Accessions Strategic Objectives

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

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Accession Strategic Focus

Comoros: In preparation for the resumption of the Working Party, Comoros officially submitted the following negotiating inputs for circulation to the Working Party: the replies to Members’ questions from the 4th Working Party meeting held in March 2018; the revised Legislative Action Plan; the revised State Trading Questionnaire; the issue-specific action plans; and draft legislation. The Secretariat is working with Comoros to update the draft Report of the Working Party for circulation by end-November. The 5th Working Party meeting is envisaged for early 2020.

At the invitation of the Government, the WTO will attend a Conference of Development Partners for Comoros (Conférence des partenaires au développement de l’Union des Comores), taking place on 2 - 3 December in Paris, to raise the profile of the WTO accession process at the highest political levels of the new government.

Belarus: In preparation for the next Working Party meeting, Minsk submitted the following negotiating inputs: the replies to Members’ questions from the 12th Working Party meeting held on 12 July; Agriculture Supporting Tables and the accompanying “Questions and Replies”; a revised Legislative Action Plan and copies of legislation; and a draft subsidies notification. The Secretariat is preparing the next revision of the draft Report of the Working Party for circulation by mid-December. Following the circulation of all negotiating inputs, the Chairperson of the Working Party, Ambassador Kemal Madenoğlu (Turkey) will consult on the date of the 13th meeting of the Working Party.

The Delegation of Belarus remains actively engaged with Members, the Secretariat and partners outside the Working Party cycle. On 16 October, Chief Negotiator Vladimir Serpikov, participated in the Conference on: “Greater Coherence in Global Economic Policymaking: the case of WTO accession”, jointly organised by the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank in Washington, D.C. On 28-29 October, the Chief Negotiator and his team were in Geneva to advance bilateral discussions with selected Members.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Following its circulation on 25 September, the draft ITA Schedule of Bosnia and Herzegovina was positively considered by the ITA Committee at its meeting on 31 October. Since no objections had been received, the Schedule is now deemed approved. The ITA Schedule will be incorporated into the draft Goods Schedule following the consolidation of all bilateral market access agreements concluded and signed between Bosnia and Herzegovina and WTO Members. Sarajevo is yet to conclude bilateral market access negotiations with one Member.

Serbia: Chief Negotiator Olivera Jocić visited Geneva in the week of 7 October to advance Serbia’s bilateral market access negotiations with selected Members.

Accessions Newsletter Team:
- Maika Oshikawa, Editor-in-chief
- Mariam Soumaré, Editor
- Chidlema Onyebuchi, Co-Editor
- Souda Tandara-Stenier, Editorial Coordinator, page layout design, photographer

with contributions from Accessions Division staff

8th Informal Group on Accessions — 30 October 2019
Ethiopia: Ethiopia remains committed to an early resumption of the Accession Working Party, according to the State Minister of Finance, Dr Eyob Tekalign at the Conference on: “Greater Coherence in Global Economic Policymaking: the case of WTO accession” on 16 October in Washington D.C. The State Minister stressed that Ethiopia sees WTO accession as an anchor for and an extension of domestic reforms.

South Sudan: A joint ITC/WTO national outreach and technical workshop will be organized in Juba, following the formation of a transitional government which is now being delayed. This workshop would also assist South Sudan in the preparation of negotiating inputs for the next Working Party meeting, envisaged for 2020. On the margins of the workshop, a visit of the Chairperson of the Working Party, Ambassador Mohammed Haqjo (Afghanistan), is also expected to take place.

Sudan: The Chairperson of the Working Party, Mr. Katsuro Nagai (Japan), plans to visit Khartoum to explore how the accession process can support the new government in reforming its economy, following the formation of a 3-year transitional government.

Azerbaijan: In preparation for the next Working Party meeting, Azerbaijan submitted negotiating inputs, including: the replies to Members’ questions from the 14th Working Party meeting held in July 2017, five pieces of legislation, a State Trading Questionnaire, updated Agriculture Supporting Tables, and a list of applied import and export duties.

The Secretariat is reviewing these inputs with a view to updating the draft Report of the Working Party for circulation to the Working Party in December.

Iraq: The Working Party Chairperson, Ambassador Omar Hilale (Morocco), who is currently based in New York, visited Geneva on the week of 7 October. He met with Ms. Mayada Abdulhadi, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq to the WTO to discuss the state of play of Iraq’s accession and the High-Level Conference on WTO Accession in Baghdad, jointly organized with the World Bank, aimed at relaunching Iraq’s accession process, following the receipt of negotiating inputs.

Uzbekistan: Following the circulation of the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) in July, Uzbekistan submitted additional documents, including: the Information on Customs Valuation Agreement, Legislative Action Plan, Checklists of Illustrative TBT and SPS Issues, and Information on Import Licensing Procedures. The submission of additional documents, including the replies to Members’ questions on the MFTR, is expected shortly for circulation. Uzbekistan is keen to resume the Working Party as early as possible.

On 7 October, a delegation headed by Mr. Badriddin Abidov, Deputy Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade and Chief Negotiator for WTO Accession of Uzbekistan visited Geneva to participate in the World Cotton Day. Mr. Abidov also met with the Working Party Chairperson, Ambassador Paik (Korea) and the Secretariat to exchange views on the resumption of the Working Party.

Curaçao: On 31 October, Curaçao, a constituent country in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, submitted its request for accession pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO. In accordance with established practice, the Chairperson of the General Council, Ambassador Sunanta Kangvalkulki (Thailand) will conduct consultations with WTO Members before the request is placed on the agenda of the General Council for consideration and decision.

Expression of Interest: Curaçao
Technical Assistance and Outreach Activities

Book Presentation on Recently Acceded WTO Members by Mr. Kenji Takamiya, 7 October 2019

On 7 October, the Accessions Division hosted a presentation of the recently published book entitled "Recently Acceded Members of the World Trade Organization: Membership, the Doha Development Agenda, and Dispute Settlement" by Mr. Kenji Takamiya from the Asian Development Bank. The book, published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2019, sheds light on trade policies of developing economies that joined the WTO after its establishment in 1995. Its detailed case studies on Georgia, China, Viet Nam and Ecuador examine their engagement in accession and Doha Round negotiations and, where relevant, dispute settlement at the WTO.


On 8 October, the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan and the Accessions Division organized a session entitled “On the Road to Nur-Sultan: Eurasian Perspectives on the Future of the Multilateral Trading System”. The discussion focused on the contributions of the Eurasian economies to the multilateral trading system, lessons learned from Eurasian countries' accessions to the WTO and their membership experiences; and topical issues in preparation for MC12, including WTO Reforms.

Trade for Peace through WTO Accessions: Global Peace Index 2019 – Reflections from the Bottom, 9 October 2019

On 9 October, Mr. Serge Stroobants of the Institute for Economics and Peace presented the latest publication on the Global Peace Index 2019 (available on this link: http://visionofhumanity.org/reports/). Following his presentation, Mr. Tamim Baiou, Chargé d’affaires, a.i., at the Permanent Mission of Libya in Geneva and Ambassador Osman Mohammed, Deputy Permanent Representative and Chargé d’affaires at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Sudan in Geneva, reflected on the ways in which trade could be used as an instrument for peace in their respective countries.


On 16 October, the WTO organized a Conference on "Greater Coherence in Global Economic Policy-Making: The Case of WTO Accession", in Washington D.C., on the margins of the Annual Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank. This conference, organized within the framework of the WTO-IMF-World Bank coherence mandate, provided a platform to discuss issues of common policy interest to the three institutions in the context of WTO accessions and to explore the scope for heightened cooperation at the country level. The conference, which was moderated by WTO Deputy Director-General Alan Wm. Wolff, was attended by over 60 participants, including from the trade and country teams of the IMF and the World Bank working with acceding governments; representatives of acceding governments and WTO Members. Presentations were made by Ms. Maika Oshikawa, Director, Accessions Division, WTO; Mr. Bjorn Rother, Advisor, Middle East and Central Asia Department, IMF; Mr. Martin Kaufman, Assistant Director, Strategy, Policy and Review Department, IMF; Ms Caroline Freund, Director, International Trade Department, World Bank; Ambassador Vladimir Serpikov, Chief Negotiator for WTO Accession, Belarus; and Dr. Eyob Tekalign, State Minister of Finance and member of the WTO Accession Committee, Ethiopia.

The issues raised and discussed at the Conference will be reflected in the thematic section of the 2019 DG Annual Report on WTO Accessions.
Technical Assistance and Outreach Activities (Cont’d)


The Accessions Division, in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) held a panel discussion entitled "Trade, Jobs and Peace" during the Geneva Peace Week on 8 November. The panel discussed the linkage between trade, jobs and peace in the context of WTO accessions and explored potential areas of collaboration between the WTO and ILO to support fragile and conflict-affected countries to integrate to the multilateral trading system.

Mr. Wayne McCook, Senior Advisor to the Director-General of the WTO, opened the panel on behalf of the WTO. The session was moderated by Mr. Katsuro Nagai, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan and Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Sudan. Other speakers were: (i) Mr. Tamim M. Baiou, Chargé d’affaires, Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland; (ii) Mr. Luigi Narbone, Director of the Middle East Directions Programme at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies; (iii) Mrs. Mito Tsukamoto, Head of Investment and Development Branch at the Employment Division of the ILO; and (iv) Mr. Abdi Dorre, Manager Director of the SCCI – Somali Chamber of Commerce.

The participants encouraged the WTO and the ILO to further champion institutional collaboration for the fragile and conflict-affected countries in the context of the Trade for Peace through WTO Accessions Initiative.


Deputy Director-General Alan Wm. Wolff attended the Paris Peace Forum. He spoke at the session on "Future of Trade Rules", chaired by Pascal Lamy, President of the Forum and former WTO Director-General. In his speech, DDG Wolff noted that trade is an essential foundation for economic stability which in turn makes peace more possible and the expansion of trade more achievable. He warned that failing to address the current challenges to the multilateral trading system, including the need to reach new enforceable trade agreements and repairing the WTO’s dispute settlement system, poses “unacceptable risks”. Other speakers of the session included: (i) Mr. Bruno Le Maire, Minister of Economy and Finance, France; (ii) Ms Arancha González, Executive Director, International Trade Center (ITC); (iii) Ms Shuli Hu, founder and publisher of Caixin Media; (iv) Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Senior Minister, Chairman, Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), Singapore.

Training Course on Goods Schedules for WTO Accession, 18-22 November 2019

On 18 November, the Secretariat commenced a 5-day training course on Goods Schedules for acceding governments, which would last until 22 November. 22 participants from 19 acceding governments and 3 Members are attending the course organized jointly by the Accessions Division and the Economic Research and Statistics Division. The course was opened by WTO Deputy Director-General Yi Xiaozhun, who stressed that increasing the membership of the WTO has always been a priority as it extends the coverage of multilateral trade rules and market access.

The main objective of the training course is to enhance understanding of the practical aspects of bilateral market access negotiations on goods as well as the technical aspects of developing schedules of commitments for goods. Participants will be trained on the theoretical underpinnings of this area of activity and will take part in practical exercises, including a two-day simulation exercise on market access negotiations.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The 8th China Round Table, Moscow, 4-5 December 2019

The 8th China Round Table on WTO Accessions will take place in Moscow, Russian Federation on 4-5 December. The thematic focus will be "Accessions and WTO Reform: on the Road to MC12". It will provide an opportunity for dialogue among all acceding governments and selected Article XII and original Members on topical issues related to WTO accessions, such as: (i) contributions of accessions to WTO Reform; (ii) implications of regional integration for the multilateral trading system; and (iii) sharing of accession-related experiences.

The Round Table will be followed by a Special Meeting of Acceding Governments, on 6 December, which will serve as a preparatory meeting for the first ministerial gathering of acceding governments on the margins of MC12.

Invitations have been sent to all acceding governments and selected Members, including Article XII Members from the region.

The 3rd Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa, Addis Ababa, 4 – 7 February 2020

The 3rd Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa will take place in Addis Ababa on 4 – 7 February 2020. The event is being co-organized by the WTO in partnership with the International Trade Centre (ITC), the World Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Government of Ethiopia. The theme "Economic Transformation through WTO Membership and AfCFTA Implementation". All acceding governments from Africa – Algeria, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Libya, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan – are expected to participate in the Dialogue.
WTO Accession Progress Tracker

Multilateral Process

- Working Party Established
  (No documents submitted)
  - Equatorial Guinea
  - Libya
  - Sao Tome and Principe
  - Somalia
  - Syrian Arab Republic
- Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR)
  - Andorra
  - Iran
  - Iraq
  - South Sudan
  - Timor-Leste
  - Uzbekistan
- Factual Summary of Points Raised
  - Bahamas
  - Ethiopia
  - Sudan
- Draft Working Party Report
  - Algeria
  - Azerbaijan
  - Belarus
  - Bhutan
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - Comoros
  - Lebanese Republic
  - Serbia

Bilateral Process

- Initial Goods and Services Offer
  - Andorra
  - Ethiopia
  - Uzbekistan
- Revised goods and services offer (Market Access Negotiations)
  - Algeria
  - Azerbaijan
  - Belarus
  - Bhutan
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - Comoros
  - Lebanese Republic
  - Serbia
- Draft Goods and Services Schedules
  - Andorra
  - Ethiopia
  - Uzbekistan

Informal Group on Accessions Meeting — 28 May 2019
### WTO Accessions 2019 — Evolving Work Programme

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<th>Accession WP</th>
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<th>Last WP Meeting</th>
<th>State of Play</th>
<th>Upcoming Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ALGERIA (DZA)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Mr. José Luis CANCELA GOMEZ (Uruguay)</td>
<td>17 June 1987</td>
<td>14WPM, 31 March 2014</td>
<td>Preparation of updated inputs (replies, LAP, AGSTs, LEG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ANDORRA (AND)</td>
<td></td>
<td>22 October 1997</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. AZERBAIJAN (AZE)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Dr Walter WERNER (Germany)</td>
<td>16 July 1997</td>
<td>14WPM, 28 July 2017</td>
<td>Preparation of updated inputs (replies, LAP, AGSTs, LEG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. THE BAHAMAS (BHS)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Mr. Andrew STAINES (United Kingdom)</td>
<td>18 July 2001</td>
<td>4WPM, 5 April 2019</td>
<td>Preparation of updated inputs (replies, EDWPR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. BELARUS (BLR)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Mr. Kemal MADENOĞLU (Turkey)</td>
<td>27 October 1993</td>
<td>12WPM, 10 July 2019</td>
<td>Preparation of updated inputs (replies, LAP, LEG, AGST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. BANGLADESH (BD)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Dr. Elisabeth TICHY-FISSBERGER (Austria)</td>
<td>6 October 1999</td>
<td>4WPM, 30 January 2008</td>
<td>No activity since 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BiH)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Mr. Atanas PAPARIZOV (Bulgaria)</td>
<td>31 May 1999</td>
<td>13WPM, 7 February 2018</td>
<td>Preparation of updated inputs (replies, LAP as well as DWPR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. CAMEROON (CM)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Mr. Louis Enrique CHÁVEZ BASSAGOTIA (Denmark)</td>
<td>9 October 2007</td>
<td>4WPM, 28 March 2018</td>
<td>Preparation updated inputs (replies, LAP as well as DWPR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. EQUATORIAL GUINEA (GNQ)</td>
<td>Chair: Pending</td>
<td>5 February 2008</td>
<td>No WPM held to date</td>
<td>Preparation of MFTR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ETHIOPIA (ETH)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Mr. Morten JESPERSEN (Denmark)</td>
<td>10 February 2003</td>
<td>3WPM, 27 March 2012</td>
<td>Preparation of full range of updated inputs (LAP, LEG, AGST, all questionnaires and checklists, MA offers, as well as FS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. IKAN (IRN)</td>
<td>Chair: Pending</td>
<td>26 May 2005</td>
<td>No WPM held to date</td>
<td>Preparation of updated inputs (MFTR and MA offers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. IRAQ (IRQ)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Mr. Omar HILALE (Morocco)</td>
<td>13 December 2004</td>
<td>2WPM, 2 April 2008</td>
<td>No activity since 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. LIBANON (LBN)</td>
<td>Chair: Mr. Jean-Paul THUILLIER (France)</td>
<td>14 April 1999</td>
<td>7WPM, 28 October 2009</td>
<td>- Preparation of updated inputs (AGST, LAP, LEG, questionnaires and checklists, MA offers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. LIBERIA (LBY)</td>
<td>Chair: Mr. Victor ECHEVARRIA UGARTE (Spain)</td>
<td>27 July 2004</td>
<td>No WPM held to date</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE (STP)</td>
<td>Chair: Pending</td>
<td>26 May 2005</td>
<td>No WPM held to date</td>
<td>Preparation of MFTR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. SERBIA (SRB)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Mrs Marie-Claire SWÄRD (Sweden)</td>
<td>15 February 2005</td>
<td>14WPM, 13 June 2013</td>
<td>Preparation of updated inputs (AGST, LAP, LEG as well as DWPR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. SOMALIA (SOM)</td>
<td>Chair: Pending</td>
<td>7 December 2016</td>
<td>No WPM held to date</td>
<td>Preparation of MFTR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. SOUTH SUDAN (SSD)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Mr. Mohammad Qurban HAGOQ (Afghanistan)</td>
<td>13 December 2017</td>
<td>1WPM, 21 March 2019</td>
<td>Preparation of updated MFTR, as well as other inputs (replies, checklists, LAP, LEG, initial MA offers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. SUDAN (SDN)</td>
<td>Chair: Mr. Katsuro NAGAI (Japan)</td>
<td>25 October 1994</td>
<td>4WPM, 14 July 2017</td>
<td>- Updated inputs circulated (AGSTs, LAP, LEG, as well as FS) circulated to WP in April-June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC (SYR)</td>
<td>Chair: Pending</td>
<td>4 May 2010</td>
<td>No WPM held to date</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. TIMOR-LESTE (TLS)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Mr. Rui MACIEIRA (Portugal)</td>
<td>7 December 2016</td>
<td>No WPM held to date</td>
<td>Preparation of replies on MFTR circulated in July 2017, as well as other inputs (LAP, LEG, initial MA offers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. UZBEKISTAN (UZB)</td>
<td>Chair: H.E. Ms PAK Ji-ah (Republic of Korea)</td>
<td>21 December 1994</td>
<td>3WPM, 14 October 2005</td>
<td>Preparation of replies on MFTR circulated on 25 July as well as other inputs (LAP, LEG, AGST, all other questionnaires and checklists, MA offers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * LDC — AGST (Agricultural Supporting Tables); CVQ (Customs Valuation Questionnaire); DWPR (Draft Working Party Report); FS (Factual Summary of Points Raised); ILQ (Import Licensing Questionnaire); LAP (Legislative Action Plan); LEG (legislation); MA (market access); MFTR (Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime); Q1 (1st quarter); STQ (State Trading Questionnaire); TA (technical assistance); WP (Working Party); WPM (Working Party meeting).
ACCESSIONS ANNIVERSARY DATES — ARTICLE XII MEMBERS

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<tr>
<th>Article XII Member</th>
<th>Membership date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>9 November 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>13 November 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>30 November 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>30 November 2015</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ACCESSIONS TOOLBOX

- Accession Working Parties ➔ Accessions Evolving Work Programme
- WTO Director-General’s Annual Reports on Accessions ➔ Accession Commitments Database (ACDB)
- Handbook on Accessions to the WTO ➔ WTO Accessions Internship - "China Programme"
- Accession-Related Technical Assistance Activities ➔ Accession processes of Article XII Members, click here
- Accession Intelligence Portal (AIP) on the WTO Website (En, Fr, Es) ➔ WTO Accessions Newsletters

Previous WTO Accessions newsletters:

N° 95 — August/September 2019
N° 94 — June/July 2019
N° 93 — April/May 2019