



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 Seventh meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions in 2012 took place on 23 July. Twenty-three delegations attended the meeting. The Secretariat consulted with Members on the Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2012/2013<sup>2</sup> (as annexed).

The Director of the Accessions Division, Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, briefed the IGA on: (i) the remaining ratification developments of the 2011 accessions, namely, the Russian Federation and Vanuatu; (ii) the two 2012 LDC Accession Priorities (Lao PDR and Yemen); (iii) the three 2012 non-LDC Accession Priorities (Kazakhstan; Serbia; and Tajikistan); and (iv) the progress in ten other active accession processes (Afghanistan, Algeria; Azerbaijan; The Bahamas; Belarus; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ethiopia; Liberia; Seychelles; and Uzbekistan).

Members were updated on the ratification status of the 2011 accessions: the Russian Federation and Vanuatu. Following the 7<sup>th</sup> IGA meeting, there were further significant developments: the Russian Federation deposited its Instrument of Acceptance.<sup>3</sup> Members re-opened the Protocol of Accession of Vanuatu at the 25 July General Council so as to extend the period of acceptance.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding the two 2012 LDC Accession Priorities, Lao PDR and Yemen, the IGA was informed that Lao PDR had completed all its bilateral negotiations with Members. A WTO Secretariat technical team worked with the Government of Lao PDR in Vientiane, from 16-22 July to finalize the draft Accession Package of Lao PDR.<sup>5</sup>

Following the 7<sup>th</sup> IGA meeting, the three WTO facilitators assisting the conclusion of the outstanding bilateral market access negotiations on goods between Ukraine and Yemen, reported the conclusion of the negotiations to the General Council at its session on 25 July.<sup>6</sup> Pursuant to the agreement between Ukraine and Yemen, a technical verification meeting shall take place from 2-3 August to initial the agreement and prepare it for signature after the Summer break. The Secretariat is now in the process of preparing Yemen's draft Accession Package for a final Working Party meeting after the Summer break.

On the three 2012 non-LDC Accession Priorities (Kazakhstan; Serbia; and Tajikistan), the IGA was informed that significant developments were registered in the Accession of Kazakhstan during the recent cycle of plurilateral meetings (on SPS; TBT; Agriculture; and TRIMs); and the technical verification meeting for Kazakhstan's draft Goods Schedule. The next round of meetings is envisaged to take place after the Summer break. On Tajikistan, Members were briefed on the productive Working Party meeting held on 17 July. This accession is on course for a 2012 conclusion. Only two bilateral negotiations remained outstanding. The Working Party Chairperson, Ambassador Clyde Kull (Estonia), mandated the WTO Secretariat to begin a "fast-track" consolidation process to prepare Tajikistan's draft Goods and Services Schedules when the remaining two bilateral outstanding negotiations have been concluded. Regarding Serbia, the IGA was informed that Belgrade had submitted replies to Member's questions. Depending on domestic legislative reforms, the next WP meeting could be convened in the last quarter of 2012.

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<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.

<sup>3</sup> As a consequence, the Russian Federation will become the 156<sup>th</sup> Member of the WTO on 22 August 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Vanuatu deposited its Instrument of Acceptance with Director-General Pascal Lamy on 25 July. As a result, Vanuatu will become the 157<sup>th</sup> Member of the WTO on 24 August 2012.

<sup>5</sup> The draft Accession Package of Lao PDR will be circulated on Friday, 3 August.

<sup>6</sup> WT/ACC/YEM/40 and WT/ACC/YEM/40/Add.1.

**ANNEX I**  
**ACCESSIONS MEETING SCHEDULE – EVOLVING CALENDAR**<sup>7</sup>

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation		Conf Office Advised
					French Spanish English	Own	
Monday, 23 July 2012	IGA	Informal Group on Accessions	Fax dated 16/07/12 refers	S2	no	-	√
Monday, 23 July 2012	Yemen	10 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	WTO/AIR/3979 refers (AM only)	CR I	yes	tbc	√
Tuesday, 24 July 2012	Kazakhstan	12 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	WTO/AIR/3981 refers (AM/PM)	S1	no	no	√
<b>Wed. 25 July and Thu. 26 July - GENERAL COUNCIL</b>							
[Friday, 14 September 2012]	Lao PDR	10 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	CR I	yes	no	√
[Friday, 21 September 2012]	IGA	Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Notice Pending (AM)	S3	no	-	√
<b>From Mon. 24 to Wed. 26 September - PUBLIC FORUM</b>							
[Friday, 28 September 2012]	Ethiopia	4 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	CR I	yes	tbc	√
<b>Wed. 3 and Thu 4. October - GENERAL COUNCIL</b>							
[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	tbc	
[Last Quarter 2012]	Belarus	Informal Consultations	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no	
[Last Quarter 2012]	Serbia	13 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no	
[Last Quarter 2012/ First Quarter 2013]	The Bahamas	3 <sup>rd</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no	
[First Quarter 2013]	The Seychelles	4 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	tbc	yes	no	√

<sup>7</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.