



WTO Accessions Newsletter

...safeguarding and strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading system

This is the special "August" edition of the Accessions Newsletter. This edition provides an update on: (i) the state-of-play in active LDCs and non-LDCs' accessions - Liberia, Kazakhstan, and Seychelles; and, (ii) accession-specific technical assistance and outreach. The updated Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings for 2014 (ECAM) is annexed to the Newsletter.



H.E. Mr. Axel Addy, Trade Minister of Liberia, making a statement at the General Council and meeting with the Chairman of the Working Party on the accession of Liberia, H.E. Amb. Joakim Reiter (Sweden) - 24 July 2014 (WTO Secretariat Photos / Souda Tandara-Stenier)

2014 LDCs' ACCESSIONS

Liberia: After its reactivation, the technical work in this accession is now focused on substance of the required negotiating inputs. Members in the IGA, in particular the European Union and the United States, are providing strong technical and policy support to Liberia. On 24-25 July, the Monrovia-based Negotiating Team, led by H.E. Mr. Axel Addy, Trade Minister of Liberia, visited Geneva, for a "pulse check" meeting with the Chairman of the Working Party on the accession of Liberia, H.E. Amb. Joakim Reiter (Sweden) and the Secretariat Team, to report on its domestic preparatory work on the inputs. Minister Addy also took part in the meeting of the General Council on 24 July. In his GC Statement, he underlined the commitment of the Liberian Government for a 2015 WTO Accession. This August, Monrovia submitted its Initial Market Access Offers on Goods and Services and Legislative Action Plan (LAP). These are being technically processed by the Secretariat; a process involving exchanges with Liberia. As soon as technical soundness is achieved, these Negotiating Inputs would be circulated to WP Members. The Negotiating Team is planning a return to Geneva in September to take stock with the Secretariat and engage with Members.

ACCESSIONS - TOOLBOX

- > Click here for a list of current [Accession Working Parties](#) and [Accession Working Party Chairpersons](#)
- > Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings (ECAM)
- > Secretariat Accessions Team
- > [WTO Director-General Annual Reports on Accessions](#)
- > Find all Article XII Members' specific accession commitments and related information provided in the Working Party Reports and Accession Protocols - in the [Accession Commitments Database \(ACDB\)](#)
- > [Handbook on Accessions to the WTO](#)
- > WTO Accessions Internship - "[China Programme](#)"
- > [Accession-Related Technical Assistance Activities](#)
- > For all official (de-restricted) documents relating to the accession processes of Article XII Members, click [here](#)
- > Accession Portal on the WTO Website ([En](#), [Fr](#), [Es](#))
- > All earlier [WTO Accessions Newsletters](#) are available on the Accession Portal of the WTO website, in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).
- > For enquiries related to the contents of the WTO Accessions Newsletter, send an e-mail to: Acceding-Government-Newsletter@wto.org

ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES (WP) IN FOCUS

Kazakhstan: Substantive progress has been made in this complex and unique accession, including over this month of August. The technical prospects for its 2014 completion have improved, as a consequence of recently submitted Negotiating Inputs. However, outstanding questions remain to be addressed.

The last Cycle of Working Party (WP) meetings took place on 21-23 July. The WP cycle included: (i) The "Transparency Session on the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Treaty"; (ii) Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture; (iii) Plurilateral Meeting on Market Access with Signatory Members; and, (iv) Informal and Formal WP Meetings. At this July Cycle, updated Negotiating Inputs before Members, included: (i) Updated Draft Working Party Report (DWPR); (ii) Replies to the Members' Questions; (iii) Revised Legislative Action Plan (LAP) and associated "Notices of Legislation"; and, (iv) updated AGSTs and Replies to Members' Questions linked to the revised Agricultural Chapter. On 30 July, the Draft Consolidated Services Schedule was circulated to Signatory Members.



*Accession of Kazakhstan - Cycle of WP Meetings - 21-23 July 2014
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)*

Although several issues remain to be resolved in this accession, there is a predictable process under way that is yielding concrete results. Improvements have been made possible by the active engagement of the Delegation of Kazakhstan, led by H.E. Minister Zhanar Aitzhanova, Minister for Economic Integration and Chief negotiator of Kazakhstan. The main issues being addressed include: (i) tariff adjustment and associated compensation; (ii) complications caused by the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in on-going accession negotiations, and; (iii) SPS. Other issues include Agriculture along with questions in the Draft Working Party Report and the Draft Goods Schedule.

The issue of tariff adjustment remains the key to advancing to conclusion on this accession. The work on the framework for tariff adjustment is in progress. The discussions are based on the Chairman's proposal,

tabled under his responsibility. The first Plurilateral Meeting on Tariff Adjustment was held on 22 July. Subsequent Plurilateral consultations are envisaged.

A recent significant step forward that has injected momentum to the negotiations is the revised Consolidated Draft Goods Schedule of Kazakhstan, circulated by the Secretariat, on 26 August, following Plurilateral Consultations at the July Cycle.

The "EAEU Treaty" will transform the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan (CU) into the EAEU. The Treaty will enter into force on 1 January 2015. To facilitate understanding of the Treaty, a Transparency Session was held on 21 July. At the session, the Delegation of Kazakhstan made a presentation on the Treaty, focusing on new elements and areas with direct relevance for the WP process. All relevant changes will be reflected in the DWPR. This work is underway and will continue in the coming months.

SPS is a third area of the negotiations of systemic importance. Outstanding work would require expeditious resolution over the next few weeks in order to remain on schedule before the September Cycle of WP meetings.

The September Cycle is tentatively scheduled for the third week of September, subject to confirmation that outstanding Negotiating Inputs are submitted with sufficient time for Members' review. Provided that all necessary inputs are submitted by Astana in due time, the Cycle is envisaged to include a WP meeting, Plurilateral meetings on Agriculture, SPS and Tariff adjustment and, Technical verification meetings on Draft Consolidated Services and Goods Schedules.

Seychelles: This accession is on track for a conclusion over the next few months. The last cycle of WP meetings took place from 2 to 3 July. Bilateral negotiations on goods and services were virtually concluded. The Secretariat has started with the technical preparation of the Draft Accession Package, although there are a few issues that still require resolution. The WP Chairwoman, Amb. Hilda Ali Al-Hinai (Oman), supported by the Secretariat, is in touch with relevant parties on several remaining questions, largely of a technical nature. Depending on the resolution of technical matters remaining, the next (and final) WP meeting could be convened in the last trimester.



*Accession of Seychelles - 6th Working Party Meeting - 3 July 2014
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)*

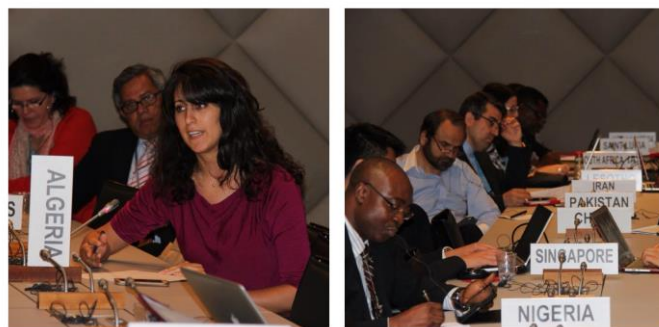
OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Accessions Division continued to provide accessions-specific technical assistance and capacity building in coordination with ITTC.



*Presentation on WTO Accessions for students from the Washington College of Law, American University - 14 July 2014
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)*

The Annual Outreach Cycle with WTO Regional Groups continued with a briefing for the Informal Group of Developing Countries (IGDCs), 21 July. Briefings for WTO Regional Groups will continue after the Summer Break.



*Briefing on Accessions for the Informal Group on Developing Countries (IGDCs) - 21 July 2014
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)*

ANNEX

EVOLVING CALENDAR OF ACCESSIONS MEETINGS (ECAM)¹

Date	Working Party	Time	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
						EN-FR-ES	Own
[Monday, 22 September 2014]	Kazakhstan	10:00 – 13:00	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (AM)	Convening Notice pending	E	NO	YES
[Tuesday, 23 September 2014]	Kazakhstan	10:00 – 18:00	Plurilateral Meeting on SPS (AM/PM)	Convening Notice pending	S2	NO	YES
[Wednesday, 24 September 2014]	Kazakhstan	10:00 – 13:00	Technical Verification Meeting on Goods Schedule with Signatory Members (AM)	Convening Notice pending	CR II	NO	TBC
		15:00 – 18:00	Tariff Adjustment: Plurilateral Meeting with Signatory Members (PM)	Convening Notice pending	CR II	NO	TBC
[Thursday, 25 September 2014]	IGA	09:00 – 10:30	8 th 2014 Informal Group on Accessions (AM)	Convening Notice pending	E	NO	NO
[Friday, 26 September 2014]	Kazakhstan	10:00 – 13:00	Technical Verification Meeting on Services Schedule with Signatory Members (AM)	Convening Fax dated 26 August 2014 refers	D	NO	YES
		15:00 – 18:00	Informal of the Working Party Meeting (PM)	Convening Notice pending	W	YES	YES
[2 nd Half of 2014]	Seychelles	10:00 – 13:00	7 th Working Party Meeting (AM)	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[4 th Quarter 2014]	Liberia		2 nd Working Party Meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[TBC]	Afghanistan		5 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO

Note:

Enquiries related to this calendar should be addressed to: accessions@wto.org

¹ 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 at least four weeks. Scheduling and confirmation of meetings also take account of the distribution of meetings in any particular period, and hence, the capacity of Members and the Secretariat alike to cope.