



WTO ACCESSIONS NEWSLETTER

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WTO ACCESSION DEVELOPMENTS – SECRETARIAT REPORT TO MEMBERS

The Tenth and final Session of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2015 took place today, 24 November 2015

Agenda:

- ✚ Completed accessions: **Kazakhstan, Liberia and Afghanistan**
- ✚ Accession Working Party Re-Start: **Belarus**
- ✚ Accession Working Parties under Maintenance: **The Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Lebanon.**
- ✚ 2015 Director General's Annual Report on Accessions
- ✚ Accession-Specific Technical Assistance, Outreach and "WTO Post-Accession Support"

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

Completed accessions / Preparation for MC10

Kazakhstan: Following ratification of its Accession Protocol, Kazakhstan deposited the Instrument of Acceptance of its Accession Protocol on 31 October. Kazakhstan shall become the 162nd Member of the WTO on 30 November.

Liberia: As earlier reported, Members adopted, *ad referendum*, the Draft Accession Package of Liberia at the 4th and Final WP Meeting, which took place on 6 October. The Accession Package has been re-issued under the double symbol of WT/ACC/LBR/23 and WT/MIN(15)/2, on 9 October. Ministers shall formally adopt the Package at the Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

Afghanistan: On 11 November, at the 5th and Final WP Meeting, Members adopted the Draft Accession Package of Afghanistan, *ad referendum*, and transmitted it to the 10th Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, for formal action. The Accession Package has been re-issued under the double symbol of WT/ACC/AFG/36 and WT/MIN(15)/6, on 13 November.

The Director Accessions conveyed to Members in the IGA the appreciation of the Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and the Director-General's appeal for Members to give early consideration to Post-Accession Implementation Support for Liberia and Afghanistan.



President Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan and H.E. Minister Aitghanova, Chief Negotiator on the Accession of Kazakhstan – 27 July 2015
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)



10th IGA Meeting – 24 November 2015
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)

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: accessions.newsletter@wto.org



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Accession(s) Re-Start

Belarus: Mr. Aleksandr Guryanov, Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus visited Geneva in the week of 16 November, for consultations and contacts with a range of Members, the WP Chairman, H.E. Ambassador Haluk Ilıcak (Turkey) and the Secretariat. Minsk seized the opportunity to explain its objectives, put forward its ideas on the re-start of its accession process and, broached a possible timeframe for its accession. Mr. Guryanov confirmed that WTO accession remained a priority for the Government of Belarus. The broad reaction of Members was supportive of Belarus' accession.

At the same time, all the contacts indicated that substance would drive the process and the actual re-start of the accession negotiations of Belarus would depend on the submission and circulation of thoroughly revised, updated and high quality negotiating inputs that would take account of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan Accession Packages. This would be *sine qua non* for the re-start of the process. The pace of the negotiations would be determined by Minsk.

The Director Accessions also informed IGA participants that the Secretariat had implemented "Stage 1" of the 3-stage Integrated Training and Capacity Building Programme specifically designed for the Belarus negotiating team. The purpose was to assist Minsk with the technical update of the negotiating inputs for the re-start of the accession process, to the extent that such assistance was required.

Director-General's Annual Report on Accessions

The IGA was informed that the Director-General's Annual Report on Accessions had been circulated on 16 November, as WT/ACC/25. In accordance with standing practice, the Director-General would present his Annual Report on Accession for Members review, at the 30 November – 1 December General Council under agenda item 9. Following the presentation of the Report by the Director-General, Members and Observers would be invited to debate and comment on the Report.

Director Accessions expressed appreciation to Members for their positive assessment of the work of the Secretariat on accessions and thanked them for their confidence, trust and support all-year round. WTO Accession was indeed one of the success stories of the WTO thanks to the Secretariat-Members partnership to support the domestic reform efforts of the Acceding Governments.



Technical Training for the Accession Negotiating Team of Belarus – 13 November 2015
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)



Briefing on Accessions for the Arab Group – 16 November 2015
and for the LDC's Consultative Group – 23 November 2015
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)

2015 Accessions Maintenance

The Bahamas: The Secretariat remained in technical engagement with H.E. Ambassador Rhoda Jackson of The Bahamas and her Team with regard to the required updates to its negotiating inputs, notably the Draft Factual Summary and revised offers. The ball was in the court of Nassau with regard to: an updated Roadmap; updated negotiating inputs; designation of a Negotiating Team; and, "Next Steps". The Secretariat stood ready to provide technical assistance to support the process. The Chairman of the Working Party, H.E. Ambassador Wayne McCook (Jamaica), envisaged a mission to Nassau on 30 November – 2 December.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Secretariat had followed-up on various aspects of the meeting between H.E. Ambassador Ljubic-Lepine, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Director-General Roberto Azevêdo on 26 October 2015. The ball remained in the court of Sarajevo to re-activate its accession negotiations and expedite its conclusion. Sarajevo would need to reach out to its negotiating partners to complete outstanding bilateral negotiations; and complete required technical work. DDG David Shark was consulting, on behalf of the General Council Chairman, to fill the vacancy in the chairmanship of the Working Party.

Lebanon: Following consultations with Members, on 6 November, the Chairman of the General Council designated Mr. Jean-Paul Thuillier, Permanent Representative of France to the WTO, as Chairman of the Working Party on the accession of Lebanon. In accordance with practice, the Secretariat provided the Chairman with the traditional "Chairman's Background Briefing" on the WTO Accession process and procedures and, reviewed the substantive state-of-play in the Working Party.

Accession-Specific Technical Assistance and Outreach Activities: 2015 Overview

- The [Annual Outreach Cycle](#) with WTO Regional Groups is almost complete. The Director Accessions had briefed the GRULAC, the Arab Group, the Asian Group of Developing Members and the LDCs Consultative Group. The briefing for the Informal Group of Developing Countries would take place on 25 November, as part of Geneva-week. A meeting was yet to be scheduled with the WTO African Group.
- The [4th China Round Table](#) on WTO Accessions and the Multilateral Trading System would take place in Nairobi, Kenya from 13 to 14 December, back-to-back with MC10. The thematic focus of the Roundtable was on "Domestic Reforms for Competitiveness and Deeper Trade Integration in the Global Economy". Currently, over 30 African/LDCs Ministers have confirmed their participation. The programme was available on the WTO Website: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/4th_china_round_table_e.pdf



- The Secretariat will participate in a Conference in Belgrade, on 8 December, related to Serbia's accession application to the EU and the WTO. The Conference was being organized by the ISAC Fund (in coordination with the Faculty of Economics of the University of Belgrade).

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

EVOLVING CALENDAR OF ACCESSIONS MEETINGS (ECAM)

DATE	WORKING PARTY	MEETING	STATUS	ROOM
Tuesday, 24 November 2015	IGA	10 th 2015 Informal Group on Accessions (9:00-10:00)	Convening fax dated 17/11/2015 refers	E
30 Nov – 1 Dec 2015	General Council			
13-14 December 2015	4 th China Round Table - Nairobi, Kenya			
15-18 December 2015	10 th Ministerial Conference – Nairobi, Kenya			
2016				
[First Quarter 2016]	Comoros	1 st Working Party Meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC

ACCESSIONS TOOLBOX: ACCESSIONS INTELLIGENCE PORTAL (AIP)

The Accessions Division is finalizing the Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP) by the end of 2015. Currently, the verification process is underway. All sites of the new, modernized accession gateway are being tested internally. The Accessions Division is implementing this project, in close coordination with colleagues from Operations, Internet and Intranet Unit.

As indicated in the 2015 Director-General's Annual Report on Accessions, the Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP) will provide a more comprehensive, easy and transparent access to accession negotiation-related information.

Any feedback, following the launch of the AIP is welcome.