



WTO OMC

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# WTO Accessions Newsletter

The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2013 took place today, 27 February. At this meeting, the Director of the Accessions Division briefed the IGA on: (i) recent developments in the 2012 completed accessions; (ii) the recent visit of the Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Seychelles to Victoria; (iii) the 2013 technical accession focus; (iv) accession maintenance work; (v) technical assistance and outreach; and (vi) acceding governments in arrears affected by administrative measures. The WTO Accession of Seychelles has emerged as a 2013 accession focus, with realistic prospects for conclusion this year, based on a time-defined end-game accession roadmap. The Secretariat also consulted with Members on the Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2013 (as annexed).

## Two new WTO Members in 2013

Lao PDR acceded as 158<sup>th</sup> WTO Member on 2 February 2013. Tajikistan deposited its Instrument of Acceptance on 31 January and will become the 159<sup>th</sup> WTO Member on 2 March 2013.



## Working Party Chairperson's Visit

The Chairperson of the Working Party (WP) on the Accession of Seychelles, Ms. Hilda Al-Hinai (Oman), and the Director of the Accessions Division, Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, visited Victoria from 7-11 February. The WP Chairperson briefed Members on her recent visit where she met with new Government authorities, including Vice President Danny Faure, and private sector stakeholders. She informed Members that this accession has emerged as a 2013 accession deliverable, based on a time-defined endgame accession roadmap, prepared by the Government. Mr. Osakwe explained that the graduation to a 2013 accession focus was based on the "new political commitment" by the Acceding Government, identifying the technical conclusion of Seychelles WTO accession as a 2013 objective (and formal WTO Membership in 2014). Members welcomed this transparency exercise, and expressed their support for this 2013 focus.

## 2013 Technical Accession Focus

**Afghanistan:** The last Working Party meeting was in December. At that meeting, the Working Party Chairperson requested Members to communicate their interest, if any, in bilateral market access negotiations. This would enable Kabul to organize itself. No further requests have been registered beyond December.

**Yemen:** The draft Accession Package was ready, with the exception of 90 tariff lines, subject to technical verification between Ukraine and Yemen. Pending the conclusion of the technical verification process, the final Working Party meeting has been pencilled in for March.

**Kazakhstan:** Kazakhstan submitted all relevant inputs, including CU-related data, for the next cycle of meetings. The Secretariat was finalizing all inputs for circulation. The next cycle of meetings will be convened in the week of 18 March. The Russian Federation underlined the significant technical work undertaken by Astana for the March cycle, and expressed its appreciation to WTO Members, active on Kazakhstan's accession, for their continued support.

**Serbia:** No developments to report, remaining work is domestic. Relevant inputs on legislative and bilateral developments were pending. The next Working Party meeting has been pencilled in for the week of 3 June 2013.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Sarajevo has submitted all relevant inputs for the next Working Party meeting. The Secretariat has updated

the draft Working Party Report. A Plurilateral meeting on Agriculture is scheduled in the morning of 27 March, and the 11<sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting is scheduled in the afternoon, on the same day. Sarajevo recently concluded bilateral market access negotiations with India and Mexico; the Bilateral Agreements will be initialled and signed on the margins of the next Working Party meeting. This accession is on course for a 2013 conclusion.

**Seychelles:** Seychelles was finalizing its replies to Members' questions. The Legislative Action Plan was being updated to indicate the date of: adoption/enactment; and, implementation. Agriculture Supporting Tables; Action Plans; and, Questionnaires were also being updated. The next cycle of meetings is scheduled for 19 June. The stated target for the conclusion of all bilateral market access negotiations is end-April. The IGA was informed that the Secretariat would provide an end-game customized TA programme before the Summer break, in line with Seychelles' time-defined, endgame accession roadmap. The Director of the Accessions Division invited Members to provide bilateral technical assistance to Seychelles.

## Accessions Maintenance Work

The IGA was briefed on the progress in six other active accessions (Algeria; Azerbaijan; The Bahamas; Belarus; Ethiopia; and, Iraq). On **Belarus**, the IGA was informed that Ambassador Kuneralp (Turkey) had undertaken confidence-building consultations with Members on the format and timing for the resumption of the Accession Working Party. Minsk was replying to Members' questions and comments on the updated Factual Summary. Chairperson's informal consultations, in the framework of the Working Party, are envisaged for the month of April. On **Iraq**, the acceding government is finalizing its initial goods offer. On **The Bahamas**, a revised Legislative Action Plan and relevant legislation have been circulated. On **Ethiopia**, no technical work was underway in the Secretariat, as inputs, outstanding from July 2012, are awaited. These inputs were required in order to convene a Working Party meeting.



## Technical Assistance and Outreach

The IGA was notified that a global seminar on WTO accession will take place in Geneva, from 7-11 October 2013. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Roundtable of the China and LDCs' Accessions Programme will be held in the second half of 2013. National activities, including visits by Working Party Chairpersons, would be undertaken, as required.

## Administrative Measures for Observers in Arrears

The IGA was informed that several acceding governments in arrears were subject to Administrative Measures.

## Evolving Calendar of WTO Accessions Working Parties

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
[25-26 February]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
Wednesday, 27 February	IGA	2 <sup>nd</sup> 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Notice pending (AM)	F	NO	NO
[2 <sup>nd</sup> half of March]	Kazakhstan	Secretariat processing inputs interactively with Astana. Calendar to be separately specified when inputs circulated.				
[Friday, 22 March]	IGA	3 <sup>rd</sup> 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Notice pending (AM)	S2	NO	NO
[Wednesday, 27 March]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Plurilateral meeting on Agriculture	Convening Notice pending (AM)	CRI	NO	NO
		11 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending (PM)	CRI	YES	NO
[March]	Yemen	11 <sup>th</sup> and final Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[29 March – 1 April]	EASTER BREAK					
[Friday, 5 April]	Algeria	11 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending (AM)	CRI	YES	NO
[April]	Belarus	Chairman's Informal WP 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 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Week of 3 June]	Afghanistan	4 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Wednesday, 19 June]	Seychelles	Plurilateral meeting on Agriculture	Convening Notice pending (AM)	S1	NO	NO
		4 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending (PM)	S1	YES	NO
[Week of 22 July]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	12 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2013]	Azerbaijan	11 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2013]	The Bahamas	3 <sup>rd</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[24 - 25 July]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 2013]	Ethiopia	4 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 2013]	Liberia	2 <sup>nd</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
5 - 6 September	JEUNE GENEVOIS					
[3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2013]	Iraq	3 <sup>rd</sup> 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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For all enquiries related to the contents of the WTO Accessions Newsletter, 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).