



**WTO ACCESSIONS 2014 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL\***



\* This Annual Report takes account of confirmed accession-related developments up until 24 November 2014.

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## I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW



1. This is the Sixth Annual Report on WTO Accessions and my Second as Director-General. At the start, I reiterated the vital importance of WTO accession as a strategic priority for the Organization. Members have rallied in support of this priority. There is greater engagement by a wider group of Members. Broader and deeper engagement has improved systemic understanding of the benefits of accession for Members and Acceding Governments alike. This needs to be sustained.

2. As the WTO approaches its Twentieth Anniversary, we should take stock of the *acquis* as we look ahead. Since 1995, 32 accessions have been concluded. As Members review this report, the Accession of Seychelles is the first item on the agenda of the GC for a formal decision. When Seychelles ratifies its Accession Protocol and deposits its Instrument of Ratification, the number of completed accessions will rise to 33 and membership to 161. The accession negotiations of Kazakhstan are at an advanced stage of maturity and on the threshold of conclusion, as soon as the remaining decisions are taken. On current pace, I believe that the stage should be set for a formal decision by the General Council early in the new year.

3. The results of accession have been far-reaching and positive. They have contributed to WTO rule-making through greater precision, clarification and otherwise strengthening our rules based system. Pursuant to Accession Protocols and as reconfirmed by WTO jurisprudence, these Protocols are integral to the "WTO Agreement". On market access, the results from accession negotiations, as codified in Goods and Services Schedules, have improved commercial opportunities for all Members, hence contributing to growth and job creation. To illustrate, it is significant that the rules-based Multilateral Trading System has expanded to cover approximately 98% of World Trade in 2013, from where it stood at 90.9% in 1995 because of the enlargement

through new Members. To reinforce this fact, average yearly growth of the commerce of new – Article XII Members – for the period 1995 to 2013 was 12.4%, almost double that of original members at 6.7%. As a consequence, the share of world trade of new Members increased from 7.8% in 1995 to 17.6% in 2013. This is not a standalone fact. This more rapid growth has contributed to global economic growth. All new Members, including those still in the process of negotiating their membership terms, have underlined the fact that a major reason, *inter alia*, for why they embark on accession negotiations is to use the process as an instrument for their domestic reforms and strengthen domestic governance by building strong institutions for law and policy.

4. On the average, it takes about a decade to conclude an accession, with some being concluded in less time, and others requiring more time. More broadly, because of the time and scope of these negotiations, I believe that the experiences from these negotiations carry very useful lessons for the negotiating leg of the tripod of the WTO. This is why in September 2013, I encouraged a stocktaking of the diverse experiences and outcomes from all accessions so far in a book to be published in 2015: "*WTO Accessions and Trade Multilateralism: Case Studies and Lessons for the WTO at Twenty*". There are contributions from Chief Negotiators of new and original Members, analysis from economists, lawyers, trade policy professionals and academics, from different institutions, to ensure objectivity, integrity of analysis and balance. I look forward to launching this book next year and reviewing the analysis together with Members. The purpose of such analysis is to find out what the Organization has achieved and ask are there lessons to be drawn more broadly. Surely, twenty years of accessions negotiations and 33 Accession Protocols hold systemic lessons for all.

5. More specific to the year under review, I have already alluded to the progress made. Although progress was achieved, it was accompanied by tough negotiating challenges in a year marked by geopolitical risks and turbulence that had complex effects on the pace and ability of the Organization to advance as rapidly as planned.

6. Progress on accessions in 2014 was defined by a range of key outcomes. In June, Yemen became a WTO Member, bringing the total number of Members to 160 and hence advancing the Organization closer to the goal

of trade universality. Prior to this, in March, the Draft Accession Package of Afghanistan emerged and was circulated to Members of the Working Party. The Draft Package of Afghanistan is stable. However, final consideration for adoption, by Members of the Working Party, awaits appropriate signalling from Kabul for re-engagement. The Accession Package of Seychelles is before you for adoption.

7. Progress was made on a number of other accessions with established Working Parties, such as The Bahamas and Algeria. I have been in contact with several Governments. It is important to know that beyond the 22 Working Parties where negotiations are on-going in different degrees, what is self-evident to me, in the various contacts, is that WTO membership holds a strong gravitational pull for governments. Acceding Governments have reaffirmed their commitment to WTO membership. Those that are active have intensified their technical negotiating engagement. I believe that the governments that continue to negotiate or those that have signalled their intention to apply for membership represent continued evidence that the WTO is an indispensable global public good to be safeguarded and strengthened.

8. Side-by-side with progress made, accession negotiations are complex and challenging. For instance, pursuant to the mandate in Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO, eligibility for WTO membership is for either states or separate customs territories. In the year under review, the accession negotiation of Kazakhstan, presented unique negotiating challenges, of the type that the Organization had never previously addressed. Kazakhstan, with the Russian Federation and Belarus, is party to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Treaty, which is scheduled to enter into force on 1 January 2015. The accession negotiations of Kazakhstan are addressing uniquely complex questions, associated with the integration and functioning of individual members of a Customs Union in a rules-based system founded on non-discrimination. Some of these questions include tariff adjustment and questions related to the relationship between different and complementary jurisdictions at national and customs union levels. The progress on these questions is a significant step forward for the Organization and a tribute to the pragmatism of Members to solve problems and the capacity of the Organization to deliver. Some of the approaches pursued and the results hold

useful lessons for multilateral negotiations in the WTO.

9. At a more technical level, this year, we improved on the tools for managing the work of the Organization on accessions. Creating an intelligent system that would make our work more accessible to Members and the user community was overdue. I initiated an "Accessions Intelligence Portal" (AIP). Several Divisions within the Secretariat are working on its development. I hope to launch it next year. The Annual Outreach Cycle with the range of "Constituency Groups" has improved on their delivery. The dialogue is more interactive and Q&A-based. Accession-specific technical assistance and capacity building are better tailored to the requirements of Acceding Governments. For instance, in all accessions, where there is serious and sustained technical engagement, I have requested staff to suggest a Road Map to the Acceding Government, which, if they own, provides a basis for facilitating their accession negotiations, efficiently. To support the Secretariat's efforts on technical assistance, I pay tribute to Australia, China, European Union (EU) and several of its individual Members, such as Sweden and Germany in particular, India, New Zealand, Oman and the United States (US).

10. Thematically, every year, these Annual Reports have a focus. Post-Accession is the thematic focus this year. There is a systemic need, demand-driven by some new Members, including Least Developed Members, for Post-Accession support. Such Post-Accession support is focused, primarily on implementation of accession-specific obligations in a rules-based system where membership is balanced on rights and obligations. An internal Secretariat platform was established in June this year to coordinate Secretariat Post-Accession support for new Members to assist them with the implementation of their obligations from day 1 of membership until their First Trade Policy Review (TPR), if they request such support. In the coming year, the Secretariat will work to improve on this platform.

11. The "business" of trade negotiations as illustrated in accession negotiations is challenging and complex, but the welfare gains and rewards are plentiful. For the progress made this year, I would like to express my appreciation to the Working Party Chairpersons, Members in the various Working Parties and Secretariat Staff, led by the Accessions Division that coordinates and facilitates this complex process.

## II. 2014 DEVELOPMENTS

### 1. ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES: AN OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

12. Twenty three (23) acceding governments were in the process of WTO accession, at the start of the year. These negotiations were managed through a combination of formal and/or informal multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral meetings (See Annex 1). In the year under review:

- Five (5) formal Working Party meetings were held. These were on the - accessions of: Algeria (one (1)<sup>1</sup> meeting); Azerbaijan (one (1)<sup>2</sup> meeting); Kazakhstan (one (1)<sup>3</sup> meeting); and Seychelles (two (2)<sup>4</sup> meetings), of which
- One (1) final formal Working Party meeting was convened on the Accession of Seychelles on 17 October 2014. At this meeting, the Draft Accession Package of Seychelles was adopted *ad referendum* by the Working Party;
- Three (3) informal Working Party meetings took place<sup>5</sup> in context of the accession of Kazakhstan, of which one special Transparency session on the Eurasian Economic Union Treaty was held in the context of the 19<sup>th</sup> Working Party on the accession of Kazakhstan<sup>6</sup>;
- At four (4) Technical Verification meetings the Consolidated Draft Schedules on Goods and Services of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Seychelles were verified; and,
- Thirteen (13) plurilateral meetings addressed specific technical issues such as in the areas of agriculture<sup>7</sup>; SPS<sup>8</sup>; and, tariff adjustment<sup>9</sup> on the

<sup>1</sup> 31 March 2014.

<sup>2</sup> 21 February 2014.

<sup>3</sup> 23 July 2014.

<sup>4</sup> 3 July and 17 October 2014.

<sup>5</sup> 26 September 2014 and 12 November 2014.

<sup>6</sup> 21 July 2014.

<sup>7</sup> 20 February 2014 in the context of the accession of Azerbaijan, 2 July 2014 in the context of the accession of Seychelles, 22 July and 10 November 2014 in the context of the accession of Kazakhstan.

<sup>8</sup> 25 June 2014 and 11 November 2014 in the context of the accession of Kazakhstan.

<sup>9</sup> 22 July 2014, 17 and 24 September 2014, 11 November 2014 in the context of the Accession of Kazakhstan.

accessions of Azerbaijan; Kazakhstan and Seychelles. The plurilateral meetings were chaired by the Secretariat<sup>10</sup>. Two (2) Small Group Consultations<sup>11</sup> on the Draft Working Party Report took place in the context of the accession of Kazakhstan, chaired by the WP Chairperson.

13. In 2014, progress was documented as follows:

- Draft Reports were revised by the Secretariat for four Working Parties – Afghanistan (one revision); Algeria (one revision); Kazakhstan (three revisions); and Seychelles (two revisions);
- Two (2) Draft Accession Packages were prepared by the Secretariat and circulated on the Accessions of Afghanistan and Seychelles, of which one (1) Draft Accession Package, of Seychelles, was adopted *ad referendum*, and the Package was re-issued in the WT/ACC- and General Council series, for formal action by the December 2014 WTO General Council.

### 2. WORKING PARTY CHAIRPERSONS

14. Two new Working Party Chairpersons were appointed in 2014. Following consultations with WTO Members, in July 2014 the Chairperson of the General Council announced<sup>12</sup> the appointments of:

- a. H.E. Ambassador Mehmet Haluk Ilicak (Turkey), as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Belarus; and
- b. H.E. Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi (Austria), as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Bhutan.

Background briefings for both new Chairpersons were organized by the Secretariat.

<sup>10</sup> Plurilateral meetings on Tariff Adjustment (22 July 2014, 24 September 2014 and 11 November 2014) in the context of the accession of Kazakhstan were chaired by the WP Chairperson.

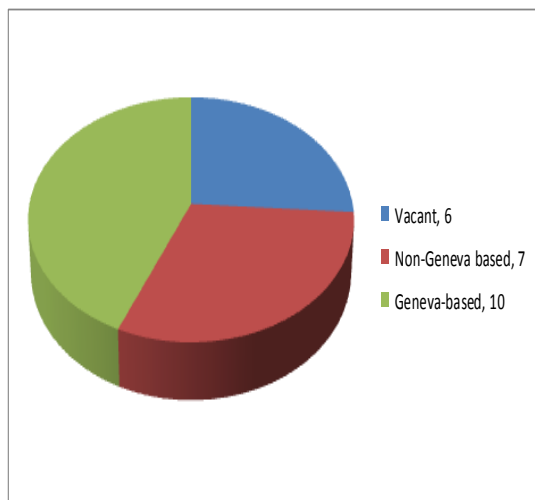
<sup>11</sup> 25 September 2014 and 10 November 2014.

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the General Council on 24-25 July 2014, contained in document WT/GC/M/152 of 9 October 2014.



15. At present, 58% (or 10) of the Chairpersons are Geneva-based (See Figure 1). There are six (6) Chairmanship vacancies (See Annex 3), which include vacancies on the accessions at the initial stages, where in most cases no documentary basis for work exists at this time.

**Figure 1 - Accession Working Party Chairmanships in 2014, by number**



16. In 2014, Working Party Chairpersons remained actively engaged. They met with representatives of Members and Acceding Governments in various formats and configurations. They facilitated the resolution of complex questions. They engaged in outreach to improve technical and policy understanding. The active engagement of Chairpersons advanced the process, including through country missions. In 2014, the Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Algeria, H.E. Ambassador Alberto D'Alotto (Argentina), visited Algiers from 18 to 21 October. There were meetings with high level authorities in Government and with the Negotiating Team, with the purpose of confirming high level political commitment advancing on the technical substance of Algeria's accession negotiations. In keeping with systemic transparency obligations, the Chairman of the Working Party reported to WTO Members on the results of his visit at the 9<sup>th</sup> Informal Group on Accessions, on 29 October.

### 3. TRANSPARENCY IN THE ACCESSION PROCESS

17. Ensuring transparency and predictability in the accession process remain key priorities for the Membership and the Secretariat. During 2014, the transparency measures that

were introduced since 2010, continued to be implemented and reinforced.

#### i. Informal Group on Accessions (IGA)

18. The Informal Group on Accessions<sup>13</sup> held 9 meetings<sup>14</sup> in 2014 (up until 24 November 2014)<sup>15</sup>. Consultations in the Informal Group were focused, as traditionally, the case, on: (i) information exchange on accessions; (ii) Secretariat reports to Members on technical developments in accession processes; (iii) reports to Members by Chairpersons of Working Parties on the results of their visits to Capitals of Acceding Governments; (iv) planning accession meetings and related activities, based on the Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings (ECAM) proposed by the Secretariat; and (v) addressing specific concerns raised by Members and Acceding Governments. Two additional items were introduced this year to the agenda of IGA meetings. These were: i) Accession Best Practices; and, ii) the Trade Growth Performance of Article XII Members; the latter a subject of thematic focus in the Director-General's Annual Reports on Accessions. The purpose of these two additional items were to make available, in particular for new Members and new delegates, the facts on systemic *best practices on accessions*, over time; and, underscore the domestic and global effects, with a bearing on WTO-consistent reforms.



IGA Meetings in 2014

<sup>13</sup> Chaired by the WTO Secretariat.

<sup>14</sup> 30 January 2014; 27 February 2014; 26 March 2014; 29 April 2014; 26 May 2014; 26 June 2014; 17 July 2014; 25 September 2014; and 29 October 2014.

<sup>15</sup> The 10<sup>th</sup> and final meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions is scheduled for 26 November 2014.

## ii. WTO Accessions Newsletter

19. The WTO Accessions Newsletter is designed to ensure transparency and enhance communication with Acceding Governments, Chairpersons, Members and the broader global trade policy community. It provides regular update on ongoing accessions through summary reports of IGA meetings. It has proven to be a useful tool for the dissemination of accession-related information and negotiating developments; and, the preparation and planning of accessions-related activities. This year, the Secretariat prepared 11 WTO Accessions Newsletters. The Newsletter is issued monthly. A special edition of the Newsletter is normally issued in the month of August; a month when Members do not meet in the IGA. This was also the case in August this year. The "August" Accessions Newsletter apprises Members and Acceding Governments of developments over the summer period and prepares them for activities *pour la rentrée*.

## iii. 2014 Annual Outreach Dialogue with WTO Regional Groups

20. In 2014, the Annual Outreach Dialogue with WTO Regional Groups comprised customized briefings for the Informal Group of Developing Countries<sup>16</sup>, the Latin-American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC)<sup>17</sup>, the African Group<sup>18</sup> and the Asian Group of Developing Members<sup>19</sup>. The objective of the Annual Outreach Dialogue is to strengthen communication channels with Members and Acceding Governments alike, through the Regional Groups. The briefings provide a platform to exchange region-specific information on WTO accessions; and respond to concerns by Members and Acceding Governments. They strengthen the collaboration between Members, Acceding Governments and the Secretariat.



Briefing on Accessions for GRULAC, 30 October 2014 and African Group, 7 November 2014

## 4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OUTREACH

21. The WTO Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan for 2014-2015 (hereinafter "the Plan") establishes support for Acceding Governments as one of its four overarching objectives<sup>20</sup>. The Plan grants priority attention to acceding Least-developed countries (LDCs).

22. Traditionally, accession-related technical assistance and capacity-building focus on training for government officials. These activities, however, also cover outreach and awareness-raising activities for Parliamentarians, the private sector, academia, civil society and the media.

23. In 2014, technical assistance and capacity-building activities included: (i) national seminars; (ii) sessions on accessions in advanced trade policy courses, regional courses and introductory courses for LDCs; (iii) workshops; (iv) technical missions; (v) establishment/upgrade of WTO Reference Centres; (vi) e-Learning; (vii) outreach dialogue with WTO groupings; and, (viii) participation in conferences. Customized briefings on accessions for delegations (including non-residents) were also provided during the 28<sup>th</sup> Geneva Week, held in May 2014.

24. In addition to these activity types of TA delivery, the Secretariat also initiated and/or participated in video conferences; telephone conferences; and dedicated electronic

<sup>16</sup> 7 May 2014 and 21 July 2014.

<sup>17</sup> 30 October 2014.

<sup>18</sup> 7 November 2014.

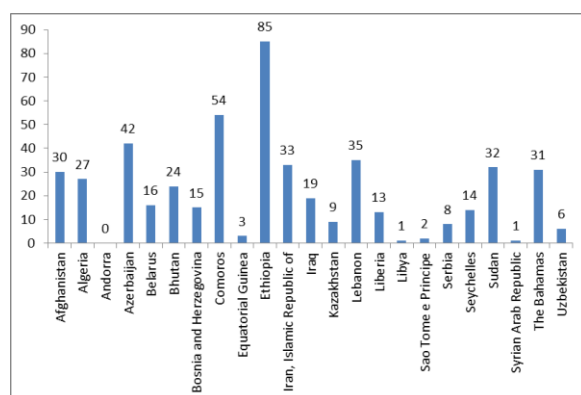
<sup>19</sup> 20 November 2014.

<sup>20</sup> WT/COMTD/W/200.

exchanges, in the supply of accession-related technical assistance and the formation of institutional partnerships. In the year under review, these modes of supply were used, for example, on the Accessions of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Liberia, Iraq, The Bahamas, and Seychelles.

25. In 2014, Acceding Governments were invited to participate in over 120 WTO TA activities. Five Acceding Governments acted as hosts for some of these activities. Table 1, below, records the number of participants from Acceding Governments that completed TA activities during 2014<sup>21</sup>.

**Table 1 - Participants from Acceding Governments in WTO TA Activities – 2014**



26. Accession-related TA and capacity-building were also provided by other institutions, and often in partnership with WTO Members. The Secretariat continues to work in a strong and effective partnership with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and the International Trade Centre (ITC). Activities have been coordinated with positive results.

27. In the year under review, the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) provided significant technical and capacity-building support in selected Acceding Governments and completed accessions. WTO accessions are currently in progress in the following EIF Countries: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Comoros, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sao Tomé and Príncipe<sup>22</sup> and Sudan. Vanuatu and Yemen acceded to the WTO in 2012 and 2014, respectively. The EIF is supporting the accession process in accordance to with countries' demands. The Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS, EIF flagship country reports highlighting trade

opportunities and constraints to trade integration) for Sao Tomé and Príncipe and Sudan which were completed in 2014, address WTO accession issues. Accession to the WTO is an important aspect of DTIS Updates for Comoros and Ethiopia which were launched in 2014. The EIF provides concrete support in Vanuatu and Yemen following their accession. In Yemen, the DTIS Update under way since 2013 includes the formulation of a "post-Accession" capacity development plan. In Vanuatu, the EIF helped to enhance the country's capacity to manage the "post-Accession" process. Beyond the DTIS and DTIS Updates, a number of countries use EIF funded projects to support accession. In Liberia, support for WTO accession is part of an EIF funded institutional capacity building project (extended for a second phase in May 2014) which for accession issues are closely coordinated with the Swedish National Board of Trade project. In the Comoros and Ethiopia, EIF funded institutional support projects are instrumental for capacity building for trade negotiations and outreach and awareness-raising on accession issues. The project for Ethiopia was launched in October 2014. The project in the Comoros was extended for a second phase in June 2014. Sao Tomé and Príncipe initiated the preparation of an institutional capacity building project in 2014, including activities through which legislation would be revised in light of the planned WTO accession.

i. WTO/ITC Joint Programme for Trade Capacity for Acceding LDCs

28. The Joint Programme for Trade Capacity for Acceding LDCs was launched by the WTO and the International Trade Centre (ITC) on 1 December 2009. This Joint Programme provides accession-specific technical assistance for the private sector, parliamentarians and government officials. The purpose is to enhance their understanding of the accession process and WTO Membership. During 2014, Afghanistan, Comoros, Ethiopia, Lao PDR, Liberia and Sudan benefited from this Joint Programme. The International Trade Centre remains proactive in accession-tailored support. It was instrumental into securing increased national awareness for WTO accession and high level political engagement. The coordinated partnership between ITC and the WTO Secretariat is vital in the delivery of technical assistance and capacity building. The two Secretariats will continue and improve on its coordinated partnership in the year to come.

<sup>21</sup> Data source: WTO TRTA Database (14 October 2014).

<sup>22</sup> The Working Party on the Accession of Sao Tomé and Príncipe is in suspension due to non-payment of assessed contributions.



## ii. China LDCs' and Accessions Programme

29. China's "Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Accessions Programme" (hereafter: China Programme) was established by the Government of China with the WTO on 14 July 2011. It was renewed and extended by the Government of China with a contribution of USD\$400,000 in December 2013.

30. The China Programme is aimed at strengthening LDCs' participation in the WTO and assisting LDCs acceding to the WTO. The China Programme comprises three main pillars: (a) the WTO Accessions Internship Programme; (b) an annual high-level WTO Accessions Round Table Meeting; and (c) support to improve the participation of officials of LDCs in WTO meetings.

31. With respect to the WTO Accessions Internship Programme, in the year under review, five interns benefited from this Programme. The programme admitted three interns from Members and two interns from Acceding Governments including one acceding LDC<sup>23</sup>.

32. Regarding, the annual high-level WTO Accessions Round Table Meeting, consultations have been underway on the venue, theme and programme for the Third High-Level Round Table (RT). It is expected that the details would be finalised and communicated to WTO Members shortly.<sup>24</sup>

## iii. Other Outreach Activities

33. Notably, a Geneva-based workshop for Iraqi Officials was organized in collaboration with the US Department of Commerce (17-21 March 2014). The country visit by Deputy Director-General David Shark and the Secretary of the Working Party provided impetus to the domestic efforts in Nassau. As

a consequence, Chief Negotiator Minister Pinder visited Geneva in June to meet with the Director-General and consult with a range of Members to take stock and identify "Next Steps".



*Seminar on WTO Accessions for Iraq, 17-21 March 2014*

34. As part of outreach, the Secretariat participated in the Astana Economic Forum (21-23 June 2014) and the High-Level "International Conference on Kazakhstan's Role in a Globalizing World: Trade and Investments" (3-5 September 2014). Furthermore, a specific seminar on the Multilateral Trading System was organized at the request of Comoros.



*Astana International Conference - 4 September 2014*

<sup>23</sup> The five interns are from China (Member), Kazakhstan (acceding Government), Liberia (acceding LDC), Nigeria (Member) and Uganda (LDC Member).

<sup>24</sup> The Thematic focus of the First China Roundtable was "Best Practices in the WTO Accession Process". This First Round Table, focused on LDCs, took place in Beijing, China from 29 May to 1 June 2012. The thematic focus of the Second China Round Table on WTO Accessions was on the: "Future of the Multilateral Trading System: Perspectives of LDCs and Article XII Members". It took place in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, from 15 to 18 October 2013.

## 5. ACCESSIONS TRANSPARENCY TOOLS BOX (ATTB)

### i. Accession Commitments Database (ACDB)

35. The Accessions Commitments Database (ACDB) provides access to all accession-

specific commitments and related information contained in Accession Working Party Reports and the Accession Protocols of the 32 Article XII Members. The ACDB is available in the three official languages of the WTO at: <http://acdb.wto.org>.

36. In 2014, the ACDB was updated to include the specific accession commitments as contained in the Accession Working Party Report of Yemen.

ii. Secretariat Register of Bilateral Market Access Agreements

37. 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, namely: the sector of the agreement (goods; services; or both, as applicable); and the dates of signature and deposit. Reports generated by this Register are available on the secure (i.e. password-protected) WTO Members' website.

38. In accordance with long-standing practice, the substantive content of Bilateral Market Access Agreements remains absolutely confidential to the parties that signed the Agreement, as well as the Secretariat with whom the Agreements are deposited.

iii. Easy access to draft laws (bills), Legislation and "Consultation Documents", notified as part of the WTO accession process

39. Accessions-related resources can be accessed on the secure (i.e. password-protected) WTO Members' website. The platform provides Members, for instance, with easy access to the electronic versions of legislation ("E-legislation link") and other "Consultation Documents" submitted by Acceding Governments, as part of their WTO accession process.

iv. WTO Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP)

40. In 2012, the WTO Accessions Division initiated the design and development of an enhanced Accessions Information Management System (AIMS), so as to achieve a modernized accessions website interface. The purpose of this project was to: (i) efficiently register and manage accession-related information; and (ii) provide easy access to accession documentation and data. In the test phase, the operational design of

the AIMS did not fully respond to the original concept. Changes were made, to relinquish the AIMS and embark on the Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP). The design concept of the AIP is superior in respect of integrating all relevant information and joining Members and the Secretariat on an advanced platform for information exchange.

41. As follow-up, in 2014, the Accessions Division, in partnership with the Information and External Relations Division, developed and designed the prototype of the modernized the "Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP)". The AIP has been designed to ensure data integrity by providing easier access to the WT/ACC-; WT/ACC/SPEC-; or JOB/ACC-documents, circulated as part of the WTO accession processes, as well as to internal documents, including but not limited to speaking notes of accession Working Party Chairpersons; delegation lists; statements by heads of delegations of acceding governments; and, with links to essential historical facts of all accessions.

42. When launched, the AIP interface will offer easier access to comprehensive accession-related information, which will include:

- a. general accession-relevant information, including the Accessions Transparency Tool Box (ATTB);
- b. a comprehensive overview of documentation and information related to each completed WTO accession process since 1995 - organized by Article XII Member; and
- c. accession-related information for active WTO accession negotiations - organized by the Acceding Government. The increased transparency and simplified access to relevant documents and data of active WTO accession processes should facilitate the work of the parties involved in the negotiations in question (i.e. WTO Members/Accession Working Party Members and Acceding Governments).

43. While the AIP will provide greater transparency, it will also ensure and safeguard the existing, agreed restriction levels of different types of negotiating inputs, documents and information. Therefore, certain accession information and documentation shall remain restricted and only available to relevant parties through a secure (i.e. password-protected) access. This would include, for instance, but would not be limited to, documentation and data linked to active WTO accession negotiations.

44. Since 2009 specifically, the Accessions Division, in close coordination with WTO Members, has stepped up its efforts to enhance and further improve transparency on WTO accessions. The new "Accession Intelligence Portal (AIP)" will be yet another component of this "Accession Transparency Initiative" and shall be launched as part of the activities of the 20th Anniversary of the Organization in 2015. There will always be scope to do more and improve. This is only one more step in a rapidly changing policy and operational environment that generates ever greater demands for openness and transparency to ensure sustainability.

### III. STATE-OF-PLAY IN ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES

45. WTO accessions advance on the basis of interdependent tracks of multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral negotiations. In the period under review, the Accession of Seychelles was concluded at the level of the Working Party and shall be on the formal agenda of the December 2014 General Council. While some accessions progressed considerably in 2014, others have not advanced as planned due to a range of factors, including, but not limited to, continued negotiations with Members; technical complexities; domestic challenges; political choices to delay for more impact analysis, for example, re-ordered priorities, and/or immediate post-conflict situations.

46. Afghanistan: Afghanistan applied for WTO accession in November 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan was established in December 2004. The fourth meeting of the Working Party was held in July 2013. This accession is queued up for conclusion. The Draft Accession Package of Afghanistan was circulated in March 2014. The Draft Accession Package contains the draft Working Party Report, the draft Decision of the General Council and the draft Accession Protocol; and, the Consolidated Draft Goods and Services

Schedules. The next meeting of the Working Party, which was postponed at the request of Kabul, is envisaged to be the final one. The purpose of the meeting would be to adopt the Draft Accession Package, *ad referendum*. However, before this meeting, updates may be required on the Draft Accession Package because of the passage of time since circulation in March 2014.



Accession of Afghanistan - Technical Verification Meeting -  
27 February 2014

47. Algeria: Algeria applied for WTO accession in June 1987. The Working Party on the Accession of Algeria was established in June 1987. The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Party was held in March 2014. The latest version of the Draft Working Party Report was circulated in February 2014. Bilateral market access negotiations are ongoing with interested Members on the basis of revised market access offers on goods, circulated in November 2013; and services, circulated in October 2013. Six bilateral market access agreements have been concluded (Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Switzerland, Uruguay and Venezuela). The next meeting of the Working Party will be convened after a complete set of updated technical inputs have been submitted by the Acceding Government, processed by the Secretariat and Members have had, at the minimum, four weeks to review the updated inputs. The Chairman of the Working Party undertook a visit to Algeria in October 2014. The Chairman reported to Members in the Informal Group on Accessions on the results of his visit on 29 October 2014.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> JOB/ACC/47.





12<sup>th</sup> Working Party Meeting on the Accession of Algeria -  
31 March 2014

48. Andorra: The Working Party held its first and only meeting in October 1999. This accession process is inactive, and there are no indications of any intentions to re-start the process.

49. Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan applied for WTO accession in June 1997. The Working Party on the Accession of Azerbaijan was established in July 1997. The 11th meeting of the Working Party was held in February 2014. Multilateral negotiations are under way on the basis of a Draft Working Party Report, circulated in December 2012. Bilateral market access negotiations with interested Members are ongoing on the basis of revised market access offers on goods, circulated in September 2013, and on services, circulated on in October 2013. Four bilateral agreements have been deposited with the Secretariat (Kyrgyz Republic, Oman, Turkey and United Arab Emirates).



Accession of Azerbaijan - 11<sup>th</sup> Working Party Meeting -  
21 February 2014

50. The Bahamas: The Bahamas applied for WTO accession on in May 2001. The Working Party on the Accession of The Bahamas was established in July 2001. The Second Working Party meeting was held in June 2012. A Factual Summary was sent to Nassau for factual updates in August 2013. Nassau's feedback is still pending. Deputy Director-General David Shark undertook on a High Level Accession Mission to The Bahamas from 9 to 11 April 2014, accompanied by the Secretary of the Working Party. DDG Shark met with key stakeholders, led by Minister Pinder (Ministry of Financial Services, Chief Negotiator). The outcomes of this Mission were reported at the Informal Group on Accession in April 2014. In June/July 2014, Minister Pinder visited Geneva to meet with a group of WTO Members to take stock of the state-of-play on the WTO accession negotiation of The Bahamas and to set-out for Members the plans and Road Map of Nassau for the Accession of the Bahamas. Minister Pinder also met with the Director-General to discuss the state-of-play. The next meeting of the Working Party will be subject to the receipt of required Negotiating Inputs and the Factual Summary from Nassau. Required Negotiating Inputs from Nassau include an updated Legislative Action Plan (LAP); and revised Market Access Offers on Goods and Services.



NASSAU, The Bahamas - 9 April 2014. High Level Accession Mission to The Bahamas led by DDG David Shark. Meeting with The Hon. Ryan Pinder, Minister of Financial Services

51. Belarus: Belarus applied for WTO accession in September 1993. The Working Party on the Accession of Belarus was established in October 1993. The seventh meeting of the Working Party was held in May 2005. Informal Consultations by the Chairperson took place in 2010, 2012 and 2013. The latest version of the Factual Summary of Points Raised was circulated in November 2012. One bilateral market access agreement (with Cuba) has been deposited



with the Secretariat. At the Informal Consultations, Belarus was asked to submit a complete set of updated technical inputs. The Secretariat was mandated to revise the Factual Summary on the basis of these inputs. Belarus was also asked to submit revised market access offers for goods and services. On 28 October 2014, the Chairman of the Working Party Ambassador Haluk Ilıcak (Turkey) met with H.E. Mr. Aleksandr Guryanov, Deputy Foreign Minister and WTO Chief Negotiator for Belarus. The meeting took stock of the state-of-play. Required negotiating inputs were identified. These included: i) an updated Factual Summary, which would serve as a basis for a future Draft Working Party Report; ii) an updated Legislative Action Plan; and, iii) revised market access offers that would take account of all CU-related market access developments so far and bilateral market access agreements that may have been concluded and signed by Belarus. Belarus reaffirmed its commitment to reactivate its accession, fully, effectively and sustainably in light of the imminent conclusion of the Accession of Kazakhstan and the entry into force of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Treaty on 1 January 2015. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Working Party would consult with Members of the Working Party to decide on "Next Steps".

52. Bhutan: Bhutan applied for WTO accession in September 1999. The Working Party on the Accession of Bhutan was established in October 1999. The fourth meeting of the Working Party was held in January 2008. The latest market access offers on goods and services were circulated in November 2007. The latest version of the Draft Working Party Report was circulated in December 2007. The Secretariat prepared a revision of the draft Report in 2008, but Bhutan is yet to submit its comments on the revised draft. Although this accession is *de facto* inactive, Mr. Lyonpo Norbu Wangchuk, Minister for Economic Affairs met with the WTO Director-General on 13 October 2014 for an exchange of views, including on questions related to the state-of-play on its WTO accession. At that meeting, the Minister confirmed Bhutan's plan to join the WTO, and emphasized the need for capacity building and awareness about the WTO in the country. The Director-General indicated that the Secretariat stood ready to assist Bhutan to the extent possible in the process leading to the country's accession to the WTO.

53. Bosnia and Herzegovina: Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for WTO accession in May 1999. The Working Party on the Accession of

Bosnia and Herzegovina was established in July 1999. The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Party was held in June 2013. The latest version of the Draft Working Party Report was circulated in May 2013. Eleven (11) bilateral agreements have been deposited with the Secretariat on goods (Canada, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, the European Union, Honduras, India, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Norway and Switzerland); and seven (7) bilateral agreements deposited on services (Canada, the European Union, India, Japan, Korea, Norway and Switzerland). Bilateral market access negotiations with other interested Members are ongoing. The next meeting of the Working Party would be convened when: (i) outstanding domestic legislative action pertaining to, *inter alia*, trading rights has been completed; (ii) work on the latest Draft Working Party Report has been finalized (pertaining to, *inter alia*, pricing policies; framework for making and enforcing policies; trading rights; government procurement; trade in civil aircraft; services; and agricultural policies); and (iii) substantial progress on the remaining bilateral market access negotiations has been registered.

54. The Union of the Comoros: The Union of the Comoros applied for WTO accession in March 2007. The Working Party on the Accession of the Union of the Comoros was established in October 2007. The first meeting of the Working Party will be convened after the Acceding Government completes its first cycle of Replies to questions from Members of the Working Party on the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime. The Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime was circulated in October 2013.



Meeting with the Delegation of Comoros - 13 November 2014

55. Equatorial Guinea: Equatorial Guinea applied for WTO accession in March 2007. The Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea was established in February 2008. Equatorial Guinea has not yet submitted its Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime to initiate the process of accession negotiations.

56. Ethiopia: Ethiopia applied for WTO accession in January 2003. The Working Party on the Accession of Ethiopia was established in February 2003. The third meeting of the Working Party was held in March 2012. At the meeting, the Working Party mandated the Secretariat to upgrade the Factual Summary of Points Raised to "Elements of a Draft Working Party Report". The next Working Party meeting would be convened once Ethiopia submits the inputs required for the preparation of the Elements of the Draft Working Party Report, and the Initial Market Access Offer on Services. At this stage, there is no multilateral activity in the Working Party on the Accession of Ethiopia. There is domestic preparatory activity to provide a platform for the re-engagement of Ethiopia when ready. Periodically, the Delegation of Ethiopia briefs Secretariat officials on domestic activity underway.

57. Islamic Republic of Iran: The Islamic Republic of Iran applied for WTO accession in July 1996. The Working Party on the Accession of the Islamic Republic of Iran was established in May 2005. The Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) was circulated in November 2009. In February 2010, questions from Members on the MFTR were forwarded to the Government of Iran. Technical inputs submitted by Iran, including the replies to Members' questions, were circulated in 2011. To convene the first meeting of the Working Party, consultations with Members would need to be undertaken by the Chairperson of the General Council for the designation of a Chairperson of the Working Party. The Islamic Republic of Iran has increased its contacts with the Secretariat and specifically requested that Members be urged to reach a consensus on the designation of a Chairperson for its Working Party, as soon as possible. There is domestic preparatory activity to provide a platform for the re-engagement of the Islamic Republic of Iran when a Chairperson is designated. Prior to that moment, the Secretariat continues to provide technical assistance and capacity-building support, either upon request, or as part of WTO Regional Activities.



*National Workshop on WTO Accessions - 16 to 19 November 2014, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran*

58. Iraq: Iraq applied for WTO accession in September 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Iraq was established in December 2004. The second meeting of the Working Party was held in April 2008. Iraq has provided a number of documentary inputs requested by the Working Party. Iraq has yet to submit its initial market access offers on goods and services. The next Working Party meeting would be scheduled as soon as Iraq submits its initial market access offers. In October 2014, the Government of Iraq decided to establish a permanent Trade Office in Geneva, to work exclusively on WTO accession, and appointed a commercial attaché to start contact and engagement with Members of the Working Party on the Accession of Iraq.



*Meeting with H.E. Ambassador Hilale, Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Iraq, 21 March 2014*

59. Kazakhstan: Kazakhstan applied for WTO accession in January 1996. The Working Party on the Accession of Kazakhstan was established in February 1996. The 19th Cycle of Meeting of the Working Party was held in July 2014. Since then, two Informal Cycles of Working Party meetings were held in September and November. The latest version of the Draft Working Party Report (DWPR)

was circulated in November 2014. The draft sections on "Ordinary Customs Duties", "Agricultural Policies" and "Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures" were considered in plurilateral format. On bilateral market access negotiations, 29 bilateral agreements on goods<sup>26</sup>; and 15 bilateral agreements on services<sup>27</sup> were deposited with the Secretariat in 2012. On goods, the fifth revision of the Consolidated Draft Goods Schedule is envisaged for circulation to Signatory Members in December 2014. On services, the Consolidated Draft Services Schedule was verified by the Signatory Members on 26 September 2014 and thereafter was circulated to Working Party Members. The draft accession package is expected to emerge over the next few weeks. A December 2014 cycle of meetings is envisaged.



Accession of Kazakhstan - 19<sup>th</sup> WP Meeting - 23 July 2014

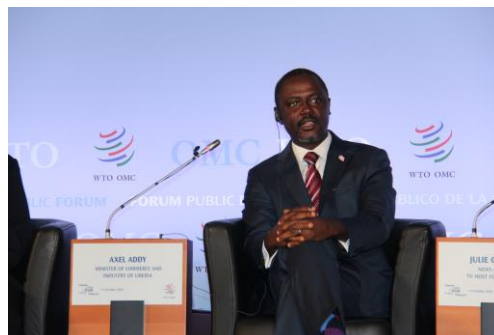
60. Lebanese Republic: The Lebanese Republic applied for WTO accession in January 1999. The Working Party on the Accession of the Lebanese Republic was established in April 1999. The seventh meeting of the Working Party was held in October 2009. The first revision of the Draft Working Party Report was circulated in October 2009. The latest

<sup>26</sup> Argentina; Australia; Brazil; Bulgaria; Canada; China; Cuba; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt; El Salvador; the European Union; Georgia; Guatemala; Honduras; India; Israel; Japan; Korea; Kyrgyz Republic; Malaysia; Mexico; Norway; Oman; Pakistan; Saudi Arabia; Switzerland; Turkey; and the United States.

<sup>27</sup> Australia; Brazil; China; Canada; Egypt; the European Union; India; Japan; Korea; Norway; Saudi Arabia; Switzerland; Chinese Taipei; Turkey and the United States.

revision of the market access offer on goods and services was circulated in June 2004. The next meeting of the Working Party will be convened after the Lebanese Republic submits the necessary inputs; above all an updated Legislative Action Plan (LAP) to indicate the enactment of laws and associated implementing regulations.

61. Liberia: Liberia applied for WTO accession in June 2007. The Working Party on the Accession of Liberia was established in December 2007. The First Meeting of the Working Party was held in July 2012. In May 2014, H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf communicated with Director-General Azevêdo, reaffirming Liberia's WTO accession as a priority for her Government with a goal of a 2015 completion. Since then, despite the public health challenge, Liberia's WTO accession technical work is steadily progressing. The Liberian Negotiating Team, led by Chief Negotiator, Minister Axel Addy, has engaged, technically, substantively and constructively, on the basis of a Road Map. Monrovia has submitted initial market access offers in goods and services, which have been circulated to Members of the WP. In accordance with longstanding accession market access best practices and the right of Members to request bilateral market access negotiations, Members of the WP on the Accession of Liberia, who so wish, have been invited to request bilateral market access negotiations with Liberia. However, the Director-General and the Chairman of the Working Party, together, have advised Members to be mindful of the negotiating circumstances of Liberia, exercise maximum restraint, *inter alia*, because of Liberia's LDCs' status and facilitate the accession negotiations of Liberia while ensuring WTO-consistent terms and conditions of membership. In appealing to WP Member, the Director-General and the Chairman of the WP have brought to the attention of Members the fact that the initial market access offers submitted by Liberia approximate and improve on market access opportunities hitherto by the 7 Article XII LDCs.



H.E. Minister Axel Addy (Liberia) - WTO Public Forum - 2 October 2014



62. Libya: Libya applied for WTO accession in June 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Libya was established in September 2004. The Working Party has never met. Libya has neither submitted a Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) nor initial market access offers, to initiate the process of accession negotiations.

63. Sao Tomé and Príncipe: Sao Tomé and Príncipe applied for WTO accession in February 2005. The Working Party on the Accession of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Príncipe was established in June 2005. Sao Tomé and Príncipe has neither submitted a Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) nor initial market access offers to initiate the process of accession negotiations. Sao Tomé and Príncipe is subject to Category III<sup>28</sup> administrative measures and therefore its Accession Working Party is in suspension until its debts are redeemed.

64. Serbia: Serbia applied for WTO accession in December 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Serbia was established in February 2005. The 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Party was held in June 2013. The latest version of the Draft Working Party Report was circulated in October 2012. Twelve (12) bilateral agreements on goods (Canada, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, the European Union, Honduras, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Norway, Panama and Switzerland) and nine (9) bilateral agreements on services (Canada, the European Union, India, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Norway, Panama and Switzerland) have been deposited with the Secretariat. Bilateral market access negotiations with other interested Members are ongoing. The next meeting of the Working Party would be convened when: (i) outstanding domestic legislative action (pertaining to, *inter alia*, commodity reserves; commodity exchange; GMOs; and services) has been completed by Serbia; (ii) work on the latest Draft Working Party Report has been finalized (including but not limited to trading rights; export regulations; government procurement; agricultural policies; trade in civil aircraft; notifications); and (iii) substantial progress on the remaining bilateral market access negotiations has been registered. The Negotiating Team in Belgrade is in technical contact with the Secretariat to provide updates on domestic activity preparatory to its substantive re-engagement.

65. Seychelles: Seychelles applied for WTO accession in May 1995. The Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Seychelles was established in July 1995. The Seventh and Final Meeting of the Working Party was held on 17 October 2014. At this meeting, the Draft Accession Package was adopted, *ad referendum*. The Working Party concluded its mandate and transmitted the Report of the Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Seychelles to the December 2014 General Council, for formal action.



*Final meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Seychelles - 17 October 2014*

66. Sudan: Sudan applied for WTO accession in October 1994. The Working Party on the Accession of Sudan was also established in October 1994. The Second meeting of the Working Party was held in March 2004. Two signed bilateral market access agreements were deposited with the Secretariat (Brazil and China). Updated technical Negotiating inputs are still pending, including a description of Constitutional changes after the independence of South Sudan in 2012. The Secretariat has been in technical contacts with Sudan to identify areas where updated materials and information are required. However, there is no substantive technical engagement by Sudan.

67. The Syrian Arab Republic: The Syrian Arab Republic applied for WTO accession in October 2001 and renewed its application in 2004, 2005, and 2010. The Working Party on the Accession of the Syrian Arab Republic was established in May 2010. No Working Party meeting has been held to date. The Syrian Arab Republic has neither submitted a Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime

<sup>28</sup> As of November 2014.



(MFTR) nor initial market access offers to initiate the process of accession negotiations.

68. Uzbekistan: Uzbekistan applied for WTO accession in December 1994. The Working Party on the Accession of Uzbekistan was also established in December 1994. The Third Meeting of the Working Party took place in October 2005. This accession is dormant.

#### IV. LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES' ACCESSIONS

69. The year 2014 has been active for a number of LDCs. On 26 June 2014, Yemen, an LDC, became the 160<sup>th</sup> WTO Member. Eight<sup>29</sup> other LDCs are at various stages in their accession process.

70. In the year under review, Afghanistan and Liberia were active. Bhutan, Comoros, Ethiopia and Sudan have been in contact with the Secretariat. However, at the multilateral level of the Working Parties, there was no substantive technical engagement on these dossiers. Equatorial Guinea remains dormant while Sao Tomé and Príncipe is still under Category III of Administrative Measures.

71. Afghanistan concluded substantive work on its accession process. Signatory Members concluded the Technical Verification of the consolidated Draft Goods and Services Schedules, on 27 February 2014. The Draft Accession Package was circulated to the Membership on 3 March 2014. The Secretariat awaits a signal from the Government of Afghanistan to convene the next and final Working Party meeting where it is expected that the Working Party will consider the entire Draft Accession Package for adoption *ad referendum*, with any updates that may be required with the passage of time. When adopted the Draft Accession Package will be forwarded to the General Council for a formal decision.

72. At the 24 July General Council meeting, Liberia conveyed to the Membership the high-level political commitment of the Government to conclude Liberia's Accession to the WTO in 2015. It has noted that undeterred by the public health challenges, domestic preparatory work and substantive technical engagement with the Secretariat are progressing rapidly on its accession dossier.



*H.E. Mr. Axel Addy, Trade Minister of Liberia and Mr. Nagib Hamim (Yemen) making a statement at the July 2014 General Council*

73. LDCs are constrained by limited human and resource capacities. In response, to support LDCs' accessions, the Secretariat provides tailored technical assistance to acceding LDCs at all stages of their WTO accession process. This year, as in previous years, technical assistance was provided to acceding LDCs through interactions with delegations in Geneva or in Capitals. This customized assistance is being improved and refined in several ways. For instance, accession-specific 2 to 3-day training sessions have been developed to train entire LDCs' Negotiating Teams. These are timed to coincide with their scheduled Working Party Cycles.

74. In addition to in-house Secretariat support, Members have continued to provide technical support for LDC Accessions. This includes, amongst others, capacity-building on the platform of the China "Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) and Accessions Programme". So far, eleven (11) China Accession interns have been trained. The "China Programme" has been extended for another year.

75. Several other WTO Members continue to sustain and upgrade their capacity-building and technical support for Acceding LDCs. Some do, nationally, others on the platform of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF). Steady support has been extended from Australia, Brazil, Canada, European Union (including individual Member States), India, New Zealand and the United States.

76. In 2012, the General Council adopted the Addendum to WT/L/508 to strengthen, streamline and operationalize the Guidelines on LDCs' Accessions.<sup>30</sup> Members are mindful of these Guidelines in on-going active LDCs' accessions. The Director-General has underscored the vital importance of Members to be cognizant of these Guidelines in facilitating negotiations with LDCs and in

<sup>29</sup> Afghanistan, Bhutan, the Union of the Comoros, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Sao Tomé and Príncipe and Sudan.

<sup>30</sup> WT/L/508/Add.1, 30 July 2012.

particular, at this time, in the accession negotiations of Liberia.

## **V. POST-ACCESSION: PERFORMANCE AND SUPPORT FOR ARTICLE XII MEMBERS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

77. WTO accession is a tool for domestic reform and integration into the rules-based Multilateral Trading System and the global economy. These reforms have assisted Acceding Government adjust their domestic economy to global best practices. The WTO accession process and resulting Membership carry significant trade and development benefits. All countries that have navigated the process have enhanced their economic welfare and prospered, as suggested in Section VI of this Report on Trade and Economic Performance of Article XII Members. The process has provided impetus not only for economic modernization and growth, but also the rule of law and good governance from a systemic point of view.

78. Yet, it is a uniquely challenging process because it is linked to a system of long-term domestic reforms. Also WTO Membership does not automatically lead to trade-related development. Enjoyment of the benefits of Membership is inter-dependent with sustained domestic reforms and implementation of the obligations and commitments of Membership, including those that are accession-specific. Reforms associated with accession negotiations themselves do not mark the end of the reform process but the end of one stage and the start of another.<sup>31</sup>

79. After 32 completed accessions, the evidence suggests that new Members require "post-Accession" support to adjust to the balance and rights and obligations of, and full benefit from Membership. Exploring how best to provide and improve on this "post-Accession" support and how new Members have performed constitute a central focus for this year's 2014 Director-General's Annual Report on WTO Accession.

80. The focus of the treatment of the question of "post-Accession" support is to

identify operational challenges in the immediate "post-Accession" period, explore how to best tackle those challenges, and what technical assistance could be provided in response.

### **2. CONCEPT OF POST-ACCESSION**

81. The concept of "post-Accession" is virtually wholly hinged on implementation. It turns on how best, systemic support can be provided, including on request, for the implementation of the obligations of Article XII Members, in a rules-based system, structured on a balance of rights and obligations. So far, regardless of levels of development and even though Article XII Members rank amongst the most technically able delegations because of extended periods of accession negotiations, virtually all Article XII Members have requested that the Secretariat provide "post-Accession" support, principally to further buttress their technical capacity in the initial period of Membership. There are also the particular "post-Accession" challenges that emerge from the very nature of WTO accessions pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO.

82. The challenges in the immediate "post-Accession" phase tend to manifest on two fronts: i) ensuring continued buy-in from all domestic constituencies, including members of parliament who, in most cases, have to ratify the accession protocol; and ii) re-focusing the mandate of the Negotiating Team to implementation of obligations and accepting the responsibilities of Membership to safeguard the rules-based system of which it is now a Member.

### **3. ARTICLE XII MEMBERS' IMMEDIATE POST-ACCESSION OPERATIONAL SUPPORT**

83. New WTO Members tend to be confronted with a range of operational tasks, immediately, "post-Accession". The questions for many are the same: what next; what should we do; where do we go; how can start to "enjoy" the benefits of membership? The operational and policy challenge that face new WTO Members, *inter alia*, is to: i) re-focus from negotiations to implementation of accepted obligations, including through deeper capacity-building; ii) deepen internal coordination; and, iii) enhance information dissemination, particularly with regard to demonstrating the benefits of Membership. These are constant recurring points for

<sup>31</sup> H.E. Dr. Nam Viyaketh, former Minister of Industry and Commerce of Lao PDR said at the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Lao PDR that "Lao PDR is convinced that joining the WTO is not an end in itself, but the beginning of the road to lead our economy into full integration into the Multilateral Trading System."

transition from Acceding Government status to Membership.

### 3.1 Internal Coordination

84. There are no templates for "post-Accession" support. However, as a starting point, Article XII Members are encouraged to establish a "National WTO Implementation Strategy". The essence of this is to have a vision of WTO Membership and implementation of obligations and exercise of the rights of Membership.<sup>32</sup> Specifically, such an implementation strategy could be elaborated hereunder in the indicative Checklist Box for internal coordination.

#### INDICATIVE CHECKLIST BOX FOR INTERNAL COORDINATION

- Adjusting domestic institutional structure to cope with/target "post-Accession" challenges – rather than accession negotiation challenges.
- Linking stakeholders within the government (intra-ministry and executive with legislative branches), between the public and private sectors, and between the government and trading partners, through a proper consultative mechanisms.
- Establishing a transparent coordination mechanism amongst all the relevant stakeholders to achieve regular horizontal communication at the technical level, this could substantially reduce the governance management risks.
- Establishing WTO contact points in all the Ministries and government authorities.
- Establishing a representative office in Geneva (if this does not already exist).
- Developing a central registry notification system (e.g. at the Ministry of Trade in close collaboration with other line Ministries).
- Familiarization and implementation of notification requirements.
- Mobilizing and directing limited resources to the targeted areas of trade policy (within the framework of a trade and development agenda).
- Requiring complementary actions, including macroeconomic reforms, adjustment assistance, and training.

### 3.2 Information Dissemination

85. It is essential to undertake a factual dissemination of WTO-related information to all stakeholders. Focus on implementation and elaboration of associated benefits is an on-going effort. The process does not stop at the conclusion of accession negotiations. "Post-Accession" outreach and technical support are just as relevant. It is crucial to raise business sector awareness of opportunities derived from the WTO Membership.

86. Internally, within the Secretariat a platform has been created for Post-Accession support. This platform establishes a coordinated base for providing support for implementation of obligations assumed by the new Member. Forward action on accession-specific commitments is assumed by the Divisions with competent jurisdiction.

87. Other platforms of "post-Accession" outreach support include the invitation to new Members to join the Informal Group on Accessions and participate; the Secretariat Accession Newsletter; the Accessions Commitments Database; the soon-to-be-launched Accessions Intelligence Portal; and, direct interaction between the new Member and Secretariat Divisions.

### 3.3 Multilateral Post-Accession Support

88. Multilaterally, from the Secretariat, "post-Accession" support is provided in two stages:

- Stage 1 – *immediate* "post-Accession"; and,
- Stage 2 – in the "transition period" – from Day 1 of Membership until the new Members' First Trade Policy Review (TPR).

89. In reality, these stages are not clear-cut, and may vary amongst different Article XII Members. From the perspective of Acceding Governments, the staging of "post-Accession" support enables them to better organize for a proactive engagement in the system and to address and resolve the issues based on the experience of previous Article XII Members.

#### Stage 1 – Immediate "post-Accession"

90. "Post-Accession" preparations and implementation should start immediately.

<sup>32</sup> This is an idea originating from the Second China Round Table, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, 15 to 18 October 2013.

Immediate planning by Article XII Members for the next steps that need to be taken to realize the full potential provided by Membership is important. It is to be noted that LDCs have made a case for "post-Accession" support with regard to the implementation of commitments Article XII LDCs have undertaken as part of their WTO accession terms and conditions.<sup>33</sup>

91. At the immediate "post-Accession" stage, it is useful for Article XII Members, including Article XII LDCs to develop an "own plan" for "post-Accession". The implementation of this "own plan" should be based on a technically competent well-staffed mission to the WTO. The flow of information from the WTO (and its environment) *via* the Permanent Mission in Geneva and back to capitals should be well organized in order to provide a sound basis for decision-making.

92. In general, the Permanent Mission of Geneva for any Member of the WTO is essential in "translating" the dynamics of daily WTO business and "interfacing" between Geneva and domestic stakeholders in the capital. This process of distribution of information and interface with the capital is crucial for Article XII Members who have just acceded to the WTO.

93. Operationally, the principal activities of the new Member's mission in the immediate "post-Accession" stage is to participate in the work of regular WTO bodies (Committees, Councils, and Working Groups); and, engagement in the Doha Negotiations.

94. Consistent attendance and participation at meetings of regular WTO bodies is a simple but effective approach for building immediate "post-Accession" competence in the regular work of the Organization. Experience has consistently indicated that attendance and effective participation at meetings is the most reliable and effective form of building immediate "post-Accession" capacity and deep knowledge of the WTO. Systemic participation by Article XII Members in on-going Accession Working Parties on Accessions is encouraged. Such participation is useful for shared experiences that enable the recently acceded to support those still in the process.

Stage 2 – "transition period" – between Day 1 and New Members' First Trade Policy Review (TPR)

95. For new Members, the period leading up to the First Trade Policy Review is critical. In this period, new Members would focus on implementation, including the obligations associated with action plan-based transition periods and developing their "habits" for membership to pursue their interests and safeguard the rules-based trading system. At the First TPR, the focus of Members is on the implementation of obligations and any assistance the new Member may require in areas where implementation is lagging. The objective of new Members in this period leading up to the First TPR is to ensure that they have a good story to tell at their TPR. These are positive signals for the trade and investment community.

96. The Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM) is a key part of the functioning of the rules-based Multilateral Trading System. Table 2 summarizes the TPR participation of 22 of the 32 Article XII Members that have undergone TPRs. As indicated, in spite of the key importance of the TPR for all Members, calendar pressures and resource constraints have delayed some of the TPRs. As of September 2014, 10 Article XII Members are yet to be reviewed. An area of possible assistance would be to assist the timely scheduling of TPRs for new Article XII Members. This entails enhanced resources for the TPRD.

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<sup>33</sup> Proposal for the establishment of a work programme on "post-Accession" for recently acceded LDCs, submission by the LDC Group, Sub-Committee on Least developed countries, WT/COMTD/LDC/W/50, 21 April 2011.



**TABLE 2 - ARTICLE XII MEMBERS AND THEIR TRADE POLICIES REVIEW**

Government*	Membership Date	Year of the First Trade Policies Review Meeting	Years of the Subsequent Trade Policies Review Meetings	Total No. of Trade Policies Review Meetings since Membership
1. Ecuador	21/01/1996	2005	2011	2
2. Bulgaria	01/12/1996	2003 <sup>+</sup>	2009, 2011, 2013	4
3. Mongolia	29/01/1997	2005	2014	2
4. Panama	06/09/1997	2007	2014	2
5. Kyrgyz Republic	20/12/1998	2006	2013	2
6. Latvia	10/02/1999	2004*	2007, 2009, 2011, 2013	5
7. Estonia	13/11/1999	2004*	2007, 2009, 2011, 2013	5
8. Jordan	11/04/2000	2008	None yet	1
9. Georgia	14/06/2000	2009	None yet	1
10. Albania	08/09/2000	2010	None yet	1
11. Oman	09 /11/2000	2008	2014	2
12. Croatia	30/11/2000	2010	None yet	1
13. Lithuania	31/05/2001	2004*	2007, 2009, 2011, 2013	5
14. Moldova	26/07/2001	None yet	None yet	0
15. China	11/12/2001	2006	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014	5
16. Chinese Taipei	01/01/2002	2006	2010, 2014	3
17. Armenia	05/02/2003	2010	None yet	1
18. FYROM	04/04/2003	2013	None yet	1
19. Nepal	23/04/2004	2012	None yet	1
20. Cambodia	13/10/2004	2011	None yet	1
21. Saudi Arabia	11/12/2005	2012	None yet	1
22. Viet Nam	11/01/2007	2013	None yet	1
23. Tonga	27/07/2007	2014	None yet	1
24. Ukraine	16/05/2008	None yet	None yet	0
25. Cape Verde	23/07/2008	None yet	None yet	0
26. Montenegro	29/04/2012	None yet	None yet	0
27. Samoa	10/05/2012	None yet	None yet	0
28. Russian Federation	22/08/2012	None yet	None yet	0
29. Vanuatu	24/08/2012	None yet	None yet	0
30. Lao PDR	02/02/2013	None yet	None yet	0
31. Tajikistan	02/03/2013	None yet	None yet	0
32. Yemen	26/06/2014	None yet	None yet	0

<sup>+</sup> Before Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007.

\* Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania joined the EU in 2004, and their first and subsequent TPR meetings have been under the membership of the EU.

#### **4. POST-ACCESSION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR ARTICLE XII MEMBERS**

97. The principal responsibility for the operational challenges faced by new Article XII Members lie within their jurisdiction. "Post-Accession" behaviour and performance largely depends on a strategy for *ownership* that the new Article XII Member may have designed and put in place, including with possible support from its partners. Also, as already indicated there is a role for technical assistance and capacity building programmes by the Secretariat that, in coordination and upon request, could be provided to support the "post-Accession" needs of new Article XII Members. There is also a role that can be played by prior Article XII Members who could facilitate the transition of newer Article XII Members by sharing their experiences

and reviewing routine best practices in the immediate "post-Accession" stage.

98. In the past few years, the Secretariat has developed a comprehensive Accessions Tool Box that provides sound technical support to both Acceding Governments and new Article XII Members in their immediate "post-Accession" phase.

99. The Secretariat has worked to improve internal coordination for the provision of support for new Article XII Members in the immediate "post-Accession" stage. This coordinated exercise is based on the platform of a "Post-Accession Secretariat Implementation and Monitoring Note". The specific purpose is to: i) support new Members, in the implementation of their "accession-specific commitments"; and ii) track and monitor progress. The internal platform provides a sounder technical basis

for providing support for Article XII Members and improving the Secretariat's assistance in respect of their accession-specific obligation.

100. Upon accession, new Article XII Members are invited to participate in the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA). The balance and quality in the exchange of views in the IGA have been improved with the participation of new Members. They continue to share their experiences, provide information on the benefits of WTO-consistent domestic reforms and, have contributed to the cross-cutting Membership partnership to safeguard and strengthen the rules-based Multilateral Trading System.

101. The Accession Commitments Database (ACDB) was launched in 2012<sup>1</sup>. It provides an inventory on accession-specific commitments, now integral to the "WTO Agreement" and related information contained in the Working Party Reports and the Accession Protocols of the Members that have acceded to the WTO pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO. The ACDB has become invaluable to Governments still in the process of negotiating their Membership and to the new Article XII Members to keep track of their obligations that they need to implement. This cannot be taken for granted in the ever-changing composition of delegations.

102. Technical assistance and capacity building support remain indispensable. A range of complementary assistance has been provided by several Members in particular Australia, Brazil, China, European Union, India, New Zealand, Oman and the United States.

103. "Post-Accession" technical assistance is essentially demand-driven. A "post-Accession" strategy and roadmap, designed by Article XII Members, who need such assistance, would serve to focus attention on the specific areas where assistance could be provided and who could best provide such assistance. A reliable source of inputs to "post-Accession" support can be found in "Action Plans" in Accession Working Party Reports, negotiated and agreed with Working Party Members.

104. Addressing technical assistance needs in a structured and transparent way will raise overall confidence in the work of Article XII Members and give a clear indication of the intention to derive benefits from effective

participation and implementation of Membership obligations.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

105. The tangible benefits of WTO accession accrue from full and effective implementation of Membership obligations, including those that are accession-specific-negotiated and agreed pursuant to Article XII accession negotiations. A "post-Accession" strategy and support are required in the immediate "post-Accession" stage to accompany the new Members as they proceed with the implementation of obligations and specific commitments.

106. Furthermore, "post-Accession" support should be designed to deepen the integration and participation of new Article XII Members in the rules-based Multilateral Trading System, constructively and credibly.

107. Previously, while the Secretariat and the Membership tended to focus on Acceding Governments up until the conclusion of accession negotiations, it is more and more evident that attention and support are required in the immediate "post-Accession" phase. Newer Members have combined both requests and appeals to the Secretariat to provide targeted coordinated immediate post-accession support.

## VI. TRADE AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF ARTICLE XII MEMBERS<sup>2</sup>

108. In the period 1995 to 2013, the value of world trade in goods and services increased by 264% at an average annual growth rate of 7.4%. These performance metrics, though registering a positive general trend, concealed a diverse situation. Over the same period, the share of world trade in goods and services which originated in or was destined to WTO's Original Members' markets reduced from 90.9% to 80.1%. The reach of the rules-based Multilateral Trading System (MTS) on world trade expanded from 90.9% to 97.7%. Article XII negotiations results are central for explaining, in part, these changes.

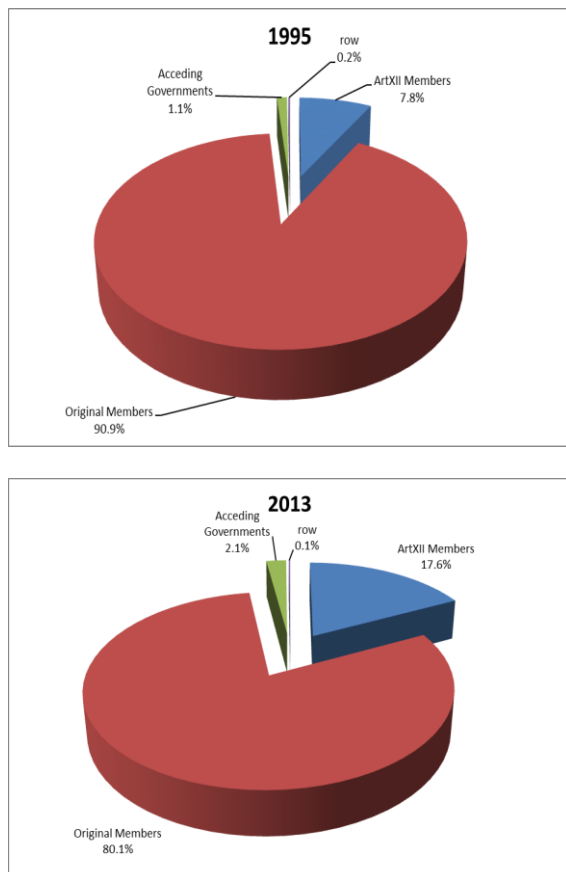
109. An important result is the addition of the 32 Article XII Members' share of world trade as part of trade conducted under the Multilateral Trading System. Figure 2 shows that while Article XII Members' share of world trade increased from 7.8% in 1995 to

<sup>1</sup> <http://acdb.wto.org/index.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> See Annex 5 of this Report.

17.6% in 2013; the share of world trade of Original Members decreased from 90.9% in 1995 to 80.1% in 2013. Although these static measures quantify market shares, they do not fully characterize the dynamics of the evolution of market shares.

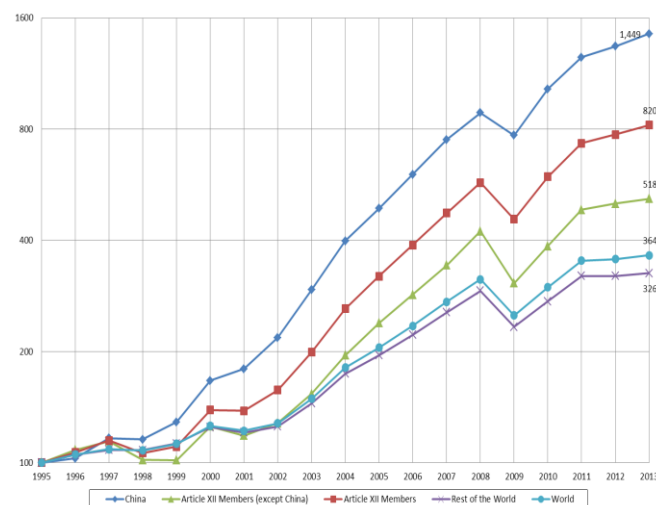
**Figure 2 - Share of World Trade by Membership Status**



110. Figure 3 shows that, in the period 1995 to 2013, the velocity of trade growth that was registered by Article XII Members (720%) was substantially higher than that of Original Members (221%). Even with the largest Article XII Member by trade value (China), excluded, Article XII Members' share of world trade grew by 418%. A salient element which emerged from this statistical analysis was that 26 of the 32 Article XII Members have outperformed Original Members in trade growth.

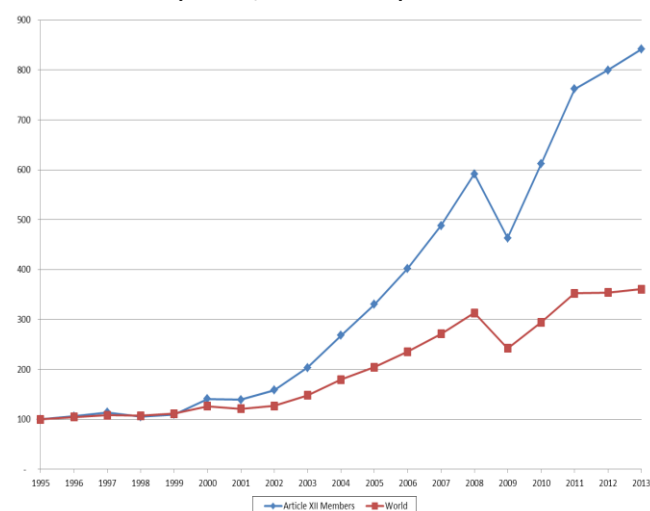
111. Overall, Article XII Members have recorded more rapid economic and trade growth, as shown in Tables 4 and 5.

**Figure 3 - Share of World Trade by Membership Status**



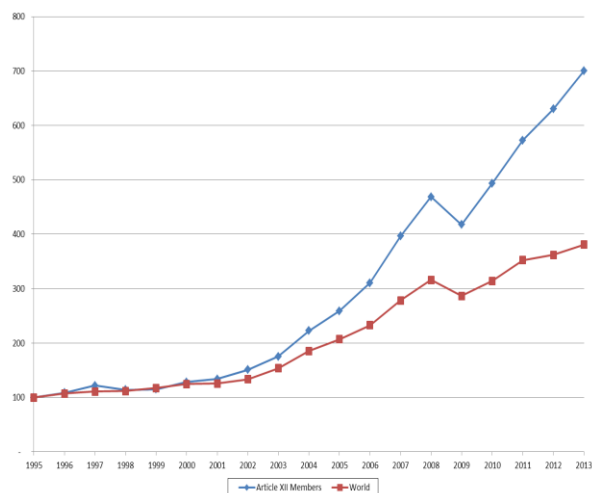
112. Figure 4 and Figure 5 show that, in the period 1995 to 2013, trade in goods and services of Article XII Members registered average annual growth rates of 12.6% and 11.4%, respectively. This was faster than the growth of global trade in goods and services, which expanded at rates of 7.4% and 7.7%. In the period between 1995 and 2013, the value of merchandise trade of Article XII Members rose by approximately 740%, in contrast to world trade that increased by approximately 260%. Even if China, a major trader, is excluded from the calculations, the trend remains. In other words, the trade growth of Article XII Members is faster than that of the rest of the world.

**Figure 4 - Value of total merchandise trade of Article XII Members: 1995-2013**  
(Index, 1995=100)



Source: WTO Statistics Database

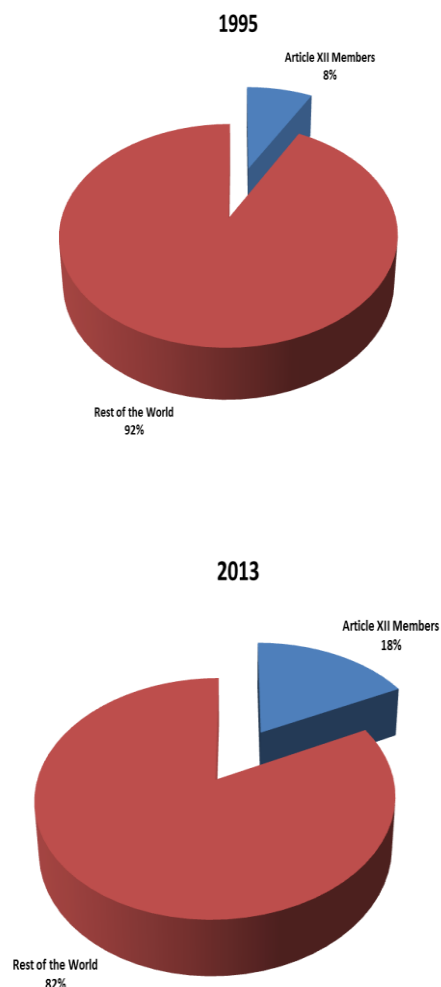
**Figure 5 - Value of total trade in commercial services of Article XII Members: 1995-2013**  
(Index, 1995=100)



Source: *WTO Statistics Database*

113. Article XII Members have also registered strong trade performance in terms of their expanded share of world merchandise trade. As shown in Figure 6, from 1995 to 2013, the share of world merchandise trade of Article XII Members increased significantly from 8% to 18%.

**Figure 6 - Share of World Merchandise Trade of Article XII Members**



Source: *WTO Statistics Database*



## VII. CONCLUSIONS - OUTLOOK 2015

114. My report this year indicates the considerable progress that was made in accession and the continuing challenges. WTO accession is work in progress. On-going negotiations and the imminent increase in the queue of those that want to accede, continue to highlight the indispensable value of the Organization. The case made by Acceding Governments, stating why they want to join, shine strong floodlights on the benefits of membership, and the uses and advantages of the Organization that, all too often, are taken for granted. WTO membership retains an ineluctable pull for governments still outside our doors for a combination of cited reasons. The WTO is seen both as an economic institution and a citadel for the rule of law. Accession negotiations are used as an instrument for sustained legislation-based domestic reforms. The point has been reiterated by new Members and those acceding that the legal framework of the WTO is invoked to manage complex relationships, ranging from questions in trade economics, law and policy to geostrategic challenges.

115. In many ways and in most instances, Article XII Members have served to renew the Organization: injecting negotiating impetus, improving market access opportunities, extending the policy debate in trade law and economics and, hence strengthening the WTO. I urge Members to sustain the focus on accession as a strategic priority. Although the rules-based system currently covers approximately 98% of global trade, the goal is to attain trade universality and membership.

116. Yet the evidence suggests that accession negotiations will be tougher not easier, not least because the scope of trade policy negotiations is increasing. Domestic stakeholders involved are more insistent that they be heard in determining the positions of their negotiators and that trade negotiations are reconciled with domestic core values and public policy purposes. The global economy is more complex. Geopolitics introduces unforeseen twists and turns. Yet, with all these variables taken into account, I believe that the prospects for progress in 2015 hold opportunities for advancing work on several accessions. Crisis should not lead to despondency. In every crisis, opportunities exist. Riddles can be solved. As Director-General, I appeal to Members to seize these opportunities to advance the work of the

WTO on accessions in the year to come, although the cardinal responsibility for decisions necessary to make accessions possible, on the basis of WTO-consistent laws and regulations, rest with Acceding Governments. As Director-General, it is important that I am clear that the litmus test is that every Protocol of Accession must safeguard, add to and reinforce the existing stock of Accession Protocols so as to strengthen the rules-based Multilateral Trading System. On this point, we cannot err. The rules-based Multilateral Trading System is greater than the sum of its parts.

117. LDCs are most in need of Members' support for their WTO-consistent domestic reforms, appropriately transitioned, for growth, poverty reduction and development. It is a signal point that the LDCs that have either graduated, or are queued-up for graduation are those that have used their accession negotiations as a platform for domestic reforms. Looking ahead, Acceding Least Developed Countries have a primary claim on Members' support, if they have negotiating inputs on the table that provide a basis for engagement by Members of Working Party.

118. The Draft Accession Package of Afghanistan is on the table. It was circulated to Members in March. When Kabul reverts, Members should help Afghanistan cross the finish line.

119. The accession of Liberia should be a priority in the New Year to support the goal set by Monrovia for a 2015 conclusion. The tragic public health challenge faced by Liberia deserves solidarity and support. The Liberian Negotiating Team has been intensively engaged on the technical substance. Their submitted Negotiating Inputs rank as well and better, in the main, than that of other LDCs and other new Members that have acceded. As Director-General, I am focused on the substance and trend lines of this accession. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the face of daunting challenges. I would like to salute Members for their support for Liberia and in particular China, Cuba, the European Union (EU), Nigeria (and several other African countries); and the United States. Members' facilitation of the WTO accession of Liberia can make a positive difference for poverty reduction, improved economic welfare and growth for the People of Liberia. I am committed to this objective. I am in contact with the Chairman of the Working Party to do all that is possible to

advance the Accession of Liberia to conclusion as soon as possible.

120. With the conclusion of the Accession of Seychelles, which I wholeheartedly welcome, there are 22 Accession Working Parties, of which approximately ten (10) are active. The potential for progress in individual accessions is fluid and subject to unpredictable change. At present, based on internal Secretariat assessments, possible opportunities for progress exist in the Accessions negotiations for Algeria, the Bahamas, Belarus and Serbia. However, as in all negotiations, substance and not calendar will determine progress towards conclusion.

121. Accession-specific tailored technical assistance and capacity-building, based on Road Maps and ownership by Acceding Governments, are central in improvements being made to our accession process. I would appeal to Members to sustain and, whenever possible, expand their support for WTO technical assistance and capacity-building, to support accession negotiations. I am hopeful that Members will support Secretariat efforts in the provision of Post-Accession assistance for those new Members

that request it to contribute to the implementation of their obligations.

122. Transparency is a key factor for the predictability in the rules-based system and to ensure that results are owned by all. This is why I attach importance to the functioning of the Informal Group on Accessions. I have encouraged greater participation of Members because it is an open-ended process to ensure wider acceptance of process and results. I have also encouraged the greater involvement of Chairpersons of Working Parties. I am grateful to Members for their fulsome support in this arrangement, coordinated by the Secretariat, acting in the best interest of the entire membership and in service to the Organization. Transparency is *sine qua non* for ownership and sustainability of process and results.

123. I am pleased with the collaboration and partnership between Members and the Secretariat in the year under review and I look forward to raising the level in the year to come.

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# ANNEX 1 - ACCESSIONS DIVISION WORK INDICATORS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2014

Years	Formal WP Meetings	Informal WP Meetings	Technical Verification Meetings (Schedules)	Plurilateral Meetings	Divisional Meetings	IGA	Documentation Pages Processed	Archiving Folders Processed	Technical Assistance & Outreach	Article XII Accessions <sup>1</sup>	Newsletters	Annual Reports	Information Management + Databases <sup>2</sup>	Regional Group Annual Outreach
2014	5	3	4	13	43	10	6,900	0	28	(1 <sup>3</sup> )	11	1	3	5
2013	11	1	1	11	29	9	8,334	0	28	1	10	1	3	6
2012	22	3	2	20	29	10	19,865	0	38	2	11	1	3	6
2011	15	27	3	20	33	10	17,269	1	12	4	9	1	1	6
2010	10	11	0	3	41	14	4,829	39	15	0	4	1	1	4
2009	10	11	n/a*	7	46	7	3,881	560	24	0	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	9
2008	18	14	n/a*	4	n/a*	4	8,172	n/a*	13	1	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
2007	14	21	n/a*	7	n/a*	5	7,035	n/a*	14	1	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
2006	16	25	n/a*	7	n/a*	6	7,646	n/a*	12	1	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
2005	23	34	n/a*	21	n/a*	4	10,383	n/a*	15	2	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
2004	26	19	n/a*	18	n/a*	6	7,907	n/a*	12	0	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
2003	18	n/a*	n/a*	9	n/a*	3	8,629	n/a*	8	2	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
2002	16	n/a*	n/a*	6	n/a*	2	10,284	n/a*	22	2	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
2001	14	n/a*	n/a*	10	n/a*	0	5,482	n/a*	20	3	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
2000	20	n/a*	n/a*	8	n/a*	1	8,626	n/a*	8	4	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
1999	17	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	0	16,916	n/a*	5	3	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
1998	21	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	0	6,913	n/a*	7	2	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
1997	30	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	0	7,019	n/a*	17	0	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
1996	26	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	0	7,520	n/a*	9	3 (+5 <sup>4</sup> )	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
1995	17	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	0	3,869	n/a*	n/a*	1	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*

(Source: Accessions Division internal data)

\*n/a: data not available.

<sup>1</sup> By date of formal adoption by the General Council / Ministerial Conference; 2013: Yemen (4 December); 2012: Lao PDR (26 October) and Tajikistan (10 December); 2011: Montenegro (17 December), Russian Federation (16 December), Samoa (17 December), and Vanuatu (26 October); 2008: Ukraine (5 February); 2007: Cape Verde (18 December); 2006: Viet Nam (7 November); 2005: Saudi Arabia (11 November) and Tonga (15 December); 2003: Cambodia and Nepal (11 September); 2002: Armenia (10 December 2002) and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (15 October); 2001: China (10 November), Moldova (8 May) and Chinese Taipei (11 November); 2000: Albania and Croatia (17 July), Lithuania (8 December) and Oman (10 October); 1999: Estonia (21 May), Georgia (6 October) and Jordan (17 December); 1998: Latvia and Kyrgyz Republic (14 October); 1996: Bulgaria (2 October), Mongolia (18 July) and Panama (2 October); and 1995: Ecuador (16 August).

<sup>2</sup> Databases: (i) ACDB; (ii) Register of Bilateral Market Access Agreements; and, (iii) Accessions Intelligence Portal (work in progress).

<sup>3</sup> The Draft Package of the Accession of Seychelles was adopted on 17 October 2014, *ad referendum*, and will be considered for formal adoption at the 2014 December General Council.

<sup>4</sup> Granada; Papua New Guinea; Qatar; St. Kitts and Nevis; and, the United Arab Emirates acceded to the WTO after 1 January 1995, under the special procedures established by the General Council - WT/L/30. This procedure afforded these 5 acceding governments additional time to complete the negotiations of their Schedules.

## 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

\* Sorted by date of Membership



**ANNEX 3 - WTO ACCESSIONS WORKING PARTY (WP) CHAIRPERSONS**

No.	Government	Date WP established	WP Chairperson*	Geneva-based (Y/N)
1.	Afghanistan	13 December 2004	H.E. Mr. Roderick <u>van Schreven</u> (Netherlands)	Y
2.	Algeria	17 June 1987	H.E. Mr. Alberto Pedro <u>D'Alotto</u> (Argentina)	Y
3.	Andorra	22 October 1997	Vacant	
4.	Azerbaijan	16 July 1997	H.E. Mr. Walter <u>Lewalter</u> (Germany)	N
5.	The Bahamas	18 July 2001	H.E. Mr. Wayne <u>McCook</u> (Jamaica)	Y
6.	Belarus	27 October 1993	H.E. Mr. Haluk <u>Ilicak</u> (Turkey)	Y
7.	Bhutan	6 October 1999	H.E. Dr. Thomas <u>Hainoczi</u> (Austria)	Y
8.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	15 July 1999	H.E. Dr. István <u>Major</u> (Hungary)	N
9.	Comoros, Union of the	9 October 2007	H.E. Mr. Luis Enrique <u>Chávez Basagoitia</u> (Peru)	Y
10.	Equatorial Guinea	5 February 2008	Vacant	
11.	Ethiopia	10 February 2002	H.E. Dr. Steffen <u>Smidt</u> (Denmark)	Y
12.	Iran	26 May 2005	Vacant	
13.	Iraq	13 December 2004	H.E. Mr. Omar <u>Hilale</u> (Morocco)	Y
14.	Kazakhstan	6 February 1996	H.E. Mr. Vesa <u>Himanen</u> (Finland)	N
15.	Lebanese Republic	14 April 1999	H.E. Mrs Laurence <u>Dubois-Destrizais</u> (France)	N
16.	Liberia	18 December 2007	H.E. Mr. Joakim <u>Reiter</u> (Sweden)	N
17.	Libya	27 July 2004	Mr. Victor <u>Echevarría Ugarte</u> (Spain)	N
18.	Sao Tomé and Príncipe	26 May 2005	Vacant	
19.	Serbia	15 February 2005	H.E. Mrs. Marie-Claire <u>Swärd Capra</u> (Sweden)	N
20.	Seychelles	11 July 1995	Ms. Hilda Ali <u>Al-Hinai</u> (Oman)	Y
21.	Sudan	25 October 1994	Vacant	
22.	Syrian Arab Republic	4 May 2010	Vacant	
23.	Uzbekistan	21 December 1994	H.E. Mr. Seokyoung <u>Choi</u> (Korea)	Y

\* As of November 2014

**ANNEX 4 – LENGTH OF TIME OF COMPLETED ACCESSIONS**

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

\* Least-developed country (LDC). Cabo Verde acceded to the WTO as an LDC. It graduated from LDC status on 20 December 2007.

## ANNEX 5 - SECTION VI-DATA ON ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

**Table 1 - Value of Merchandise Trade and Year-on-Year Percentage Change: 1995-2013**

(Billion dollars and percentage)

		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Article XII Members	Value	846	899	962	887	928	1,191	1,176	1,340	1,722	2,270	2,796	3,403	4,131	5,006	3,921	5,179	6,445	6,765	7,119
	Year-on-year percentage change		6.2%	7.1%	-7.8%	4.6%	28.3%	-1.2%	13.9%	28.5%	31.9%	23.1%	21.7%	21.4%	21.2%	-21.7%	32.1%	24.4%	5.0%	5.2%
World	Value	10,453	10,955	11,331	11,186	11,642	13,182	12,679	13,238	15,458	18,797	21,378	24,591	28,352	32,731	25,335	30,810	36,832	37,015	37,706
	Year-on-year percentage change		4.8%	3.4%	-1.3%	4.1%	13.2%	-3.8%	4.4%	16.8%	21.6%	13.7%	15.0%	15.3%	15.4%	-22.6%	21.6%	19.5%	0.5%	1.9%

Source: WTO Statistics Database

**Table 2 - Value of Trade in Commercial Services and Year-on-Year Percentage Change: 1995-2013**

(Billion dollars and percentage)

		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Article XII Members	Value	153	166	187	175	176	197	206	232	269	341	397	476	608	719	641	757	878	967	1,073
	Year-on-year percentage change		8.5%	12.4%	-6.5%	0.7%	11.9%	4.2%	12.6%	16.0%	27.1%	16.4%	19.8%	27.7%	18.3%	-10.9%	18.1%	16.0%	10.0%	11.1%
World	Value	2,369	2,536	2,629	2,653	2,784	2,955	2,975	3,159	3,644	4,396	4,900	5,511	6,596	7,482	6,789	7,441	8,351	8,571	9,026
	Year-on-year percentage change		7.1%	3.7%	0.9%	4.9%	6.1%	0.7%	6.2%	15.4%	20.6%	11.5%	12.5%	19.7%	13.4%	-9.3%	9.6%	12.2%	2.6%	5.3%

Source: WTO Statistics Database

**ANNEX 6 - ACCESSIONS MANAGEMENT****Table 1 - Accession Working Party Management**

Accession Working Party	Code	Secretary	Co-Secretary	Administrative Manager/Support
<b>Chiedu Osakwe, Director, Accessions Division</b>				
<b>1. Afghanistan*</b>	AFG	Varyanik	Tebagana	Evans
<b>2. Algeria</b>	DZA	Sekkate	Fahn	Tandara-Stenier
<b>3. Andorra</b>	AND	<a href="mailto:accessions@wto.org">accessions@wto.org</a> - No Activity		
<b>4. Azerbaijan</b>	AZE	Pardo de León	Varyanik	Evans
<b>5. Bahamas</b>	BHS	Lee	Okenwa	Tandara-Stenier
<b>6. Belarus</b>	BLR	Oshikawa	Sekkate Varyanik	Tandara-Stenier
<b>7. Bhutan*</b>	BTN	Oshikawa	Lee	Tandara-Stenier
<b>8. Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	BIH	Beslać	Okenwa	Tandara-Stenier
<b>9. Comoros, Union of the*</b>	COM	Sekkate	Tandara-Stenier	Tandara-Stenier
<b>10. Equatorial Guinea*</b>	GNQ	Sekkate	Fahn	Evans
<b>11. Ethiopia*</b>	ETH	Varyanik	Tebagana	Evans
<b>12. Iran, the Islamic Republic of</b>	IRN	Varyanik	Sekkate	Evans
<b>13. Iraq</b>	IRQ	Varyanik	Lee	Evans
<b>14. Kazakhstan</b>	KAZ	Oshikawa	Sekkate Varyanik	Tandara-Stenier
<b>15. Lebanese Republic</b>	LBN	Pardo de León	Sekkate	Evans
<b>16. Liberia*</b>	LBR	Lee	Varyanik	Evans
<b>17. Libya</b>	LBY	Pardo de León	Sekkate	Evans
<b>18. Sao Tomé and Príncipe*</b>	STP	Sekkate	Tebagana	Evans
<b>19. Serbia</b>	SRB	Beslać	Okenwa	Tandara-Stenier
<b>20. Seychelles</b>	SYC	Beslać	Okenwa	Tandara-Stenier
<b>21. Sudan*</b>	SDN	Lee	Sekkate	Evans
<b>22. Syrian Arab Republic</b>	SYR	Beslać	-	Evans
<b>23. Uzbekistan</b>	UZB	Lee	Fahn	Tandara-Stenier

\*Least-developed countries (LDCs)



**Table 2 - Non-Working Party Workload Distribution**

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Professional</b>	<b>Administrative Manager/ Support</b>
<b>Director-General's Annual Accession Reports</b>	Director & Professional (rotating) (2014: Lee)	Evans
<b>Acting in the absence of the Director</b>	Oshikawa	Tandara-Stenier
<b>Informal Group on Accessions</b>	Pardo de León	Tandara-Stenier
<b>WTO Accessions Newsletter (monthly)</b>	Director & Varyanik	Tandara-Stenier
<b>China Programme / MOU / Round Tables Pillar</b>	Director & Oshikawa	Evans
<b>China Programme / MOU / Accessions Interns Pillar</b>	Oshikawa & Tandara-Stenier	
<b>TA Focal Point / Annual Outreach</b>	Pardo de León	Evans
<b>LDC Focal Point</b>	Oshikawa	Evans
<b>Databases:</b>		
– <b>Accessions Commitments Database (ACDB)</b>	Sekkate	Rotating interns Tandara-Stenier
– <b>Market Access Register</b>	Varyanik Fahn	Evans
– <b>Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP)</b>	Beslać	Rotating interns Evans
– <b>Trade performance of Article XII Members</b>	Sekkate	Evans
<b>Accessions Website Update</b>	Working Party Secretaries	Rotating interns Tandara-Stenier
<b>Accessions Book project</b>	Accessions Division	Evans

**ACCESSIONS STAFF DISPOSITION:**

- Director;
- 6 Professionals;
- 2 Administrative Managers;
- 5 rotating China's LDCs and Accessions Programme interns; and
- 2 regular Accessions Division interns.