

WTO Accessions Newsletter

The Eighth 2012 meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) took place today, 21 September. The Director of the Accessions Division briefed the IGA on: (i) the two 2012 LDC Accession Priorities (Lao PDR and Yemen); (ii) the three 2012 non-LDC Accession Priorities (Kazakhstan; Serbia; and Tajikistan); and (iii) the progress in ten other active accession processes. The Secretariat also consulted with Members on the Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2012/2013 (as annexed).

2012 Accession Priorities

Lao PDR: The Accessions Division circulated all components of Lao PDR's draft Accession Package in August, namely: the revised draft Working Party Report; the draft Goods Schedule; and the draft Services Schedule. The final Working Party meeting is scheduled for 28 September, to adopt, *ad referendum*, Lao PDR's draft Accession Package. A dedicated session of the General Council, to formally adopt Lao PDR's Accession Package, is envisaged for the end of October.

Yemen: The first technical verification meeting, chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division, had taken place on 2-3 August and remained work in progress, under the direct supervision of the Facilitators. Yemen was currently preparing its replies to questions received from Members.

Tajikistan: The Accessions Division circulated two components of Tajikistan's draft Accession Package, namely: the draft Goods and the draft Services Schedules. The third and final component, the revised draft Working Party Report, would be circulated on Monday, 24 September. This would be the close-to-final version of the revised draft Working Party Report. At the next meeting, scheduled for 9 October, the Working Party would consider Tajikistan's draft Accession Package. An additional meeting may be convened in November, if necessary, to consider for adoption, *ad referendum*, Tajikistan's Accession Package.

Kazakhstan: All the relevant inputs for the next cycle of meetings, scheduled for the month of October, were circulated this week, including the revised draft Working Party Report.

Serbia: The Secretariat is in the process of finalizing the revised draft Working Party Report. Relevant legislative feedback from Belgrade was still pending. The next Working Party meeting could be convened in the last quarter of 2012.

Accessions Maintenance Work

The Director of the Accessions Division reported on the progress in ten other active accessions (Afghanistan, Algeria; Azerbaijan; The Bahamas; Belarus; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ethiopia; Liberia; Seychelles; and Uzbekistan). Concerning the Accession of Belarus, the IGA was informed that the Secretariat was updating the Factual Summary, in collaboration with Minsk, to include new information on the Customs Union, the Common Economic Space, and Belarus' Foreign Trade Regime. The circulation of the updated Factual Summary is envisaged for October. At the request of Members, the Secretariat would also compile and circulate other relevant economic assessments. Once the updated Factual Summary has been circulated, the IGA would be consulted on the timing of the next meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Belarus. The submission of legislation was still outstanding.

First IGA Participation by the Russian Federation

The Secretariat, on behalf of the IGA, warmly welcomed the Russian Federation as a new member of the "IGA family". In its statement, the Russian Federation expressed the hope that with the "joint effort" of the WTO Membership, 2012 would be yet another good year for "accession harvest". The Russian Federation expressed its support for the early conclusion of the WTO accessions of its CU partners - Kazakhstan and Belarus.

Vacant Working Party Chairmanships

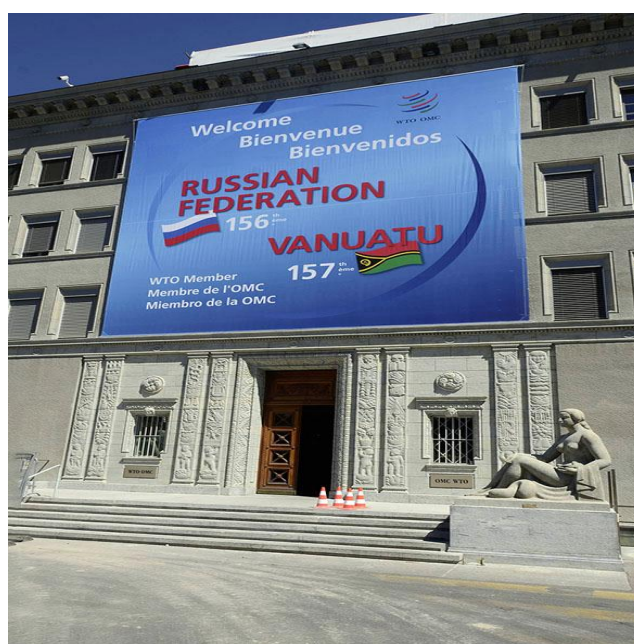
The IGA was informed that DDG Alejandro Jara, in coordination with the Chairwoman of the General Council, was consulting on the vacant Chairmanship for the Working Party on the Accession of Belarus.

Cost-saving Procedures for Meetings

The IGA was informed that Chairpersons of WTO bodies, including Accession Working Parties, were obliged to streamline the management of meetings. Printed copies were no longer provided at meetings, except for small group and technical meetings and courtesy copies for acceding governments.

E-Legislation Link

The Secretariat reported on the new platform providing simplified access to the electronic copies of legislation and consultation documents submitted by Acceding Governments. The platform also contained the WTO Accessions Newsletter and the latest entries in the Register of Bilateral Market Access Agreements. Contents of Bilateral Agreements would remain confidential.



The purpose of the Newsletter is to provide Acceding Governments with a summary report of the meetings of the Informal Group on Accessions and operationally relevant information to assist them with preparations for meetings and negotiations associated with their accession. 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.

Evolving Calendar of WTO Accessions Working Parties

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					French Spanish English	Own
Friday, 21 September 2012	IGA	Informal Group on Accessions	Fax 14/09/2012 refers	S3	no	-
From Mon. 24 to Wed. 26 September – Public Forum						
Friday, 28 September 2012	Lao PDR	10 th Working Party	WTO/AIR/3995 refers	CR I	yes	tbc
[Wednesday, 3 October 2012]	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral on SPS	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	S2	no	tbc
		Plurilateral on TBT	Convening Notice Pending (PM only)	S2	no	tbc
[Thursday, 4 October 2012]	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral on Agriculture	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	S3	no	tbc
		Plurilateral on TRIMs	Convening Notice Pending (PM only)	S3	no	tbc
[Friday, 5 October 2012]	Kazakhstan	13 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)	CR I	yes	tbc
Wed. 3 and Thu. 4 October – General Council						
[Monday, 8 October 2012]	Kazakhstan	HS 2007 Technical Verification	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	S1	no	tbc
[Tuesday, 9 October 2012]	Tajikistan	[Goods/Services Schedule Verification]	Convening Notice pending (AM)	S3	no	tbc
		9 th Working Party	Convening Notice pending (PM)	CR II	yes	tbc
[Friday, 19 October 2012]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	[10 th Working Party]	Convening Notice Pending (AM)	CR I	yes	tbc
		[Plurilateral on Agriculture]	Convening Notice Pending (PM)	tbc	no	tbc
[October/November 2012]	Yemen	11 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)	tbc	yes	tbc
[Last Quarter 2012]	Azerbaijan	10 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	tbc
[Last Quarter 2012]	Belarus	Informal Consultations	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	no	no
[Last Quarter 2012]	Serbia	13 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no
[Last Quarter 2012]	Ethiopia	4 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no
[Last Quarter 2012]	Afghanistan	3 rd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no
[Last Quarter 2012]	Algeria	Informal/Formal WP meeting	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no
[Week of 10 December – Second Geneva Week]						
[Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 December 2012 – General Council]						
[First Quarter 2013]	The Bahamas	3 rd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)	tbc	yes	no
[First Quarter 2013]	The Seychelles	4 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	tbc	yes	no

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.

Enquiries related to this calendar should be addressed to:

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