

8TH CHINA ROUND TABLE ON WTO-ACCESSIONS
Moscow, Russian Federation
December 4-6, 2019

Question to Curaçao during the Tour de Table (session #3) on December 4, 2019:
What are your motivations for becoming an Article XII acceding member of the WTO?

1. First of all, we appreciate the invitation by the WTO-Secretariat to attend this event and also like to thank the sponsor (China) and host (The Russian Federation) of the 8th China Round Table on WTO Accessions.
2. Secondly, we are already an original member of the WTO, because we share a common membership within the Kingdom of the Netherlands with three other countries: Aruba, Sint Maarten and the Netherlands. However, the Netherlands (the European part of the Kingdom) is part of the European Union, which represents the perspective of developed countries, whereas we are a developing country in a region far away from Europe. Since 1998 our government has taken a decision to operate independently in WTO-matters and in 2014 we agreed with our main trading partner, the USA, to pursue an independent membership of the WTO. This was followed by a Decision in 2015 by the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
3. Curaçao eagerly wants to integrate more in its own region in terms of its trading relationships. This integration is only possible based on WTO rules, which is being demonstrated by the negotiations currently being conducted with Colombia and the Dominican Republic, as well as the consultations with Trinidad & Tobago. Consequently, the WTO provides us with the required passport to conduct bilateral trade agreements with other countries, especially in our region.
4. In addition, we have been a participant to GATT since 1949, which means that we have a history of deep commitment towards multilateralism and international organizations. In this respect, our aspiration is to directly participate in the global trade dialogue, because if you don't the decisions resulting from the global dialogue are going to affect you anyway.
5. Moreover, the WTO system provides transparency to all, small and large, countries, based on its system of multi-lateral, plurilateral and bilateral agreements. Although it faces many practical challenges and the reforms being debated upon, in principle, the WTO is the world's best bet in avoiding disrupting international trade wars.
6. In a more local context, the WTO provides us with a good body of knowledge and of best practices in international trade. The WTO therefore helps us to bring our systems and practices, where necessary, in line with the global environment for investment and trade facilitation to attract much needed foreign investments.
7. These are the main motivations, incentives and/or reasons for our application to apply to become a member of the WTO in our own right as an Article XII separate customs territory, similar to Hong Kong, Macau and Chinese Taipei with respect to mainland China within the constitutional setting of The People's Republic of China.

8. As we have been preparing this application for many years, in terms of your question, we sincerely hope there are no more challenges as to the decision making by the General Council when our membership will be considered on December 9, 2019.
