth.

Iran:

Iran was the largest economy outside of the WTO. The Director-General was being briefed comprehensively and regularly on this accession, in real time, particularly on its systemic aspects and the range of questions being put to the Secretariat from the membership. WTO Top Management had this accession under close and constant scrutiny.

Following the General Council meeting on 12 May where a group of 19 Members had made a joint statement in support of the re-activation of the accession of Iran, consultations were underway in different formats and configurations on the way forward. The Accessions Team remained in constant engagement with Members and Tehran.

Sudan:

A delegation led by H.E. Dr. Kamal Hassan Ali, Minister of International Cooperation, visited Geneva on 9 and 10 June for a series of bilateral meetings with the Secretariat and Members. The Minister hand-delivered a letter addressed by

Sudan's Vice-President to Director-General Azevêdo. He provided the Secretariat with an update on domestic policy developments and introduced Sudan's Chief Negotiator for the WTO Accession, Dr. Hassan Ahmed Taha.

The visiting Delegation sought Members' support for the re-start of Sudan's accession negotiations, starting with the appointment of a Geneva-based WP Chairperson. Currently, Deputy Director-General David Shark is consulting on the chairmanship on behalf of the Chairperson of the General Council.

The Minister informed the Secretariat that Khartoum had established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on WTO Accession, chaired by the Vice President. The Committee was currently updating the negotiating documentation to provide a technical platform for the re-start of Sudan's accession negotiations. Specifically, an updated MFTR would be submitted by end September; and, updated market access offers on goods and services would be tabled by end of the year. The Minister confirmed that Sudan would shortly pay its outstanding assessed contributions.

Technical Assistance and Outreach Activities

Post Accession Support

The Director Accessions reported that in preparation for the membership of Liberia and Afghanistan, the Secretariat was providing post-accession implementation support to the respective Governments, on two tracks: (i) Specialised training workshops for post-accession; and, (ii) a Post-Accession Forum on the margins of the UNCTAD XIV.

On [Liberia](#), the Director Accessions informed the IGA that:

- The Accessions Division held a National Workshop on Post-Accession in Monrovia on 27-29 June. The Workshop was opened by Chief Negotiator Axel M. Addy, Minister of Commerce and Industry and, Ms. Elafew Tamba, Head of the Liberia Revenue Authority, who were

co-chairs of the Steering Committee on Post-Accession.

- The National Workshop on Post-Accession attracted over 70 participants from different line Ministries at the Deputy/Assistant Minister level, legislative representatives, the private sector and media. The participants actively engaged in various sessions on *inter alia*, "Post Accession: concept, framework, best practices, and support"; "notification requirements"; "review of selected accession specific commitments in Liberia's Working Parties Report"; and, an "overview of the key principles/provisions of WTO Agreements".
- Participants at the Workshop applauded the "Liberian model", praising the commitment and leadership of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and, the support of

WTO Director-General Azevêdo and Members.

On [Afghanistan](#), the Director Accessions informed the IGA that:

- The WTO Secretariat was organizing, together with UN ESCAP, a 5-day National Workshop on Post-Accession for Afghanistan, in Bangkok, Thailand, during the week of 11 July 2016.

Post-Accession Forum

A high-level WTO/UNCTAD Post-Accession Forum would be held on the margins of UNCTAD XIV in Nairobi on 19 July. This event would bring together the Governments of Afghanistan and Liberia and their multilateral and bilateral partners to discuss the on-going post-accession work and support, so that the two LDCs can maximise the benefits of WTO membership.



National Workshop on Post-Accession, Monrovia, Liberia 27-29 June 2016

Transitional arrangements in the Accessions Division

The Director Accessions announced that he would leave the WTO Secretariat on a special leave for 12 months, starting from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

The Director General had appointed Ms Maika Oshikawa to serve as Officer-in-Charge of the Accessions Division during this period. DDG David Shark would continue to oversee the work of the Division. The Director Accessions appealed to Members to give Ms Oshikawa the same support that they had unfailingly accorded to him since 2009.

He said to the IGA that Director-General Roberto Azevêdo had significantly raised the profile of the WTO to new and higher levels and had injected the Secretariat with

a level of confidence for success and delivery that had not previously existed. In this regard, the support of the membership would matter as DDG Shark and Ms. Oshikawa coordinated and facilitated the work of the Organization in this strategic area of work that reflected complex sensitivities.

Ambassadors / Heads of Delegations in the IGA congratulated the Director Accessions on a successful past 7 and one half years in the Division, contributing to the completion of 10 accessions and several underway. Members also congratulated him for being instrumental in strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading system. They wished him well on his new journey and looked forward to his return, and as stated, "with not a day extra".



Informal Group on Accessions – 30 June 2016



Special Presentation by H.E. Ms Micheline Calmy-Rey

Part II of the June IGA was open to all Members and the WTO Secretariat. This session was honoured with the participation of H.E. Ms Micheline Calmy-Rey, former Member of the Swiss Federal Council, former Foreign Minister and President of the Swiss Confederation in 2007 and 2011.

Director Accessions introduced Madame Calmy-Rey as a widely acknowledged Statesperson, negotiator and mediator of global repute and a strong supporter of the WTO and had contributed to the conclusion of complex WTO accessions, directly and indirectly.

Madame Calmy-Rey gave a presentation on the 'Art and Science of Negotiations: De-Politicizing and Technicizing Negotiations'. The presentation elaborated the diplomatic engineering approach in facilitating the conclusion of complex negotiations, drawing from her experience as President of Switzerland in facilitating bilateral

aspects of WTO accession negotiations of the Russian Federation. Madame Calmy-Rey suggested a range of lessons that could be learned as the WTO undertook ever more complex and sensitive negotiations, including in accession negotiations.

The Swiss-mediated accession of the Russian Federation to the WTO illustrated how the problem-solving mind-set of engineering science could be applied to complex real world negotiations. It complemented existing negotiation theories which could prove valuable.

Every step of the negotiation process needed to be carefully planned, cast in a frame and acceptable to all parties in order to create an atmosphere of trust. Furthermore, accession negotiations contained technical elements. The challenge in this approach was to separate the technical aspects and *technicize* them, from the geopolitical considerations.

Madame Calmy-Rey said to Members that the *"WTO and Switzerland are identical in their role as mediators; and Switzerland and the WTO had a duty of neutrality and transparency as well as a mandate to foster dialogue and build consensus"*.

Expert knowledge to develop creative solutions was available within the WTO. *"By embracing a diplomatic engineering approach, the WTO could thus foster its role as convener, as a hub of technical expertise and as an honest broker"*.

The IGA resoundingly applauded the presentation by Madame Calmy-Rey. Specifically, representatives of the Russian Federation and Jamaica took the floor to express appreciation for her presentation that provided invaluable insights with high objectivity. Switzerland's policy of neutrality and its mediation were applauded as valuable for the multilateral trading system.

"By embracing a diplomatic engineering approach, the WTO could thus foster its role as convener, as a hub of technical expertise and as an honest broker".

Madame Micheline Calmy-Rey

List of WTO Accessions Working Party Chairpersons

No.	Government	Date Working Party established	WP Chairperson
1.	Algeria	17 June 1987	Pending
2.	Andorra	22 October 1997	Pending
3.	Azerbaijan	16 July 1997	H.E. Dr. Walter Werner (Germany)
4.	The Bahamas	18 July 2001	H.E. Mr Wayne McCook (Jamaica)
5.	Belarus	27 October 1993	H.E. Mr Haluk Ilicak (Turkey)
6.	Bhutan*	6 October 1999	H.E. Mr Thomas Hajnoczi (Austria)
7.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	15 July 1999	H.E. Dr. Rajmund Kiss (Hungary)
8.	Comoros, Union of the*	9 October 2007	H.E. Mr Luis Enrique Chávez Basagoitia (Peru)
9.	Equatorial Guinea*	5 February 2008	Pending
10.	Ethiopia*	10 February 2002	H.E. Dr. Steffen Smidt (Denmark)
11.	Iran	26 May 2005	Pending
12.	Iraq	13 December 2004	H.E. Mr Omar Hilale (Morocco)
13.	Lebanese Republic	14 April 1999	Mr Jean-Paul Thuillier (France)
14.	Libya	27 July 2004	Mr Víctor Echevarría Ugarte (Spain)
15.	Sao Tomé and Príncipe*	26 May 2005	Pending
16.	Serbia	15 February 2005	H.E. Mrs Marie-Claire Swärd Capra (Sweden)
17.	Sudan*	25 October 1994	Pending
18.	Syrian Arab Republic	4 May 2010	Pending
19.	Uzbekistan	21 December 1994	H.E. Mr Seokyoung Choi (Korea)

* Least-developed country (LDC)

Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meeting (ECAM)

DATE	WORKING PARTY	MEETING	STATUS	ROOM
[Thursday, 21 July 2016]	Azerbaijan	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (PM)	Convening Notice pending	E
[Friday, 22 July 2016]	Azerbaijan	13 th Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Azerbaijan (AM)	Convening Notice pending	D
[Tuesday, 26 July 2016]	IGA	7 th 2016 Informal Group on Accessions (9:00-10:00)	Convening Notice pending	E
[27-28 July 2016]	General Council			
[September/October]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	[Technical Verification Meetings with Signatory-Members of the Draft Goods and Services Schedules]	Convening Notice pending	TBC
[September/October]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	13 th Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AM)	Convening Notice pending	TBC
[Second half of 2016]	Lebanon	18 th Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of the Lebanese Republic	Convening Notice pending	TBC

Other Accessions Events

Date	Event
27-29 June 2016	National Workshop on Post-Accession for Liberia, in Monrovia, Liberia
11-15 July 2016	National Workshop on Post-Accession for Afghanistan, in Bangkok , Thailand
19 July 2016	UNCTAD/WTO Post-Accession Forum, UNCTAD 14, in Nairobi , Kenya
28 September 2016	Book launch "African Perspectives on Trade and the WTO: Domestic Reforms, Structural Transformation and Global Economic Integration"— 2016 Public Forum
28 November—2 December 2016	Geneva-based training on services for selected acceding governments
December 2016	5 th China Round Table, Beijing, China

Accessions Toolbox

◆ Accession Working Parties	◆ Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings (ECAM)
◆ Accession Working Party Chairpersons	◆ Accession Commitments Database (ACDB)
◆ WTO Director-General's Annual Reports on Accessions	◆ WTO Accessions Internship - "China Programme"
◆ Handbook on Accessions to the WTO	◆ Accession processes of Article XII Members, click here
◆ Accession-Related Technical Assistance Activities	◆ WTO Accessions Newsletters
◆ Accession Portal on the WTO Website (En, Fr, Es)	



Contact the WTO Accessions Division Secretariat: accessions.newsletter@wto.org