

This is an information note to assist Acceding Governments with preparations for meetings and negotiations associated with their accession. It is one of several practical steps by the WTO Secretariat to improve transparency on accessions matters.

NOTE ON ACCESSIONS INFORMATION FOR ACCEDING GOVERNMENTS

The second meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2011 took place today, 21 February 2011. At today's meeting, the Secretariat consulted with Members on the evolving calendar of accessions meetings for 2011.¹ Sixteen delegations attended the meeting. The Secretariat briefed the IGA on the progress of the seven 2011 Accession Priorities, namely, the three LDCs of Samoa, Vanuatu and Yemen; Kazakhstan; Montenegro; the Russian Federation; and, Serbia. The IGA was also briefed on recent developments in four other active accession processes. Members were reminded on the deadlines to submit additional questions and comments in writing on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina (25 January 2011) and the Accession of Afghanistan (25 January 2011).

The Chairperson (Ambassador Steffen Smidt (Denmark)) of the Working Party on the Accession of Ethiopia, briefed Members on his visit to the Acceding Government. Members welcomed this transparency exercise. With regard to Ethiopia and the three LDCs' Accession Priorities, Bangladesh, on behalf of the LDC Group, stressed the need for (i) the implementation of the 2002 Guidelines on LDCs' Accessions; and (ii) the early harvest of the three LDCs' Accession Priorities, in light of the UN-LDC IV this May.

The IGA was informed that: (i) the Training Programme (on Accessions Best Practices) organized by the Indian Government would take place next week; and, (ii) tentative dates for the Regional Seminar on Accessions for the CEECAC Region (mid-July 2011) and the Geneva-based Workshop (second half of 2011) had been set. The Secretariat commended the EU, India and the US for their accession-related TA and invited other Members, in a position to do so, to compliment the contributions of these Members.

Members were notified that (i) five Working Party Chairpersons were vacant (Algeria, The Bahamas, Iran, Samoa and Uzbekistan); and that (ii) Mr. Atsuyuki Oike, Minister at the Japanese Mission, be appointed as Chairperson on the Accession of Samoa at the General Council tomorrow, 22 February 2011.

Members agreed with the proposed calendar of accession meetings for 2011 (annexed). However, Members converged that Meetings could only go ahead on the basis of inputs received with sufficient time for consideration and review, normally a period of 4-6 weeks.

¹ Accessions-related meetings are scheduled, based on the submission of substantive and qualitative inputs on the multilateral track of accession negotiations; and, meaningful offers and progress on bilateral market access negotiations.

ACCESSIONS MEETING SCHEDULE – EVOLVING CALENDAR²

21 February 2011

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation		Conf Office Advised
					French Spanish English	Own	
22-23 February 2011	General Council			CR			√
[17 March 2011]	Serbia	10 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	CRI	yes	no	√
[30 March 2011]	Russian Federation	Informal Chair Consultations	Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)	D	no	no	√
[31 March 2011]				D	no	no	√
[31 March 2011]				E	no	no	√
		Plurilateral on Agriculture	Convening Notice Pending (PM only)	E	no	no	√
[April/May 2011]	Yemen	Informal/Formal Meeting	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	tbc	√
[2–6 May 2011]	Geneva Week						
[3 May 2011]	Samoa	Informal/Formal Meeting	Convening Notice Pending (half day only)	E	yes	no	√
[4-5 May 2011]	General Council						
[6 May 2011]	Ethiopia	2nd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	D	yes	tbc	√
[After summer break 2011]		Geneva-based Seminar	Convening Notice Pending	tbc			√
Date TBC at any moment	Montenegro	8th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	tbc	√

²Dates are suggested to assist planning by Members, Acceding Governments and the Secretariat. However, meetings will only go ahead on the basis of inputs received with sufficient time for consideration and review by Members, normally a period of 4 to 6 weeks.

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