



The purpose of the Newsletter¹ 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 Fifth meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions in 2012 took place on 11 June 2012. Twenty-nine delegations attended the meeting. The Secretariat consulted with Members on the Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2012². The Director of the Accessions Division (Mr. Chiedu Osakwe) briefed the IGA on: (i) the ratification developments; (ii) the results from the 2012 "Beijing Round Table on Best Practices in WTO Accessions for LDCs"; (iii) the 2012 LDC Accession Priorities (Lao PDR and Yemen); (iv) the 2012 non-LDC Accession Priorities (Kazakhstan, Serbia and Tajikistan); (v) the progress in nine active Accession Working Parties; and (vi) technical assistance/outreach.

Members took note of the evolving calendar of accession meetings. 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.

The Director of the Accessions Division provided a summary report on the results and outcomes of the "Beijing Round Table", hosted by the Government of China, organized by the WTO Secretariat and opened by Director-General Pascal Lamy, H.E. Minister Chen, Minister of Commerce of China, and the LDCs' Coordinator (Haiti). He informed Members that LDCs' participants adopted a "Beijing Statement". At the request of LDCs, this statement has been circulated as a document of the General Council; the Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries; the Working Party on the Accession of Lao PDR; and, the Working Party on the Accession of Yemen (WT/L/856, WT/COMTD/LDC/20, WT/ACC/LAO/35, and WT/ACC/YEM/36) on 6 June. The Ambassador of Haiti, on behalf of the LDC Group, commended the Secretariat for the excellent organization of the Round Table and the Government of China for its leadership on LDCs' accessions. Supportive statements of the Round Table, the contributions of China and the Secretariat were made by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Lesotho (for the African Group).

Members were briefed on the technical state-of-play of: the two 2012 LDC Accession Priorities (Lao PDR and Yemen); and, two 2012 non-LDC Accession Priorities (Kazakhstan and Tajikistan). The IGA was also briefed on nine other active accessions (Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, The Bahamas, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Liberia and Seychelles).

The IGA was also informed on the visits undertaken by Deputy Director-General Alejandro Jara to Kazakhstan (Astana Economic Forum); and, by the Working Party Chairperson, Ambassador Clyde Kull (Estonia), to Tajikistan, accompanied by the Secretariat. The highest levels of political leadership in both countries have signalled their commitment to take the necessary decisions so as to work with Members to conclude their accessions in 2012.

The Director of the Accessions Division advised the IGA that the Regional Seminar on Accessions for African Acceding Governments would have to be re-scheduled for next year, and would no longer be organized in 2012. In the second half of the year, national activities would continue to be delivered upon request, but priority would be given to Accession Working Parties in Geneva.

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

¹ For all enquiries related to the contents of the Newsletter, please contact: Acceding-Government-Newsletter@wto.org; Tel: +41 22 739 65 60; and Fax: +41 22 739 57 76.

² 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.