



WTO OMC

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WTO Accessions Newsletter

The 1st meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2013 took place today, 25 January. At this meeting, the Director of the Accessions Division briefed the IGA on: (i) recent developments of the 2012 completed accessions; (ii) the 2013 accession focus; (iii) accession maintenance work; (iv) technical assistance and outreach; (v) the Accessions Commitments Database (ACDB); and (vi) acceding governments affected by administrative measures. The Secretariat also consulted with Members on the Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2013 (as annexed). The 9th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC9) would take place in Bali on 3-6 December. Any draft accession packages to be considered for formal action by Ministers at MC9 would need to be adopted, *ad referendum*, at the Working Party level between September and October.

Two new WTO Members in 2013

Lao PDR deposited its Instrument of Acceptance on 3 January and will become the 158th WTO Member on 2 February 2013. Tajikistan completed the domestic ratification process on 9 January, and has yet to deposit its Instrument of Acceptance with Director-General Lamy, in order to start the 30-day count to WTO Membership.



Accession of Tajikistan - Signing ceremony
Geneva, 10 December 2012
(Picture by ADB's Tajikistan Resident Mission)

2013 Accession Focus

Afghanistan: This LDC accession emerged as a 2013 Priority. WTO Members interested in bilateral market access negotiations with this 2013 LDC accession priority were encouraged to communicate their interest to Kabul as soon as possible to facilitate work on this accession. The Minister of Finance will visit Geneva next week.

Ethiopia: WTO Director-General Lamy visited Addis Ababa on 7-8 January 2013. He discussed Ethiopia's accession with the new Prime Minister, the chief negotiator, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Steering Committee. Inputs from Ethiopia are still pending, including the initial market access offer on services, in order to convene the next Working Party meeting.

Yemen: This 2012 LDC Accession Priority has been transferred to 2013. The technical verification process remained work in progress under the Facilitators and reported to the General Council Chairperson.

Kazakhstan: Due to its technical complexity, this 2012 Accession Priority was carried over as a priority for 2013. Kazakhstan is currently in the process of preparing replies to Members' questions and comments; this work is expected to be finalized by mid-February. On the draft Goods Schedule, outstanding work remains in the areas of: AMS; export subsidies; export duties; and TRQs. Pending the finalization of the last remaining bilateral market access negotiation on services, the objective is to circulate the consolidated draft Services Schedule prior to the next cycle of meetings. Depending on the timely circulation of all relevant inputs, the next cycle of meetings was pencilled in for the week of 18 March 2013.

Serbia: The new Serbian State Secretary, Mr. Stevan Nikčević visited Geneva in the week of 21 January. On this occasion, he met with the Working Party Chairperson, Ambassador Swärd Capra (Sweden) and a WTO Secretariat team. Two of the objectives of his visit were to: (i) discuss the state-of-play of Serbia's WTO accession process; and (ii) identify Serbia's 'remaining homework' to advance this accession to an end-game stage this year. The major remaining challenge is the enactment of WTO-consistent legislation on: GMOs; trading rights; and, excise duties. Serbia aims to complete all relevant legislative work and conclude all remaining bilateral

negotiations, in the first half of 2013. Pending relevant legislative and bilateral developments, the next Working Party meeting has been pencilled in for the week of 3 June 2013.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: The IGA was reminded that the Working Party Chairperson, Ambassador Major (Hungary) encouraged Members and Bosnia and Herzegovina to work towards concluding all remaining bilateral market access negotiations in the first half of 2013. Sarajevo started submitting inputs in the week of 21 January. On the basis of these inputs, the Secretariat has started updating the draft Working Party Report, in preparation for the next Working Party meeting, pencilled in for the week of 25 March 2013.

Accessions Maintenance Work

The IGA was briefed on the progress in six other active accessions (Algeria; Azerbaijan; The Bahamas; Belarus; Iraq; and Seychelles). On **Belarus**, the IGA was informed that Ambassador Kuneralp (Turkey) was designated as the new Working Party Chairperson on 18 December 2012. He was currently in the process of consulting with Members on the format and timing for resumption of work, which is pencilled in for the 2nd Quarter of 2013. On **Iraq**, the Secretariat was currently reviewing the initial goods offers submitted on 20 December 2012. On **Seychelles**, the IGA was informed that Seychelles was in the process of preparing its replies to Members' questions. The Working Party Chairperson, Ms. Al-Hinai (Oman), and a Secretariat team will visit Seychelles from 7 to 8 February.

Technical Assistance and Outreach

Secretariat appreciation was conveyed to Members (in particular, Australia; China; the EU; Japan; New Zealand; Switzerland; and, the US) for the bilateral technical assistance provided to acceding governments in 2012. Other WTO Members were invited to also provide essential accession-related technical assistance in 2013, for which there was real demand. The IGA was notified that a global seminar on WTO accessions and the second Roundtable of the China and LDCs' Accessions Programme will be held in the second half of 2013. The first Round Table, organized by the WTO Secretariat and hosted by the Government of China, took place from 29 May - 1 June 2012.

Accessions Commitments Database (ACDB)

The ACDB, launched in May 2012 by Director-General Lamy, was presented in its enhanced format on 16 January 2013 at the Trade Data Day. It can be accessed via: <http://acdb.wto.org/>



Trade Data Day, Geneva, 16 January 2013

Administrative Measures for Observers in Arrears

The IGA was informed that Administrative Measures for Members and Observers in arrears were implemented as of 1 January 2013. Several acceding governments were affected by these administrative measures.

Evolving Calendar of WTO Accessions Working Parties

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
Friday, 25 January	IGA	1 st 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Fax dated 21/01/13 refers (AM)	S3	NO	NO
7-8 February	Working Party Chairperson's visit to Seychelles					
[25-26 February]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[First half of March]	Algeria	Informal/formal WP meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	NO	YES
[Week of 18 March]	Kazakhstan	15 th Working Party meeting + Plurilaterals	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Wed, 27 March]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Plurilateral on Agriculture	Convening Notice pending	CRI	NO	NO
		11 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	CRI	YES	NO
[Week of 25 March]	Ethiopia	4 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Week of 8 April]	The Bahamas	3 rd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[1-2 May]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
9 May - 10 May	ASCENSION DAY + EID HOLIDAY					
20 May	WHIT MONDAY					
[Week of 3 June]	Serbia	13 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Week of 3 June]	Afghanistan	4 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Week of 17 June]	Seychelles	4 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Week of 17 June]	Liberia	2 nd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Week of 22 July]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	11 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 nd Quarter]	Belarus	Informal/formal WP meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 nd Quarter]	Azerbaijan	11 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[24 - 25 July]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
5 - 6 September	JEUNE GENEVOIS					
[3 rd Quarter]	Iraq	3 rd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[8 - 9 October]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[5 - 6 November]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[3-6 December]	NINTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (MC9) - BALI					

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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