



The purpose of the Newsletter<sup>1</sup> is to provide Acceding Governments with a summary report of the meetings of the Informal Group on Accessions and to assist them with preparations for meetings and negotiations associated with their accessions. It is one of several practical steps by the WTO Secretariat to ensure transparency on accessions matters. This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and without prejudice to the positions of Members and to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

## **NEWSLETTER FOR ACCEDING GOVERNMENTS**

The second meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions in 2012 took place today, 21 February 2012. At today's meeting, the Secretariat consulted with Members on the Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2012<sup>2</sup>. Twenty-one delegations attended the meeting, including the Ambassadors of Panama and Saudi Arabia. It was positively noted that that these IGA meetings are becoming more interactive.

The Secretariat briefed the IGA on: (i) the four 2012 Accession Priorities (Kazakhstan, Lao PDR (LDC), Serbia, and Yemen (LDC)); and (ii) the progress in seven active accession processes (Afghanistan; Algeria; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Ethiopia; Seychelles; and, Tajikistan).

The Director of the Accessions Division (Mr. Chiedu Osakwe) conveyed to Members appreciation for Members' support for the four 2012 Accession Priorities. He reiterated that progress and harvest would depend on: (i) the timely and substantive submission of technical inputs by acceding governments; and (ii) the early conclusion of pending bilateral negotiations. He therefore urged Members to intensify their efforts to close all pending bilateral negotiations by mid-March, and no later, to ensure that the Secretariat team could prepare the Consolidated Goods Schedules for Goods and Services before the Summer break. This timeline would give Members the required time to review the Schedules to convene relevant verification meetings after the Summer break, in September/October. In reporting on the 2012 Accession Priorities, to remain on track, the pace of input submissions from Kazakhstan required acceleration. The outstanding bilateral negotiation(s) with Yemen and Lao PDR required completion, no later than mid-March. Serbia would need to submit its updated Legislative Action Plan and relevant Members would need to increase the pace of bilateral negotiations with Serbia. With regard to the two LDC Accession Priorities, namely, Lao PDR and Yemen, the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the Arab Group, and Jordan urged Members to conclude the pending bilateral market access negotiations.

The IGA was also informed that pursuant to paragraph 31 (f) of the recommendations adopted by the General Council in November 2011, the distribution of official documents in meeting rooms and at the Document Centre had been discontinued as of 1 January 2012. Accession-related documents would need to be retrieved from the Members' website.

The French and Spanish translations of this Newsletter will follow shortly.

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<sup>2</sup> 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 CALENDAR<sup>3</sup>****21 February 2012**

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation		Conf Office Advised
					French Spanish English	Own	
23 February 2012	Azerbaijan	Agriculture Plurilateral	Convening fax 13/02/2012 refers (AM Only)	D	no	yes	√
24 February 2012		9 <sup>th</sup> Working Party Meeting	WT/AIR/3889 refers (AM Only)	D	yes	yes	√
[8 March 2012]	Tajikistan	7 <sup>th</sup> Working Party Meeting	Convening Notice Pending	CR I	yes	tbc	√
[9 March 2012]		Plurilateral on Agriculture	Convening Notice Pending	CR II	no	tbc	√
[16 March 2012]	Lao PDR	8 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)	CR II	yes	tbc	√
[19 March 2012]	Belarus	Informal/Formal Meeting	Convening Notice Pending	D	yes	tbc	√
[26 March 2012]	Yemen	Informal/Formal Meeting	Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)	E	yes	tbc	√
[27 March 2012]	Ethiopia	3rd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (PM Only)	D	yes	tbc	√
[29 March 2012]	Serbia	12 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (PM Only)	D	yes	tbc	√
[last week of March 2012]	Algeria	Informal Chair Consultations	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	no	tbc	
[20 April 2012]	Kazakhstan	Informal/Formal Meeting	Convening Notice Pending	S1	no	tbc	√
[27 April 2012]	Seychelles	3 <sup>rd</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)	S1	yes	no	√
[second quarter 2012]	Afghanistan	2 <sup>nd</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no	
[second quarter 2012]	The Bahamas	2 <sup>nd</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	tbc	
[second quarter 2012]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	10 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	tbc	
[1-2 May 2012]	General Council						
[25-26 July 2012]	General Council						

<sup>3</sup> Dates are suggested to assist planning by Members, Acceding Governments and the Secretariat. However, listed meetings are not automatic and will only go ahead on the basis of inputs from Acceding Governments, received with sufficient time for review by Members, normally a period of 4 weeks.