



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 Fourth meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions in 2012 took place today, 30 April 2012, at the level of Heads of Delegations. The meeting took place in two parts: In the first part, it was chaired by the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on LDCs (SLDCs), Ambassador Smidt (Denmark), with the support of his Co-Chairpersons, namely, the Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Lao PDR, Ambassador Yi (China) and the Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Yemen, Mr. Röben (Germany). The second part was chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division, Mr. Chiedu Osakwe. Twenty-four delegations attended the meeting.

At the request of several Group Coordinators and for transparency purposes, the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on LDCs, Ambassador Smidt, presented a joint Chairpersons' Report on the *informal confidential facilitation process* under way to assist the conclusion of the outstanding bilateral negotiations between Ukraine and Lao PDR; and Ukraine and Yemen. The SLDC Chairperson is co-chairing this process with Ambassador Yi, the WP Chairperson on the Accession of Lao PDR; and, Mr. Röben, the WP Chairperson on the Accession of Yemen. This confidential facilitation process was undertaken at the request of Lao PDR and Yemen in the context of the 2002 Guidelines on LDCs' Accessions and the MC8 Decision - WT/L/846 process. (See attached report RD/ACC/3). Nine Members commented on the Report of the three Chairpersons. These were: Singapore, on behalf of ASEAN Group; Haiti, on behalf of the LDCs Group; Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the GCC and the Arab Group; Pakistan, on behalf of the Asian Group; Australia; China; the EU; Turkey; and the US. Overall, Members: (i) welcomed the three Chairpersons' facilitation process and expressed their support; (ii) noted that this process strengthened and "*operationalized*" the 2002 LDC Guidelines and the recent MC8 Decision (WT/L/846); (iii) called on fellow Members to exercise flexibility in their negotiations with acceding LDCs; and (iv) encouraged an early conclusion of the bilateral negotiations of Lao PDR and Ukraine; and Yemen and Ukraine, in order to meet the WTO Membership's 2012 LDCs' accession targets. The three Chairpersons would continue to report on the state-of-play of this confidential facilitation process at: the next Working Party meetings of Yemen and Lao PDR; the Sub-Committee on LDCs; and the Informal Group.

In the second half of the meeting, the Secretariat consulted with Members on the Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2012<sup>2</sup> (see Annex I). Mr. Osakwe briefed the IGA on: (i) the "*four + 1*" 2012 Accession Priorities: Lao PDR (LDC), Yemen (LDC); Kazakhstan, Serbia and Tajikistan; (ii) the progress in eight active accession processes; and (iii) the "Beijing 2012 Round Table on WTO Accession Best Practices" for Least-developed Countries (LDCs), 29 May to 1 June in Beijing.

Members took note of the proposed calendar of accession meetings (annexed). They reiterated the standing practice that meetings should only go ahead on the basis of inputs received with sufficient time for consideration and review, normally a minimum period of 4 weeks.

With regard to the newly emerged 2012 accession priority Tajikistan, Mr. Osakwe informed the IGA that a visit by the Working Party Chairperson, Ambassador Clyde Kull (Estonia), assisted by the Secretariat, was envisaged between 17 and 20 May. Ambassador Kull would provide a transparency report on his visit to Dushanbe at the Fifth IGA meeting.

Members were also briefed on the "Beijing 2012 Roundtable on WTO Accession Best Practices" for LDCs, from 29 May to 1 June. This Roundtable is part of "China's LDCs and Accessions Programme". For more information, please see: [http://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/acc\\_e/beijingroundtable\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/beijingroundtable_e.htm).

On behalf of Director-General Pascal Lamy, Mr. Osakwe welcomed Montenegro on its first official working day as 154<sup>th</sup> Member to the WTO and congratulated the WTO Membership for this 2011 accession achievement.

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

<sup>1</sup> Please contact Ms Petra Beslać ([Acceding-Government-Newsletter@wto.org](mailto:Acceding-Government-Newsletter@wto.org); Tel: +41 22 739 60 94; and Fax: +41 22 739 57 76) for all enquiries related to the contents of the Newsletter.

<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.

## ANNEX I

**ACCESSIONS MEETING SCHEDULE – EVOLVING CALENDAR<sup>3</sup> - 30 April 2012**

| Date                  | Working Party | Meeting                        | Status                                  | Room  | Interpretation               |     | Conf Office Advised |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|-----|---------------------|
|                       |               |                                |   |       | French<br>Spanish<br>English | Own |                     |
| 30 April 2012         | IGA - HODs    | Informal Group on Accessions   | Convening Fax 20/04/12 refers (AM only) | CR II | no                           | -   | √                   |
| 30 April 2012         | Yemen         | 9 <sup>th</sup> Working Party  | WTO/AIR/3929 refers (PM Only)           | CR I  | yes                          | tbc | √                   |
| [23 May 2012]         | IGA           | Informal Group on Accessions   | Convening Notice Pending (AM)           | tbc   | no                           | no  | √                   |
| [7 June 2012]         | Seychelles    | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Working Party  | Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)      | CR II | yes                          | no  | √                   |
| [8 June 2012]         | Kazakhstan    | HS 2002 Verification           | Convening Notice Pending (AM)           | tbc   | no                           | -   | √                   |
| [13 June 2012]        | Afghanistan   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Working Party  | Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)      | S1    | yes                          | no  | √                   |
| [15 June 2012]        | Yemen         | 10 <sup>th</sup> Working Party | Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)        | CR II | yes                          | tbc | √                   |
| [20 June 2012]        | Kazakhstan    | HS 2007 Verification           | Convening Notice Pending (AM)           | tbc   | no                           | -   | √                   |
| [21 June 2012]        | The Bahamas   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Working Party  | Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)      | CR II | yes                          | tbc | √                   |
| [29 June 2012]        | IGA           | Informal Group on Accessions   | Convening Notice Pending (AM)           | tbc   | no                           | -   | √                   |
| [6 July]              | Tajikistan    | 8 <sup>th</sup> Working Party  | Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)        | CR II | yes                          | tbc | √                   |
| [Week of 9 July 2012] | Lao PDR       | 9 <sup>th</sup> Working Party  | Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)      | tbc   | yes                          | tbc | √                   |
| [11 July 2012]        | Liberia       | 1 <sup>st</sup> Working Party  | Convening Notice Pending (PM Only)      | S1    | yes                          | no  | √                   |
| [18 July 2012]        | Kazakhstan    | SPS Plurilateral meeting       | Convening Notice Pending (AM)           | S2    | no                           | tbc |                     |
|                       |               | TBT Plurilateral meeting       | Convening Notice Pending (PM)           | S2    | no                           | tbc | √                   |
| [19 July 2012]        | Kazakhstan    | Agriculture Plurilateral       | Convening Notice Pending (AM)           | S2    | no                           | tbc | √                   |
|                       |               | TRIMs Plurilateral             | Convening Notice Pending (PM)           | S2    | no                           | tbc | √                   |
| [23 July 2012]        | Kazakhstan    | Informal/Formal WP meetings    | Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)        | S1    | no                           | no  | √                   |
| [23 July 2012]        | IGA           | Informal Group on Accessions   | Convening Notice Pending (AM)           | tbc   | no                           | -   | √                   |
| [24 July 2012]        | Kazakhstan    | Informal/Formal WP meetings    | Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)        | S1    | no                           | no  | √                   |
| [27 September 2012]   | Ethiopia      | 4 <sup>th</sup> Working Party  | Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)        | CR II | yes                          | tbc | √                   |

<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.

| Date                 | Working Party          | Meeting                        | Status                   | Room | Interpretation               |     | Conf Office Advised |
|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------|------------------------------|-----|---------------------|
|                      |                        |                                |                          |      | French<br>Spanish<br>English | Own |                     |
| [After Summer Break] | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 10 <sup>th</sup> Working Party | Convening Notice Pending | tbc  | yes                          | tbc |                     |
| [After Summer Break] | Algeria                | Informal/Formal WP meeting     | Convening Notice Pending | tbc  | yes                          | no  |                     |
| [Last Quarter 2012]  | Azerbaijan             | 10 <sup>th</sup> Working Party | Convening Notice Pending | tbc  | yes                          |     |                     |
| [Last Quarter 2012]  | Belarus                | Informal Consultations         | Convening Fax Pending    | tbc  | yes                          | no  |                     |
| [Last Quarter 2012]  | Serbia                 | 13 <sup>th</sup> Working Party | Convening Fax Pending    | tbc  | yes                          | no  |                     |
| 1-2 May 2012         | General Council        |                                |                          |      |                              |     |                     |
| [25-26 July 2012]    | General Council        |                                |                          |      |                              |     |                     |