



WTO Accessions Newsletter

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

IGA-AGENDA:

The 3rd meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2015 took place today, 20 March. The meeting was chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division. IGA Members were briefed on: (i) the Director-General Azevêdo's visit to the accessions and legal exhibition; (ii) state-of-play updates on the Accessions of Kazakhstan and Liberia; (iii) LDCs' accessions; (iv) accession WPs under "maintenance"; and, (v) accession-specific technical assistance and outreach. The Secretariat consulted IGA Members on the updated ECAM: Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings for 2015 (annexed). H.E. Ambassador Vesa Himanen (Finland), Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Kazakhstan, and H.E. Ambassador Joakim Reiter (Sweden), Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Liberia, reported to Members on item (ii).



Director-General Azevêdo visits the Accessions and Legal Exhibition - 19 March 2015
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)

ACCESSIONS AND LEGAL EXHIBITION

The exhibit "The WTO: a rules-based system", at the initiative of Valerie Hughes, Director Legal Affairs Division, had been co-organized with the Accessions Division, the Languages, Documentation and Information Management Division (Graphics, Printing and Archives) and other WTO Divisions: Information and External Relations Division and the Information Technology Solutions Division. The accessions segment of the exhibit was in 3 parts: (i) an information stand, providing a snapshot on how to initiate the WTO accession process, the actual process at a glance, and the architecture of an Accession Package/"Terms of Accession"; (ii) an installation, demonstrating the "Volume Increase of Accession Documents"; and, (iii) a *vitrine* displaying a sample of Accession Protocols. A 4th component: an interactive WTO Accession Map, demonstrating the expansion of the WTO's membership since 1995, would be added in May/June. The Exhibit could be viewed on the ground floor of the new building. It was a permanent exhibition, as part of the WTO's year-long activities for the 20th Anniversary of the Organization, which would stay in place until December.

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 OF LIBERIA

H.E. Ambassador Joakim Reiter (Sweden), Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Liberia, reported to IGA Members on the state-of-play on the Accession of Liberia.

The accession of Liberia was a "non-problematic" accession. It was a "strong deliverable" for MC10. Liberia's Negotiating Team, led by the Chief Negotiator, Minister Addy, had been in Geneva for an extended period, returning as necessary, to develop the Draft Working Party Report (DWPR). The DWPR was progressing, substantively and steadily. Monrovia had just submitted its revised Agriculture Supporting Tables (AGSTs). There had been progress on bilateral market access negotiations with six interested Members, at the closure of the established timeline. The objective remained to have the Draft Accession Package emerge before the Summer Break. The next cycle of Working Party meetings was envisaged for late April / early May 2015. Members requested ample time to review Monrovia's responses to their questions/requests before the WP meeting was convened. Ambassador Reiter thanked Members for their pragmatism, encouragement and support and paid tribute to DG Azevêdo's leadership on the accession of Liberia. He remained in steady coordination with Minister Axel Addy, the Chief Negotiator on the Accession of Liberia and Members to focus on the substance of Liberia's accession.



IGA Meeting - 20 March 2015
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)

ACCESSION OF KAZAKHSTAN

H.E. Ambassador Vesa Himanen (Finland), Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Kazakhstan, briefed IGA Members on the state-of-play on the accession of Kazakhstan.

The accession of Kazakhstan was at the threshold of conclusion. The Draft Accession Package was being finalized. On 17 March 2015, the Secretariat had circulated the 5th revision of the Draft Goods Schedule to the 29 Signatory Members and the Russian Federation. The Technical Verification Meeting was scheduled for 31 March. The Draft Services Schedule, which had already been verified, was stabilized and, had been re-

circulated, in its final form, on 17 March. The Draft Working Party Report (DWPR) was expected to emerge, shortly, as soon as a few remaining questions were resolved. The next cycle of meetings, which would comprise informal, plurilateral and the Working Party Meeting, was envisaged for late April / early May. He urged Members and Kazakhstan to show flexibility to resolve the remaining issues, as soon as possible.

LDCs' ACCESSIONS

Afghanistan: Together with Liberia, this LDC accession was a deliverable in 2015. The Draft Accession Package, circulated in March 2014, was stable. Kabul would contact the Secretariat regarding the date for the next WP meeting. At this time, Secretariat was updating, together with Kabul, some time-sensitive parts of the documents and Legislative Action Plan (LAP).

Comoros: Comoros was working on the inputs for its Working Party.

Other LDCs' Accessions were currently inactive.

CONCLUDED ACCESSIONS

Seychelles: The Government of Seychelles had invited the WP Chairperson, Mme Hilda Al Hinai, and the WTO Secretariat for an activity to facilitate the ratification of Seychelles' Accession Protocol and explain Seychelles' terms of WTO membership and its benefits. The activity was scheduled from 23 to 25 March.

MAINTENANCE WORK

Azerbaijan: The last cycle of meetings on the Accession of Azerbaijan, which comprised the Agriculture Plurilateral and the WP meeting, had taken place on 5 and 6 March. Members had been invited to submit their written questions/answers by 15 April.



Meetings on the Accession of Azerbaijan - 5 and 6 March 2015
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)

OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Preparations for the Second Global Seminar on WTO Accessions and the Launch for the Accessions Book were underway. The events were scheduled to take place from 28 to 30 September.

ANNEX

EVOLVING CALENDAR OF ACCESSIONS MEETINGS (ECAM)¹

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room
Friday, 20 March 2015	IGA	3 rd 2015 Informal Group on Accessions (9:00-10:00)	Convening fax dated 13/03/2015 refers	S2
Tuesday, 31 March 2015	Kazakhstan	Technical Verification Meeting on Goods Schedule with Signatory Members + RF – Restricted Access (from 10:00 am)	Convening fax F15-07 dated 17 March 2015 refers	D
[April/May 2015]	Liberia	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture	Convening Notice pending	TBC
[April/May 2015]	Liberia	2 nd Working Party Meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC
[April/May 2015]	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral Meeting on SPS (PM)	Convening Notice pending	TBC
[April/May 2015]	Kazakhstan	Informal Meeting of the Working (AM/PM)	Convening Notice pending	TBC
[April/May 2015]	Kazakhstan	20 th Working Party Meeting (AM/PM)	Convening Notice pending	TBC
[Friday, 24 April 2015]	IGA	4 th 2015 Informal Group on Accessions (9:00-10:00)	Convening Notice pending	E
[Friday, 29 May 2015]	IGA	5 th 2015 Informal Group on Accessions (9:00-10:00)	Convening Notice pending	E
[TBC]	Afghanistan	5 th Working Party Meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC

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.