

WTO ACCESSIONS NEWSLETTER

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

WTO ACCESSION DEVELOPMENTS – SECRETARIAT REPORT TO MEMBERS

Fourth Session of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) - 23 April 2015.

Agenda:

- + "Post-Accession Ratification Activity" in [Seychelles](#): Report by Ms. Hilda Al-Hinai (Oman), Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Seychelles
- + Progress Report on Accessions in 2015 Focus: [Afghanistan](#), [Liberia](#) and [Kazakhstan](#)
- + Accession Working Parties under Maintenance: [Azerbaijan](#)
- + Accession-Specific Technical Assistance and Outreach Activities: 2015 Overview

Chaired by the WTO Secretariat (Director of the Accessions Division)

Briefing on Post-Accession Ratification Activity

The Chairwoman of the Working Party, Ms. Hilda Al-Hinai, reported on the visit to Seychelles, from 23 to 26 March. She congratulated the Government and the People of the Republic of Seychelles on the ratification of its Accession Protocol by the unanimous vote of the National Assembly, on 24 March 2015. The ratification facilitated the completion of the legal action necessary for WTO membership. Seychelles would become the 161st WTO Member on 26 April 2015. She recommended this post-accession activity model for other areas of WTO work, noting that one of the many lessons learned from WTO accessions was that trade agreements were never self-ratifying. Domestic ratification processes required multilateral intervention and support. The activity in Seychelles was the most recent example.

For her full statement, [click here](#).



4th 2015 IGA Meeting on 23 April 2015, Geneva, Switzerland
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Samantha Evans)

ACCESSIONS TOOLBOX

- + [Accession Working Parties](#)
- + [Accession Working Party Chairpersons](#)
- + [WTO Director-General's Annual Reports on Accessions](#)
- + [Handbook on Accessions to the WTO](#)
- + [Accession-Related Technical Assistance Activities](#)
- + Accession Portal on the WTO Website ([En](#), [Fr](#), [Es](#))
- + Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings (ECAM)
- + [Accession Commitments Database \(ACDB\)](#)
- + WTO Accessions Internship - "[China Programme](#)"
- + Accession processes of Article XII Members, click [here](#)
- + [WTO Accessions Newsletters](#)

+ Contact the WTO Accessions Secretariat: Acceding-Government-Newsletter@wto.org

Progress Report on Accessions in 2015 Focus

Afghanistan: The IGA was informed that H.E. Mr. Rasa had been appointed as new Minister of Commerce and Industries. He would be briefed on Afghanistan's draft Accession Package. The draft Package required technical updates before the next Working Party meeting could be convened in consultation with Members of the Working Party.

Liberia: The next cycle of meetings was scheduled for 7 May 2015. Monrovia had submitted a complete set of updated documentation. The Negotiating Team, led by H.E. Minister Addy, would be in Geneva from 4 to 8 May 2015. Members would meet with the Team bilaterally from 4 to 6 May 2015. Liberia was working as hard as any Acceding Government had ever worked to conclude its accession and was fundamentally committed to the trade integration and acceptant of its benefits.

Kazakhstan: The IGA was informed of the successful conclusion and emergence of two of the three components of the Draft Accession Package of Kazakhstan:

- ✚ The Technical Verification Process of the Draft Goods Schedule had been finalized on 8 April 2015 by Signatory-Members, the Russian Federation and the Acceding Government of Kazakhstan and, subsequently, circulated to all Working Party Members on 15 April 2015.
- ✚ The Technical Verification Process of the Draft Services Schedule had been finalized on 26 September 2014 by Signatory-Members, the Russian Federation and the Acceding Government of Kazakhstan and, subsequently, circulated to all Working Party Members on 17 March 2015.

On the Draft Working Party Report, the third and final component, the IGA was briefed that Astana had submitted outstanding inputs. The Secretariat would update the Draft Working Party Report in due course, and would circulate the revised version to Working Party Members in the week of 27 April 2015. The IGA was also informed that WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and H.E. Ambassador De Mateo, Chairperson of the General Council, were regularly briefed on this accession because of its challenges, systemic ramifications and sensitivities. The Chairperson of the Working Party would shortly circulate a message on the next and final steps.



Post-Accession Ratification Activity in Seychelles from 23 to 26 March 2015

Reminder

Azerbaijan: The indicative deadline for the submission of additional questions/comments has passed (i.e. 15 April 2015). Members that wish to submit questions/comments are invited to do so as soon as possible.



Technical Verification of the Draft Goods Schedule on the Accession of Kazakhstan – Meeting with Signatory-Members on 8 April 2015, Geneva, Switzerland
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Laurens Van De Ven)

Accession-Specific Technical Assistance and Outreach Activities: 2015 Overview

- ✚ A Joint Briefing for the African Group and the LDCs' Consultative Group has been scheduled for 1 May 2015. At this joint session, the WTO Secretariat will consult with these Groups on the planned 3rd and 4th China Round Tables, which will take place in Dushanbe and Nairobi respectively.
- ✚ The 3rd China Round Table, focusing on "Post-Accession", will take place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 2 to 5 June 2015. The WTO Secretariat is in the process of contacting guest speakers and participants.
- ✚ The 4th China Round Table has been scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 12 to 13 December 2015, back-to-back with the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference.
- ✚ The WTO Secretariat confirmed the 2nd Global Seminar on Accessions; the 10-year Anniversary of Saudi Arabia's WTO membership; and, the launch of the book "WTO Accessions and Trade Multilateralism: Case Studies and Lessons for the WTO at Twenty" by the WTO Director-General, from 28 to 30 September 2015. These activities had been designed to blend with this year's theme for the WTO Public Forum: "Trade Works"! The draft programme is distributed to Members together with this Newsletter, and would be posted, shortly, on the WTO public website.



For enquiries, contact: Acc-events@wto.org

EVOLVING CALENDAR OF ACCESSIONS MEETINGS (ECAM)

DATE	WORKING PARTY	MEETING	STATUS	ROOM
Thursday, 23 April 2015	IGA	4th 2015 Informal Group on Accessions (9:00-10:00)	Convening fax dated 16/04/2015 refers	S2
Monday, 27 April	TNC			
5-6 May 2015	General Council			
7 May 2015	Liberia	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (AM)	Convening fax dated 22/4/2015 refers	D
7 May 2015	Liberia	2nd Working Party Meeting (PM)	WTO/AIR/ACC/2 refers	D
[Thursday, 28 May 2015]	IGA	5th 2015 Informal Group on Accessions (9:00-10:00)	Convening Notice pending	E
[2-4 June 2015]	Dushanbe, Tajikistan - 3 rd China Round Table			
[8-10 June 2015]	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral Meeting on SPS (AM)	Convening Notice pending	W
[8-10 June 2015]	Kazakhstan	Informal Meeting of the Working (PM)	Convening Notice pending	W
[8-10 June 2015]	Kazakhstan	20th Working Party Meeting (AM/PM)	Convening Notice pending	W
[Thursday, 25 June 2015]	IGA	6th 2015 Informal Group on Accessions (9:00-10:00)	Convening Notice pending	E
[27-31 July 2015]	Geneva Week			
[TBC]	Afghanistan	5th Working Party Meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC
28 September 2015	Second Global Seminar on Accessions			
29 September 2015	10-Year Anniversary of Saudi Arabia's WTO Membership			
30 September 2015	Launch of Book - "WTO Accessions and Trade Multilateralism: Case Studies and Lessons for the WTO at Twenty" by WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo			
12-13 December 2015	Nairobi, Kenya - 4 th China Round Table			

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.

Supervising Deputy Director-General Mr. David Shark

Secretariat Accessions Working Party Management (To be provided in the next Newsletter)