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***Support for Accession:  
Partnership and Outreach***

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# Overview

- ▶ Accession through
  - Article XII of Marrakesh Agreement or
  - Annex 2 of the Rules of Procedure for Ministerial Conferences/General Council
- ▶ Observer Status in the WTO
  - Purpose and duration
  - Access and facilities
- ▶ Menu of WTO Technical Assistance



# Legal Framework – Option 1

## Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO

### Article XII Accession

1. Any State or separate customs territory possessing full autonomy in the conduct of its external commercial relations and of the other matters provided for in this Agreement and the Multilateral Trade Agreements may accede to this Agreement, on terms to be agreed between it and the WTO. Such accession shall apply to this Agreement and the Multilateral Trade Agreements annexed thereto.

# Legal Framework – Option 2

## Guidelines for Observer Status for Governments in the WTO

- Annex 2 of the “Rules for Procedure Sessions of the Ministerial Conference and Meetings of the General Council” (WT/L/161)

### Annex 2 Guidelines for Observer Status for Governments in the WTO

4. Governments wishing to request observer status in the General Council shall address to that body a communication expressing the intent to initiate negotiations for accession to the WTO Agreement within a maximum period of five years, and provide a description of their current economic and trade policies, as well as any intended future reforms of these policies.



# Article XII or Observer Status

- ▶ Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreements
  - 36 Accessions completed in 1995–2015
  - 19 on-going Accessions Working Parties
- ▶ Request for Observer Status\* and then Article XII
  - The Bahamas in 2000; then in 2001
  - Comoros in 1999, and in 2007
  - Ethiopia in 1997; then in 2002
  - Equatorial Guinea in 2002; then in 2007
  - Iran in 1979, then in 1996
  - Iraq in GATT, then in 2004
  - Libya in 1999, and then in 2001
  - Sao Tome and Principe in 2001, and in 2005

*\* Only those requests considered by the General Council*



# Observer Status

## Purpose and Duration

### ► Purpose:

- ... *“to allow a government to better acquaint itself with the WTO and its activities, and to prepare and initiate negotiations for accession to the WTO Agreement.”*

*(para 3 of Annex 2 of the Guidelines for Observer Status)*

### ► Duration:

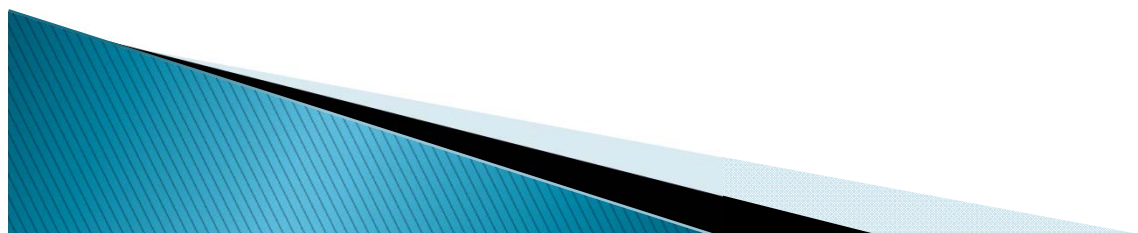
- Initially, a period of 5 years, with the possibility of an extension



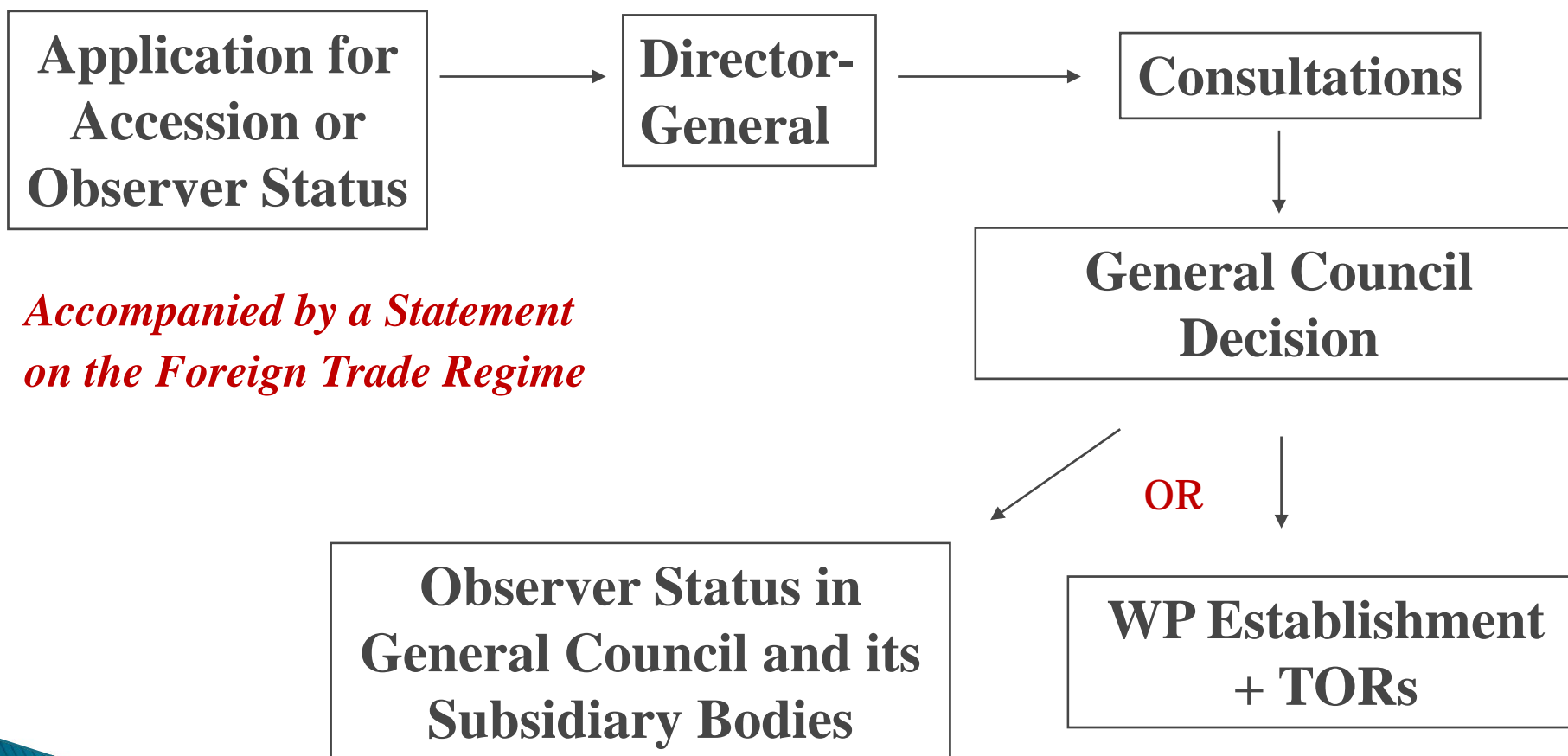
# Observer Status

## Access and Facilities

- ▶ WTO documents
  - Access the main WTO document series
- ▶ WTO meetings
  - Attendance at the General Council and its subsidiary bodies, as well as the Ministerial Conferences
    - only formal sessions
  - Exception: Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration
  - Right to speak:
    - After WTO Members, but cannot make proposals or participate in decision-making.
- ▶ Technical Assistance provided by WTO



# Initiation of the Accession Process





# Observer Fee

- ▶ Budget of the WTO: CHF197 millions (2015)
- ▶ Annual contributions by:
  - 162 WTO Members:
    - fee based on their shares in world trade
    - LDCs and those who are small shares: CHF29,000
  - Observers: flat fee of around CHF29,000



# Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Activities

- ▶ E-Learning on WTO and WTO Accessions:
  - <https://ecampus.wto.org/>
- ▶ Global activities in Geneva
  - Advanced Trade Policy Courses (12 weeks)
  - Advanced training on various WTO topics (1 week)
    - Global seminar on WTO Accessions
- ▶ Regional activities
  - Trade Policy Courses (8 weeks)
  - Workshops, including through partnership
  - China Round Tables – exchange of experiences

# Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Activities

## ▶ National activities

- Tailor-made to each stage of Accession process
  - Introduction to the WTO Accession
  - Preparation of the MFTRs, Goods and Services Offers
  - Outreach to different stakeholders
    - University and research institutions
    - Parliamentarians
    - Press/Media

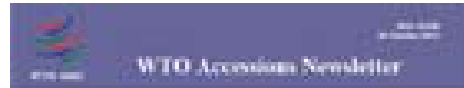
## ▶ Academic Support

## ▶ Internships

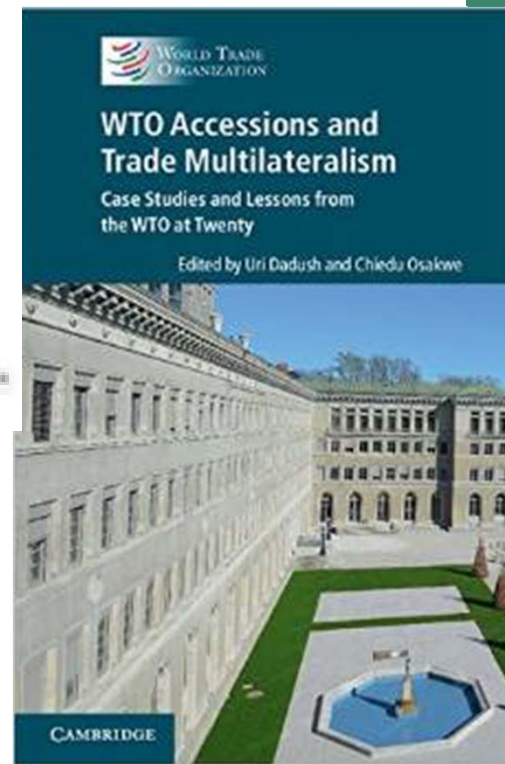
- Netherlands Trainees Programme: 10 months in the Secretariat



# Accession Publications



\* The Annual Report refers to the period of 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014.  
This document has been prepared under the Director-General's own  
the authority of Members or in their right and



*Thank you*

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