



WTO OMC

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# WTO Accessions Newsletter

The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2013 took place today, 22 March. At this meeting, the Director of the Accessions Division welcomed, on behalf of the Membership and the WTO Secretariat, Tajikistan to the 'IGA family'. The IGA was briefed on: (i) the 2013 technical accession focus; (ii) accession maintenance work; (iii) technical assistance and outreach; and (iv) acceding governments in arrears affected by administrative measures. The IGA also bid farewell to Mr. Nicholas Niggli, current Deputy Head of the WTO Division of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland, and thanked him for his key contributions to WTO accessions over the past years. The WTO Secretariat also consulted with Members on the Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2013 (as annexed).

## **First IGA Participation by the Republic of Tajikistan**

The Secretariat, on behalf of the IGA, warmly welcomed the Republic of Tajikistan as a new member of the "IGA family". The IGA looked forward to Tajikistan's contributions to the Multilateral Trading System, specifically, on WTO accessions. The Delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan was led by H.E. Mr. Saidrahmon Nazriev, Deputy-Minister of Economic Development and Trade.



New 'IGA Family Member' - Republic of Tajikistan, Geneva, 22 March 2013

## **2013 Technical Accession Focus**

**Afghanistan:** Kabul's stated objective is to conclude its on-going bilateral market access negotiations with eight Members, no later than end-April. A draft ITA Schedule in HS2012 would be ready next week, to further facilitate the on-going bilateral negotiations. The next Working Party (WP) meeting is pencilled in for the month of June, pending inputs from Kabul. The IGA was informed that the timing for a WP Chairperson's visit, accompanied by a Secretariat team, was currently being discussed.

**Yemen:** The Delegations of Ukraine and Yemen are constructively and positively engaged. Pending the conclusion of this technical verification process, the final Working Party meeting is pencilled in for the end of April.

**Kazakhstan:** The latest cycle of meetings on the Accession of Kazakhstan has just been completed. Steady and positive progress was registered across all meetings this week. The Draft Working Party Report has been further stabilized. WP Members underlined the importance that Astana accelerates legislative work. The WP Chairperson envisages two further cycles of meetings between May and July. The adjustment question is key in completing this accession.

**Serbia:** Belgrade submitted a revised Legislative Action Plan. Other relevant inputs on legislative and bilateral developments are still pending.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Sarajevo recently concluded bilateral market access negotiations with India, Korea and Mexico; the Bilateral Agreements would be initialled and signed on the margins of the next Working Party meeting. The conclusion of the remaining five on-going bilateral market access negotiations is within reach. Panama informed the IGA of its objective to conclude its bilateral market access negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina in "record time". In preparation of the upcoming WP meeting, H.E. Ambassador Istvan Major (Hungary), WP Chairperson,

addressed a communication to WP Members and the IGA on 21 March, providing an updated state-of-play. His assessment, based on his contacts with Members and the Secretariat, is that this accession is on course for a 2013 conclusion. The 11<sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting is scheduled for the afternoon of 27 March. A Plurilateral meeting on Agriculture is scheduled in the morning of the same day.

**Seychelles:** Ms. Hilda Al-Hinai (Oman), WP Chairperson, informed the IGA that the Government of Seychelles reconfirmed its commitment to conclude Seychelles' WTO accession process in 2013. She also informed Members that Seychelles' negotiating team would be in Geneva from 25 to 27 March for bilateral market access negotiations with interested Members. 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.

## **Accessions Maintenance Work**

The IGA was briefed on the progress in four other active accessions (Algeria; Azerbaijan; The Bahamas; and Belarus). On **Algeria**, the next WP meeting is scheduled for 5 April. On **Belarus**, the IGA was informed that Minsk was preparing replies to Members' questions. China, India, the Russian Federation and Ukraine intervened to express their support for the resumption of the work of the Accession Working Party. Chairperson's Informal Consultations, in the framework of the Working Party, are envisaged for the month of May. Although the IGA family was overall supportive of a resumption of the work, some Members underscored the need to examine the replies first, before deciding on the specific timing for the next meeting. On **The Bahamas**, a draft subsidies notification was circulated to Members on 4 March.



Mr. Nicholas Niggli, Informal Group on Accessions, Geneva, 22 March 2013

## **Technical Assistance and Outreach**

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
Friday, 22 March	IGA	3 <sup>rd</sup> 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Fax dated 15 March 2013 refers	S2	NO	NO
Wednesday, 27 March	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Plurilateral meeting on Agriculture	Fax dated 11 March 2013 refers (AM)	CRI	NO	NO
		11 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	WTO/AIR/4092 dated 11 March 2013 refers (PM)	CRI	YES	YES
<b>29 March – 1 April</b>	<b>EASTER BREAK</b>					
Friday, 5 April	Algeria	11 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	WTO/AIR/4103 dated 20 March 2013 refers (AM)	CRI	YES	NO
[Friday, 26 April]	IGA	4 <sup>th</sup> 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Notice pending	S2	NO	NO
[April]	Yemen	11 <sup>th</sup> and final Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
<b>[29 April – 3 May]</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> WTO GENEVA WEEK</b>					
<b>[1-2 May]</b>	<b>GENERAL COUNCIL</b>					
<b>9 May - 10 May</b>	<b>ASCENSION DAY + EID HOLIDAY</b>					
<b>20 May</b>	<b>WHIT MONDAY</b>					
[Friday, 31 May]	IGA	5 <sup>th</sup> 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Notice pending	S2	NO	NO
[May]	Belarus	Chairman's Informal WP meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[May/June]	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral/ Informal/Formal meetings	Convening Notices pending	TBC	TBC	TBC
[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
[Friday, 28 June]	IGA	6 <sup>th</sup> 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Notice pending	S2	NO	NO
[June]	Afghanistan	4 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[June/July]	Serbia	13 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	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]	The Bahamas	3 <sup>rd</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Tuesday, 23 July]	IGA	7 <sup>th</sup> 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Notice pending	S3	NO	NO
<b>[24 - 25 July]</b>	<b>GENERAL COUNCIL</b>					
[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
[2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 2013]	<b>2013 ROUNDTABLE FOR LDCs</b>					
<b>5 - 6 September</b>	<b>JEUNE GENEVOIS</b>					
[3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2013]	Azerbaijan	11 <sup>th</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
[3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2013]	Iraq	3 <sup>rd</sup> Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[8 - 9 October]	<b>GENERAL COUNCIL</b>					
[7 -11 October]	<b>GLOBAL SEMINAR ON ACCESSIONS</b>					
[5 - 6 November]	<b>GENERAL COUNCIL</b>					
[3-6 December]	<b>NINTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (MC9) - BALI</b>					

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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