



WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION



WT/ACC/31 • WT/GC/189 • WT/MIN(17)/6
29 November 2017

ANNUAL REPORT

WTO ACCESSIONS

2017

Annual Report by the Director-General





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* Unless otherwise specified, this Annual Report takes account of confirmed accession-related developments up until 24 November 2017.

This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or their rights and obligations under the WTO.

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I. OVERVIEW 2017 AND OUTLOOK 2018



1. I am pleased to present the Ninth Annual Report on WTO Accessions. This is my fifth such report since I started my term as Director-General in September 2013, and my first since I started my second term in September this year. I would thus like to take this opportunity to reflect on the Organization's achievements in the Accessions arena in the last four and a half years, and in particular in 2017, and how we could build on that success going forward into 2018.

2. Looking back on my first term as Director-General, I take great pride in what the Organization has achieved in the field of Accessions. In my first Annual Report in 2013, I emphasized that "WTO accession is a strategic priority for the Organization." The following years bore this out. Since I took office, the WTO family grew from 159 to 164 Members, that is, on average, one new Member per year, expanding the coverage of WTO rules to include over 98% of global trade. The accessions of these new Members, three of whom are post-conflict least developed countries (LDCs), demonstrate the enduring value of the multilateral trading system to a wide variety of countries as a key driver to strengthen their economies. However, there are still 21 Acceding Governments¹, in addition to others, that remain outside the multilateral trading system. Moreover, accessions processes are long and arduous. These governments thus need our help to realize their goal of membership. Therefore, WTO accessions remain a strategic priority for the Organization and for my second term as Director-General.

3. During 2017, several governments registered remarkable progress in their accessions processes. By the end of the year, the accessions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the Union of the Comoros were both at an advanced stages, thanks to the intensive technical work undertaken by the two respective Acceding Governments on the one hand, and the constructive engagement by WTO Members on the other. In the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the government completed the outstanding accession-related legislative reforms and made vigorous efforts to conclude outstanding bilateral market access negotiations. In the accession of the Union of the Comoros, the Working Party met three times within a period of ten months, and several bilateral market access negotiations were concluded on the margins of the Working Party meetings. As such, we shall make both of these accessions priorities in 2018 to support the goal set by Sarajevo for a conclusion in the first half of the year and to target an early conclusion to the Union of the Comoros' accession, even if the initial target for a completion by MC11 was not met.

4. There was a surge in Working Party activity in 2017. Such a surge is reflected not only in the number of meetings which increased four-fold over 2016, but also in the amount of documentation issued for the eight meetings which amounted to over 3,000 pages. At the level of accession Working Party, in addition to Azerbaijan which maintained the regular pace of its 20-year accession process, there were intensive efforts to reactivate several accessions whose processes had been inactive for many years. These reactivation efforts included the accessions of: Belarus (its Working Party met twice this year, resuming after 12 years of limited activity in informal mode), Iraq (its Working Party resumed on an informal basis after nine years of dormancy), the Lebanese Republic (a comprehensive set of multilateral documentation circulated to its Working Party after eight years of dormancy), and Sudan (its Working Party met twice this year, resuming after 13 years of dormancy). These reactivations were assisted by high-level political commitments by the respective governments to pursue WTO accession for domestic structural reforms and deeper integration into the global economy. I thus hope to see concrete

¹ Twenty-one accessions include: Algeria, Andorra, Azerbaijan, The Bahamas, Belarus, Bhutan*, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Union of the Comoros*, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia*, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Lebanese Republic, Libya, Sao Tome and Principe*, Serbia, Somalia*, Sudan*, Syrian Arab Republic, Timor-Leste* and Uzbekistan (* is LDC).

progress made in 2018 on all these accessions. In particular, however, I expect that Belarus can accelerate the pace of negotiations to reach an advanced stage by the end of next year if the current level of political and technical engagement is sustained. I am also optimistic that the accession of Sudan will continue to make substantive progress in 2018, building on the momentum generated by a successful and vigorous resumption of Working Party activity. Other Acceding Governments, including the Bahamas, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia and Serbia, have also indicated their plans to reactivate their accession processes in 2018.

5. Recalling the priority that WTO Members attach to LDC accessions, I note with satisfaction that acceding LDCs registered substantial progress in their respective processes in 2017. In addition to the accessions of the Union of the Comoros and Sudan mentioned above, two new LDC applicants — Somalia and Timor-Leste — which had started their accessions in December 2016, have circulated their Memoranda on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) during their first year of the accession process. These early submissions of the base documentation represents an extraordinary mobilization of resources on the part of these post-conflict LDCs, as the preparation of the MFTR is one of the first major challenges often encountered by LDC Acceding Governments in the accession process. It has taken, on average, more than four years for LDCs to accomplish this early step. I very much hope that this achievement allows these Governments to start substantive discussions at the level of the Working Party in 2018 so these accessions can start to make direct contributions to the Governments' ongoing efforts to rebuild their economies within international frameworks. In this regard, the Secretariat is ready to support the efforts of a newly formed *g7+ WTO Accessions Group*², which will be inaugurated at MC11 in Buenos Aires, as a platform for post-conflict LDCs to support and realize the objective of integration into the multilateral trading system to promote peace, security and stability.

6. I am confident that the gains made this year will eventually lead to multiple accessions in the foreseeable future. Such gains, however, do not arise in a vacuum. Rather, they flow from the energy and

resolve at all levels, including the highest levels, of Acceding Governments to undertake and tackle the rigorous demands of accession-related reforms. It is in that context that I introduce this year's thematic focus, "WTO Accessions and the Business Environment". Business is the lifeblood of economies. A thriving private sector, among other things, increases employment, augments real incomes, expands the production of goods and services, and raises standards of living overall. In short, it is essential to effectively pursue the very goals that led nations to found first the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) 70 years ago and then to establish the WTO as the global trade governing body in 1995. It is fitting, therefore, that governments enter the accession process with the goal and, indeed, the expectation that joining the WTO will help improve their own business environments and therefore could attract greater investments, from both domestic and foreign sources. The thematic section explores the relationship between WTO accession and the business environment, including through an analysis of empirical data from the annual World Bank Doing Business Indicators. This exploration indicates that the WTO accession process is accompanied by improvements to Acceding Governments' regulatory business environments.

7. Outreach and technical assistance also saw major and exciting expansion in 2017, focusing on the regions with the largest numbers of ongoing and future accessions (Africa, Middle East/Arab Region, and Central Asia and the Caucasus). In August, the first Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa was held, in partnership with the Government of Kenya and the University of Nairobi, offering a platform for the Acceding Governments from the region to exchange lessons learned from their accessions processes, and to discuss how to sequence these processes and ongoing regional integration initiatives. In September, in cooperation with the WTO Arab Group, a public outreach session was organised at the 2017 WTO Public Forum, showcasing three ongoing Arab accessions which offered practical insights on not only the value of accession and the national contexts in which it occurs, but also the realities and opportunities that underlie the accession process. The Second Trade Policy Forum on Central Asia and the Multilateral Trading System, initially also scheduled for September in Astana,

² The *g7+ WTO Accessions Group* includes: three Article XII LDC Members (Afghanistan, Liberia, and Yemen), four acceding LDCs (Union of the Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia and Timor-Leste) and one expression of interest to submit application for WTO accession (South Sudan).

Kazakhstan, was postponed to 2018. Finally, in Geneva, building on the success of the training course on Trade in Services in 2016, the first Advanced Course on Goods Scheduling was held in March, focusing on legal, procedural and practical aspects of bilateral market access negotiations. Moving forward into 2018, outreach and technical assistance efforts will continue to evolve. The Secretariat will continue to develop and implement tailor-made approaches to the specific needs and challenges of individual Acceding Governments, with the objective of realising and maximising the gains from WTO accessions. Special focus will continue to be placed on LDCs, in particular, post-conflict states among them.

8. The Secretariat, however, cannot meet the technical-assistance needs of acceding governments alone. I am thus grateful for the support that the WTO has received in the area of technical assistance and capacity building from China, the European Union (including its Member states), India, Japan, Kenya, Oman, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. I am also grateful for the support provided by sister agencies, and in particular the Advisory Centre on WTO Law, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Enhanced Integrated Framework, the International Trade Centre, the Islamic Development Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the UN Development Programme, the World Intellectual Property Organization, and the World Bank.

9. Moreover, the "China's LDCs and Accessions Programme (The China Programme)" continued to make valuable and targeted contributions by supporting Acceding Governments and Article XII Members from the LDC Group to realize the benefits of WTO accession and membership. This year, two China Round Tables were held — in March in Siem Reap, Cambodia, and in December in Buenos Aires, Argentina — providing platforms to connect, exchange and share accession experiences. In Siem Reap, under the leadership of the LDC Coordinator, Cambodia, which was one of the first LDCs to accede to the WTO, the Fifth China Round Table focused on the "Best Practices on the Accession of Least-Developed Countries". In Buenos Aires, just one day before the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference, the Sixth China Round Table will officially launch the WTO Accession Negotiators' Network. These activities demonstrate that the most valuable resource for Acceding

Governments is often each other and other Article XII Members who have completed the accession process, and thus have been imbued with uniquely relevant experience. Furthermore, under the WTO Accessions Internship Programme, seven Interns were trained, bringing the total number of trained young professionals to 24 over the last five years. Moving forward into 2018 and beyond, the China Programme will remain one of the main vehicles to meet the unique needs of Acceding Governments, as it offers a valuable tool box which can address multiple challenges that the Acceding Governments face, both during and after accession.

10. In 2017, the Secretariat continued in the best traditions of transparency to enable our Members, Acceding Governments, partners, and the public to stay informed of developments in various dossiers through monthly meetings of the Informal Group on Accessions and monthly Accessions Newsletters. It is hoped that these transparency tools can shed light not only on the progress made in the accession process, but also the challenges met by the Acceding Governments in the process. Further, in 2017 work continued in the area of post-accession implementation support, expanding the knowledge pool of experiences and lessons learned from recently acceded Members. I have no doubt that the Secretariat will carry forth these positive trends into the New Year.

11. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the departure of Deputy Director-General Mr David Shark from the WTO in September 2017, after his four year term. His contributions to, and tireless support for, WTO accessions, including as former Working Party Chairperson who successfully concluded the accession of Cabo Verde in 2008, is deeply appreciated and will be missed. At the same time, I would like to warmly welcome his successor, Ambassador Alan Wm. Wolff. Even in his short time at the WTO thus far, Ambassador Wolff has taken up an active role in promoting and facilitating the work of WTO accessions. We thus look forward to his engagement, leadership, and support.



Deputy Director-General David Shark



Deputy Director-General Alan Wm Wolff

12. As we prepare for another charged yet exciting year with WTO Accessions in 2018, I am ready to mobilise resources from across the Secretariat to provide tailored support and advice to Acceding Governments at all stages of accession, as well as for post-accession implementation support when they become Members. Let me also take this opportunity to call upon all Members to dedicate their attention and resources and sustain their engagement with governments aspiring to join them in the coveted ranks of WTO Membership. My door is always open to Acceding Governments, and I encourage them to cultivate relationships among themselves and with former Acceding Governments to enrich their own accessions processes through cross-pollination of ideas, advice and experiences.

13. Our coordinated efforts on this score are doubtlessly well spent. Recently acceded Members and Acceding Governments clearly see WTO membership as the foundation for focussing their nations in positive directions and for enhancing the well-being of their people. Afghanistan, the latest addition to the WTO family, sees it as creating a basis for restoring and transforming its war-torn economy to a hub of commerce between Central and South Asia. Liberia, which completed its accession process in 2015, was recovering from civil war when Ebola hit just the year before, and is now an ardent supporter of WTO accession as a means to drive reforms and create a climate to attract foreign investment. Perhaps being

inspired by these examples, this year, we have been reminded, once again, of the power of WTO membership to attract and drive economic transformation. Timor-Leste and, hopefully, soon South Sudan, will embark on the accession journey as part of state-building after long and costly struggles for independence. Somalia seeks membership to help recover from extended periods of conflict and instability. Moreover, while domestic challenges in many Acceding Governments — from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, the Lebanese Republic, to Sudan — are well known, they have reactivated their respective WTO accessions processes as a means to stabilize or diversify their economies. Their commitment to WTO accession and their determination to use WTO membership to work for themselves constantly remind all of us the values of multilateralism which cannot be met by alternative arrangements.

14. I thus close by reaffirming the importance of our mission as an Organization, and how proud I am to be a part of it. The principles upon which the Members founded the WTO are not, after all, an historical aberration, or bred of expediency. Rather, they are sound and deep. Our goal of universality is neither platitude nor a reflection of inertia. It is, rather, a reflection of the appeal of the benefits that arise from this special Member-driven organization. Going forward, we will continue to secure those benefits for Members, both present and future.



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo meeting with H.E. Mr. Djaffar Ahmed Said Hassani, Vice President of the Union of the Comoros — Geneva, 1 December 2016



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo meeting with H.E. Mr. Andrei Yeudachenka, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus — Geneva, 23 January 2017



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and Deputy Minister Josip Brkić of Bosnia and Herzegovina — Geneva, 15 June 2017



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and H.E. Mr. Hatim El-Sir, Minister of Trade of Sudan — Geneva, 14 July 2017



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo meeting with H.E. Mr. Mouayed SALEH, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Iraq — Geneva, 20 September 2017



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and Ms Maryn Hassan, Chief Negotiator of Somalia — Geneva, 26 September 2017

II. 2017 DEVELOPMENTS

1. ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES: AN OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

15. At the start of the year, 21 Acceding Governments were in the process of WTO accession. These negotiations were managed through a combination of formal and/or informal multilateral, plurilateral, and bilateral meetings (see Annex 1). In the year under review:

- Seven formal Working Party meetings were held. These were on the accessions of Azerbaijan (one³ meeting), Belarus (two⁴ meetings), the Union of the Comoros (two⁵ meetings), and Sudan (two⁶ meetings).
- One informal Working Party meeting was held for Iraq⁷.
- Three meetings addressed specific technical issues in the area of agriculture. These were on the accessions of Azerbaijan (one⁸ meeting), Belarus (one⁹ meeting), and Sudan (one¹⁰ meeting). These plurilateral meetings were chaired by the Officer-in-Charge of the Accessions Division.

16. In 2017, progress in the accession Working Parties was documented as follows:

- A Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) was circulated for the Working Parties of Somalia and Timor-Leste.
- A revised MFTR was circulated to the Working Party of Sudan¹¹.
- Factual Summaries of Points Raised were prepared by the Secretariat for the Working Parties of the Union of the Comoros and Sudan.
- Elements of a draft Report of the Working Party were prepared by the Secretariat for the Working Parties of Belarus and the Union of the Comoros.
- A first version of a draft Report of the Working Party was prepared by the Secretariat for the Working Party of Belarus.
- Draft Reports of the Working Party were revised by the Secretariat for three Working Parties: Azerbaijan (one revision), Bosnia and Herzegovina (one revision), and the Lebanese Republic (one revision).

2. WORKING PARTY CHAIRPERSONS

17. There were a number of changes in the status of Accession Working Party Chairpersons in 2017, in a chronological order:

- H.E. Mr Kemal Madenoğlu (Turkey) was designated as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Belarus in December 2016, following the departure of H.E. Mr Haluk Ilicak (Turkey).
- H.E. Mr Carsten Staur (Denmark) was designated as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Ethiopia in September 2017, following the departure of H.E. Mr Steffen Smidt (Denmark).
- H.E. Mr Pedro Nuno Bártolo (Portugal) was designated as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Timor-Leste in September 2017.



Chairpersons: H.E. Mr. Pedro Nuno Bártolo (Portugal), and H.E. Mr. Kemal Madenoğlu (Turkey)

18. At present, eight of the Chairpersons are Geneva-based. There are eight vacancies for the positions of Chairpersons of Accession Working Parties (see Annex 3). These include vacancies on accessions at their initial stages, where no documentary basis for work exists, at this time.

19. In 2017, Working Party Chairpersons remained actively engaged. They consulted with Members and Acceding Governments in various formats and configurations, and engaged in outreach to improve technical and policy understanding on WTO accessions. The active engagement of Chairpersons advanced the accessions processes, including through country visits.

³ The 14th meeting of the Working Party held on 28 July 2017.

⁴ The eighth meeting of the Working Party held on 24 January 2017 and the ninth meeting of the Working Party held 13 September 2017.

⁵ The second meeting of the Working Party held on 1 June 2017 and the third meeting of Working Party held on 12 October 2017.

⁶ The third meeting of the Working Party held on 31 January 2017 and the fourth meeting of the Working Party held on 14 July 2017.

⁷ Held on 17 November 2017.

⁸ Held on 27 July 2017.

⁹ Held on 12 September 2017.

¹⁰ Held on 13 July 2017.

¹¹ At this writing, the MFTR for Somalia is scheduled for circulation the first week of December 2017.

20. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of the Union of the Comoros, H.E. Mr Luis Enrique Chávez Basagoitia (Peru), led a mission, accompanied by the Officer-in-Charge of the Accessions Division and the Working Party Secretary, to Moroni from 8 to 10 March 2017. The WTO delegation held high-level meetings with the Government, including: H.E. Mr Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros; H.E. Mr Mohamed Daoudou, Minister of Interior; H.E. Mr Said Ali Said Chayhane, Minister of Finance; H.E. Mr Mohamed Bacar Dossar, Minister of Foreign Affairs; H.E. Mr Hamadi Idaroussi, the Secretary General of the Government; Mr Michel Bua, Resident Representative of the International Monetary Fund; and representatives from the private sector. The meetings confirmed that the WTO accession process enjoyed support at all levels of Government, which considered WTO membership as central to the country's socio-economic development, and that the private sector stakeholders were engaged in the accession process.



Accession of the Union of the Comoros
Working Party Chairperson's visit in Moroni
8-10 March 2017



Accession of Sudan
Working Party Chairperson's visit in Khartoum
10-11 April 2017

21. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Sudan, Mr Ryosuke Kuwana (Japan), led a mission, accompanied by the Officer-in-Charge of the Accessions Division and the Secretary of the Working Party, to Khartoum from 10 to 11 April 2017, at the invitation of the Government. The WTO delegation held meetings with: H.E. General Bakhri Hassan Saleh, Prime Minister; H.E. Mr Hassabo Mohammed Abdel Rahman, Vice President and Chairman of the Higher Committee on Sudan's Accession to the WTO; H.E. Mr Osman Ahmed Fadul Wash, Minister of International Co-operation; H.E. Mr Ibrahim Ahmad Abd al-Aziz Ghandour, Minister of Foreign Affairs; and H.E. Mr Salah Mohamed Al-Hassan, Minister of Trade. The delegation also toured the Sudan National Assembly and met with H.E. Mr Ibrahim Ahmed Omer, Speaker and interacted with Dr Mohamed El Mustafa

Eldaw Ahmed, Chairman and Members of the Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Committee of the Assembly. The meetings underscored Sudan's commitment to its accession process and highlighted the government's view that WTO accession was a catalyst to deepen economic reforms and improve trade relationships.

22. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Belarus, H.E. Mr Kemal Madenoğlu (Turkey), led a mission, accompanied by the Officer-in-Charge of the Accessions Division and the Secretary of the Working party, to Minsk from 1 to 3 November 2017. The Chairperson met with: H.E. Mr Andrei Kobyakov, Prime Minister; H.E. Mr Vladimir Makei, Minister of Foreign Affairs; H.E. Mr Andrei Yeudachenka, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; H.E. Mr Dmitry Krutoy, First Deputy Minister of the Economy; H.E. Ms Alla Lomakina, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food; and Mr Vladimir Ulakhovich, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Belarus. These meetings confirmed that the Government of Belarus fully supports the WTO accession process and that the private sector is also very supportive of Belarus' WTO membership. In addition, the Secretariat team accompanying the Chairperson met with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Development Programme. The Secretariat also met with the Belarusian technical team to address general questions related to the preparation of accession documents.



Accession of Belarus— Working Party Chairperson's visit in Minsk
1-3 November 2017

23. In keeping with systemic transparency obligations, the Chairpersons of the Working Parties reported to Members on the progress of the work in their respective Working Parties, including the results of their visits, at the Informal Group on Accessions¹².

¹² The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of the Union of the Comoros, H.E. Mr Luis Enrique Chávez Basagoitia (Peru), reported to the IGA on 4 April 2017. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the accession of Lebanese Republic, Mr Jean-Paul Thuillier (France), also reported to the IGA on 4 April 2017. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Sudan, Mr Ryosuke Kuwana (Japan), reported to the IGA on 2 May 2017.

3. TRANSPARENCY IN THE ACCESSION PROCESS

24. Ensuring transparency and predictability in the accession process remain key priorities for the WTO Director-General and the WTO Membership. In 2017, the transparency measures that were introduced since 2010 continued to be implemented and reinforced.

i. Informal Group on Accessions (IGA)

25. The IGA held ten meetings in 2017. Consultations in the IGA focused on: (i) information exchange on accessions; (ii) Secretariat reports on technical developments in accessions processes; (iii) Secretariat reports on technical assistance and outreach activities; (iv) reports by Working Party Chairpersons; (v) planning of accession meetings; and (vi) addressing specific concerns raised by Members.

ii. WTO Accessions Newsletter

26. In 2017, the Secretariat prepared 11 WTO Accessions Newsletters, including one special edition. The Newsletter has served its purpose to ensure transparency on accession matters, report on monthly meetings of the IGA, and enhance communication with Acceding Governments, Chairpersons, Members, and the broader global trade policy community. The number of subscribers to the Newsletter in 2017 was 721, excluding the Secretariat.

iii. 2017 Annual Outreach Dialogue with WTO Regional Groups

27. As part of its 2017 annual outreach dialogue with WTO regional groups, a briefing for least-developed countries was provided at the 81st session of the Sub-Committee on LDCs held on 3 October 2017. Annual outreach dialogue on accessions was also conducted with the Informal Group of Developing Countries on 20 October 2017; the Asian Group of Developing Members on 25 October 2017; the Informal Group of Latin-American members of the WTO on 9 November 2017; and the Arab Group on 13 November 2017¹³. The objective of the annual outreach dialogue is to strengthen communication channels with Members and Acceding Governments, and to provide a platform to exchange region-specific information on WTO accessions. These outreach activities strengthen the collaboration between Members and Acceding Governments, and assist in building greater ownership for WTO accessions.



Annual Outreach to Regional Group with Arab Group —
13 November 2017

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OUTREACH

i. Overview

28. The WTO Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan for 2016–2017 establishes support for Acceding Governments as one of its four overarching objectives¹⁴. The Plan grants priority attention to acceding LDCs. Traditionally, accession-related technical assistance and capacity building focus on training for government officials. These activities, however, also cover outreach and awareness-raising activities for Parliamentarians, the private sector, academia, civil society, and the media.

29. In the period under review, technical assistance and capacity building activities delivered by the Accessions Division included: (i) national seminars; (ii) sessions on accessions in advanced trade policy courses¹⁵, and introductory courses for LDCs; (iii) workshops; (iv) technical missions; (v) establishment/upgrade of WTO Reference Centres¹⁶; (vi) e-Learning; (vii) outreach dialogue with WTO groupings¹⁷; (viii) presentations to students¹⁸; and (ix) participation in conferences.

30. In 2017, the Accessions Division was involved in the delivery of 21 technical assistance activities, including the activities specified above. The beneficiary countries included Acceding Governments and several Members. Specifically, tailor-made technical assistance was delivered to Afghanistan (post-accession), Belarus, Lebanese Republic, the Union of the Comoros, Sudan, and Somalia.

31. At the request of the Government of the Union of the Comoros, the Secretariat travelled to Moroni to assist the core team of officials in the preparation of negotiating inputs (Factual Summary of Points Raised,

¹³ At this writing, the annual outreach dialogue with the African Group is scheduled for December 2017.

¹⁴ WT/COMTD/W/211.

¹⁵ The Accessions Division participated in Advanced Trade Policy Courses in Geneva in January, June, and November 2017.

¹⁶ In Sudan from 13 to 15 November 2017.

¹⁷ See, e.g. above para. 27.

¹⁸ The Accessions Division met with students from UBIS University (Geneva), the Diplomatic Academy (Vienna), IELPO (Barcelona), Lviv National University (Ukraine), and the European Public Law Organization (Athens).

revised market access offers on goods and services) and background documents (Questions and Replies and a revised Legislative Action Plan). The technical working sessions took place over three days (from 8 to 10 March) and involved about a dozen officials mainly drawn from the Ministry of Economy and External Trade and the customs authority, as well as one Member of Parliament.



Accession of the Union of the Comoros—Technical Assistance mission
8-10 March 2017

32. At the request of the Government of Lebanese Republic, the Secretariat undertook a technical mission to Beirut from 20 to 25 February 2017. The objective of the mission was to review and update negotiating inputs for a formal resumption of the Working Party on the accession of the Lebanese Republic, and to agree on specific next steps in the accession process. The Secretariat team held intensive technical working sessions with the Lebanese Republic's WTO accession team and the representatives of the line ministries involved in the accession process. These sessions reviewed the required accession documentation, including the draft Working Party Report, to reflect policy and legislative developments which had taken place in the Lebanese Republic since the last meeting of the Working Party held in October 2009.

33. At the request of the Government of Sudan, the Accessions Division undertook a nine-day mission to Khartoum from 3 to 11 April 2017. The mission had two technical components focussing on: (i) the revision of Sudan's services offer (jointly with the Trade in Services and Investment Division); (ii) the preparation of negotiating inputs on rules. These components of the Secretariat's technical assistance activities were held in conjunction with a visit by the Working Party Chairperson who held high-level meetings with the Government and domestic stakeholders.



Accession of Sudan — Technical Assistance mission
Khartoum, Sudan — 3-11 April 2017

34. This year, the Secretariat organized the first Course on Goods Schedules for WTO Accession from 27 to 31 March 2017. Participants included 26 representatives from 12 Acceding Governments and two representatives from Members. The main objectives of this training course were to: (i) enhance understanding of bilateral market access negotiations on goods as well as the technical aspects of the goods schedules; and (ii) learn from experience-sharing sessions with former accession negotiators who had been directly involved in goods negotiations as well as other experts. Participants requested this course be held on a regular basis.



Participants of the first Course on Goods Schedules for
WTO Accessions—27 to 31 March 2017

35. On 13 July 2017, the Accessions Division organized the Forum on WTO Accessions on Accession-Related Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building, on the margins of the Aid for Trade Global Review 2017. The Forum brought together Acceding Governments, selected Members, and development partners (multilateral institutions and other donors) to discuss the challenges faced by Acceding Governments and their specific technical assistance and capacity building needs and to establish direct contacts between the Acceding Governments and donors. This high-level event was opened by H.E. Mr Axel Addy, Minister of Trade and Industry of Liberia and former Chief Negotiator on Liberia's WTO accession. Sudan, the Union of the Comoros, Somalia, and Timor-Leste made presentations on their respective accessions and related technical assistance and capacity-building needs. In response, Members and development partners described types of technical assistance and capacity building that they were prepared to provide to the Acceding Governments¹⁹.

36. From 28 to 30 August 2017, the Accessions Division organized the first Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, in partnership with the Government of Kenya

¹⁹ https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/forum0717_e/programme_e.htm.

and the University of Nairobi. The Regional Dialogue gathered high-level government officials from four Acceding Governments (Union of the Comoros, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan), and South Sudan (non-WTO observer), as well as the representatives from Article XII Members and development partners and international organizations. The dialogue had three main sessions: (i) WTO Membership: Structural Reforms and Regional Integration; (ii) Accession to the WTO; and (iii) Mobilising Support for WTO Accession. At the conclusion of the Regional Dialogue, participants adopted the "Nairobi Outcome: Fostering Synergies and Coherences between Regional Integration and the Multilateral Trading System through WTO Accessions"²⁰. The Regional Dialogue was followed by a two-day specialized training for government officials of Somalia and South Sudan from 31 August to 1 September 2017. This training provided an overview of the WTO accession process, focusing on drafting the MFTR and Legislative Action Plan²¹.



Ambassador (Dr.) Amina Mohamed
Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs



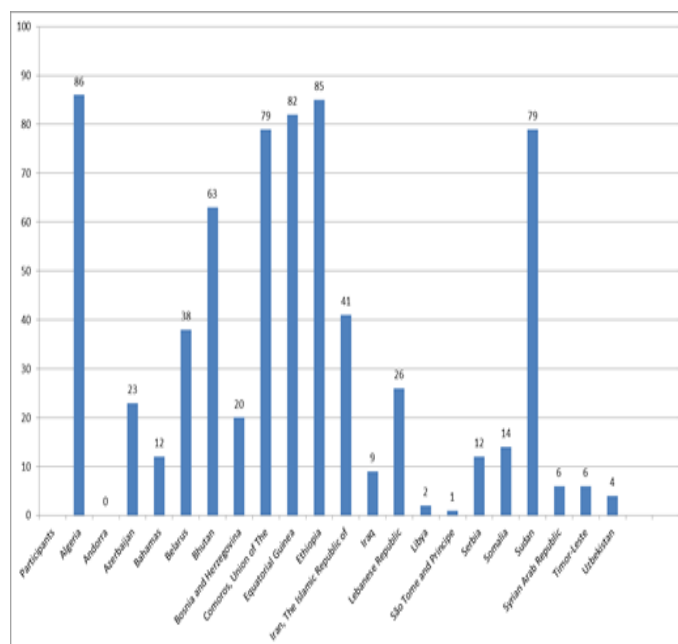
Professor Peter Mbiti, Vice Chancellor
University of Nairobi

Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions,
Nairobi, Kenya—28-30 August 2017

37. On 27 September 2017, in cooperation with the WTO Arab Group, the Accessions Division organized a session at the 2017 Public Forum "Accessions Behind the Headlines: Integration of Arab Countries into the Global Economy", affording representatives from the Arab region a chance to offer perspectives on accession (Union of the Comoros, Somalia and Sudan) and explore the realities and opportunities that underlie the accession process. These events showcase not only the steadfast engagement of Acceding Governments, but the dedication and initiative of the Secretariat team in meeting their needs²².

38. In 2017, Acceding Governments were invited to participate in over 16 technical assistance and capacity building WTO activities. Figure 1, below, shows the number of participants from Acceding Governments that completed technical-assistance activities during 2017.

Figure 1: Participants from Acceding Governments in WTO technical assistance activities (2017)



Courses on goods schedules—Participant
from Ethiopia, 27-31 March 2017

39. Accession-related technical assistance and capacity building were also provided by other institutions, and often in partnership with WTO Members. This year, the Secretariat continued to work in partnership with the Advisory Centre on WTO Law, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Enhanced Integrated Framework, the International Trade Centre, the Islamic Development Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the UN Development Programme, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Bank. Activities have been coordinated with positive results.

²⁰ The outcome was circulated in document with joint symbols: WT/ACC/30, WT/GC/185, WT/MIN(17)/2, WT/COMTD/95, WT/COMTD/LDC/26. See dedicated webpage at: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/dialogue0817_e/programme_e.htm.

²¹ South Sudan's participation in the Regional Dialogue and the two-day specialised training was supported by the Enhanced Integrated Framework.

²² https://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum17_e/session44prog.pdf.

ii. China's LDCs and Accessions Programme (The China Programme)

40. China's LDCs and Accessions Programme (the China Programme) was established by the Government of China and the WTO on 14 July 2011. China undertook the fifth renewal and extension on 20 March 2017, with a contribution of US\$500,000.



Signing Ceremony of the extension of the China Programme
20 March 2017, Siem Reap, Cambodia

41. The China Programme is aimed at strengthening LDCs' participation in the WTO and at assisting Acceding Governments in joining the WTO. The programme supports and finances activities under five principal pillars:

- I. WTO Accessions Internship Programme;
- II. Annual China Round Tables on WTO Accessions;
- III. Increasing participation of LDCs in WTO meetings;
- IV. South-South dialogue on LDCs and development; and
- V. LDCs' Trade Policy Review follow-up workshops.

42. The Accessions Division is responsible for the implementation of Pillar I and Pillar II, as well as other accession-specific support²³. With respect to the WTO Accessions Internship Programme, under which the WTO Secretariat selects candidates, seven interns benefited from this Programme in the year under review²⁴. Since the launch of the Programme, 24 trainees have benefitted from the WTO Accessions Internship Programme²⁵.

43. The Fifth China Round Table on WTO Accessions took place from 20 to 23 March 2017 in Siem Reap,

Cambodia. The theme of the Round Table, which was organized in partnership with the Government of Cambodia, was "Best Practices on the Accession of Least-Developed Countries". Around 50 participants from LDC Acceding Governments and Article XII LDC Members, including eight Ministers, actively engaged in sharing experience on accession negotiations. The results of these discussions are reflected in the outcome document: "The Siem Reap Statement", which was circulated, at the request of the Government of Cambodia, in document: WT/ACC/29, WT/GC/183, WT/MIN(17)/1, WT/COMTD/94, and WT/COMTD/LDC/25²⁶.



6th China Round Table—Opening Ceremony — Siem Reap, Cambodia — 20 March 2017

44. The Sixth China Round Table was held on 9 December 2017, back-to-back with the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference. This China Round Table, to be hosted by the Government of Argentina, will focus on "Strengthening the Rules-based Multilateral Trading System and Building a Network to Promote Accessions"²⁷.

45. Specific support has also been extended towards the accessions of the Union of the Comoros and Somalia. On the accession of the Union of the Comoros, the China Programme funded a total of five delegates to attend the first and second Working Party meetings held on 2 December 2016 and 1 June 2017, respectively. It also contributed towards a Round Table and Technical Working Sessions held during the Chairperson's visit to Moroni on 8 to 10 March 2017²⁸. On the accession of Somalia, the China Programme facilitated the participation of six Somali officials in a Specialized Training on WTO accessions held in Nairobi, Kenya from 31 August to 1 September 2017²⁹.

²³ More background and information on the five pillars can be found here: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/china_programme_e.htm.

²⁴ The China WTO Accession Internship participants are from Angola (LDC), India (original Member), Iran (Acceding Government), Tajikistan (Article XII Member), Timor-Leste (LDC), and Zambia (LDC).

²⁵ An overview of former and current participants, including alumni stories, can be found here: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/pillar1_e.htm.

²⁶ More background and information on the Fifth China Round Table can be found here: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/chinaround2017_e.htm.

²⁷ More information on this and previous round tables can be found here: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/pillar2_e.htm.

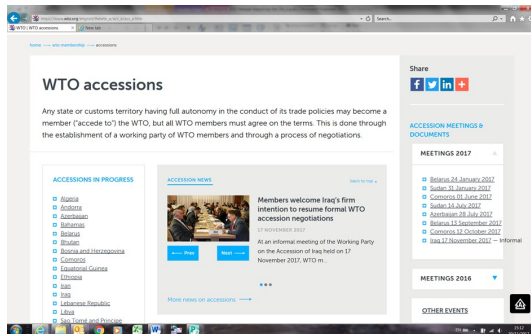
²⁸ See above, paras. 20 and 31 (discussing these trips).

²⁹ See above, para. 36 (discussing this event).

5. ACCESSIONS TRANSPARENCY TOOLS BOX

i. WTO Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP)

46. The Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP), launched in 2016, forms an integral part of the WTO's initiative to enhance transparency on WTO accession negotiations. The AIP is available at: <https://www.wto.org/accessions>.



Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP) Webpage

47. The Accessions Intelligence Portal provides access to documentation and data on the WTO accessions processes, including 36 completed accessions and 21 ongoing accessions. Key features of the AIP include:

- all documentation submitted to accession Working Parties since 1995;
- access to all notified legislation to accession Working Parties since 1995;
- a Legislative Action Plan Register for all WTO Members that have joined since 1995;
- an interactive tracker, which provides comprehensive information on the status of ongoing accessions; and
- an interactive WTO accessions map with a feature allowing users to see the evolution of WTO membership since 1995.

While the Accessions Intelligence Portal is open to the public, some parts of the website, including access to documents of ongoing accession negotiations, remain password-protected and only accessible to WTO Members and Acceding Governments.

ii. Accession Commitments Database (ACDB)

48. The Accession Commitments Database (ACDB) provides access to all accession-specific commitments and related information contained in Accession Working Party Reports of 36 Article XII Members. The ACDB is available in the three official languages of the WTO at: <http://acdb.wto.org>.

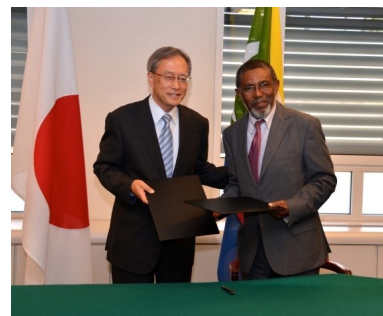
iii. Secretariat Register of Bilateral Market Access Agreements

49. The Register of Bilateral Market Access Agreements contains basic information regarding signed Bilateral Market Access Agreements on Goods and Services that have been deposited with the Secretariat. The specific information includes: the sector of the agreement (goods; services; or both, as applicable), and the dates of signature and deposit.

50. Reports generated by this Register are available only to WTO Members via a password-protected access: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/xacc_e/register_e.htm. In accordance with long-standing practice, the substantive content of Bilateral Market Access Agreements remains confidential to the parties that signed the Agreement, as well as the Secretariat with whom the Agreements are deposited.

III. STATE-OF-PLAY IN ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES

51. WTO accession negotiations advance on the basis of three interdependent tracks — with multilateral, bilateral, and in many cases, plurilateral processes running in parallel. Separately, there are domestic processes in the Acceding Governments to establish national negotiating positions and to decide on inputs. In 2017, there was mixed progress in the 21 ongoing accessions. Some advanced whereas others did not advance, as planned. A range of factors, as in the past, remains in play. They include, but are not limited to, continued negotiations with Members; technical complexities; domestic challenges; political choices to delay for more impact analysis; re-ordered priorities; and/or post-conflict situations. This Section provides the state of play on the on-going accessions, as of November 2017. More details of the state of play are provided and regularly updated in the monthly Accessions Newsletter, which can be found on the WTO accession website.



Accession of the Union of the Comoros —
Signing ceremony of the bilateral market access
protocol with Japan — Geneva, 28 July 2017

Table 1: Current accessions by general status, as of November 2017

General Status	Accessions
Advanced Stage	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Union of the Comoros*
Work in Progress	Azerbaijan, Belarus, Sudan*
Reactivation	Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia*, Iraq, the Lebanese Republic, Serbia
Activation	Somalia*, Timor-Leste*
Working Party Inactive	Andorra, Algeria, the Bahamas, Bhutan*, Iran, Libya, Sao Tome and Principe*, Syrian Arab Republic, Uzbekistan

Notes: * LDCs.

"Work in Progress" indicates technical advancement and regular exchange of information with WTO Members and the Secretariat.

"Reactivation" indicates exchange of information with the Secretariat and/or WTO Members with the objective of early resumption of activities at the level of the Working Party after a period of dormancy/inactivity.

"Activation" indicates new activities at the level of the Working Party.

"Inactive" indicates no activities at the level of the Working Party for at least three years.

52. Algeria: Algeria submitted a request for accession in June 1987. The Working Party on the Accession of Algeria was established in June 1987. The 12th meeting of the Working Party was held in March 2014. The most recent version of the draft Working Party Report was circulated in February 2014. To date, [seven] bilateral market access agreements have signed and deposited with the Secretariat. The latest market access offers were circulated to the Working Party in October 2013 (services) and in November 2013 (goods). The next meeting of the Working Party will be convened once Algeria submits required negotiating inputs, including inputs for the update of the draft Working Party Report.

53. Andorra: Andorra applied for WTO accession in July 1997. The Working Party on the Accession of Andorra was established in October 1997. The Working Party held its first and only meeting in October 1999. This accession process is inactive, and there are no indications of any intentions to re-start the process.

54. Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan applied for WTO accession in June 1997. The Working Party on the Accession of Azerbaijan was established in July 1997. The 14th meeting of the Working Party was held in July 2017. Multilateral negotiations are underway on the basis of the draft Working Party Report, whose third

revision was circulated in May 2017. To date, four bilateral market access agreements have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat. Bilateral market access negotiations are ongoing with interested Members on the basis of revised market access offers circulated on a bilateral basis. The 15th meeting of the Working Party is envisaged for mid-2018, subject to the submission of required negotiating inputs.



Accession of Azerbaijan - 14th Working Party Meeting
Geneva, 28 July 2017

55. The Bahamas: The Bahamas applied for WTO accession in May 2001. The Working Party on the Accession of The Bahamas was established in July 2001. The second Working Party meeting was held in June 2012. A Factual Summary of Points Raised was sent to Nassau for factual updates in August 2013. The most recent market access offers on goods and services were circulated to the Working Party in March 2012 (goods) and in August 2013 (services). The next meeting of the Working Party will be convened once the Bahamas submits required updated negotiating inputs, including an updated Legislative Action Plan and revised market access offers on goods and services.

56. Belarus: Belarus submitted a request for accession in September 1993. The Working Party on the Accession of Belarus was established in October 1993. The seventh meeting of the Working Party was held in May 2005, and informal Consultations by the Chairperson took place in 2010, 2012, and 2013. The Working Party formally resumed its activities in 2017, and the eighth and ninth meetings took place in January and September 2017. The first version of the draft Working Party Report was circulated in July 2017, following the examination of an "Elements" of a draft Working Party Report at the eight meeting. In 2017, four bilateral market access agreements were concluded. Bilateral negotiations are ongoing with a number of interested Members. The tenth meeting of the Working Party is envisaged for the first quarter in 2018.



Accession of Belarus - 8th Working Party Meeting
24 January 2017

57.

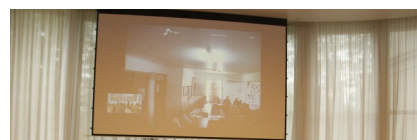
Bhutan: Bhutan applied for WTO accession in September 1999. The Working Party on the Accession of Bhutan was established in October 1999. The fourth meeting of the Working Party was held in January 2008. The first version of the draft Working Party Report was circulated in December 2007. The most recent market access offers on goods and services were circulated in November 2007. There has been no activity in the Working Party since the fourth meeting.

58. Bosnia and Herzegovina: Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for WTO accession in May 1999. The Working Party on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina was established in July 1999. The 12th meeting of the Working Party was held in June 2013. The latest version of the draft Working Party Report was circulated in October 2017. Thirteen bilateral agreements have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat. Bilateral market access negotiations remain with only a limited number of Members. The next meeting of the Working Party will be convened, when appropriate, likely in the first quarter of 2018, to: (i) review recent domestic legislative developments; (ii) finalize the draft Working Party Report; and (iii) review the status of bilateral market access negotiations.



Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Negotiating Team - Geneva, 24 July 2017

59. The Union of the Comoros: The Union of the Comoros applied for WTO accession in March 2007. The Working Party on the Accession of the Union of the Comoros was established in October 2007. Three meetings of the Working Party were held, in December 2016, and in June and October 2017. The first version of the draft Working Party Report is being prepared by the Secretariat, following the examination of an "Elements" of a draft Working Party Report at the third meeting of the Working Party. The first two bilateral market access agreements were signed and deposited with the Secretariat in 2017. Bilateral negotiations are ongoing with a limited number of interested Members. The fourth meeting of the Working Party is envisaged for the first quarter in 2018, subject to the submission of required negotiating inputs by the Union of the Comoros.



3rd Working Party meeting on the Accession of the Union of the Comoros - 12 October 2017

60. Equatorial Guinea: Equatorial Guinea applied for WTO accession in March 2007. The Working Party on the Accession of Equatorial Guinea was established in February 2008. No Working Party meeting has been held to date. Equatorial Guinea has not submitted any negotiating inputs to initiate the accession process.

61. Ethiopia: Ethiopia applied for WTO accession in January 2003. The Working Party on the Accession of Ethiopia was established in February 2003. The third meeting of the Working Party was held in March 2012. The Factual Summary of Points Raised was circulated in March 2012. An initial market access offer on goods was circulated in February 2012. The next meeting of the Working Party will be convened once Ethiopia submits negotiating inputs, including its market access offers on good (revised) and services (initial).

62. Islamic Republic of Iran: The Islamic Republic of Iran applied for WTO accession in July 1996. The Working Party on the Accession of the Islamic Republic of Iran was established in May 2005. The MFTR was circulated in November 2009. Technical inputs submitted by Iran, including replies to Members' questions on the MFTR, were circulated in 2011. To

convene the first meeting of the Working Party, the Chairperson of the General Council would need to undertake consultations with Members on the designation of a Chairperson of the Working Party.

63. Iraq: Iraq applied for WTO accession in September 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Iraq was established in December 2004. The second meeting of the Working Party was held in April 2008. The MFTR was circulated in 2005. Iraq provided several negotiating inputs requested by the Working Party. An informal meeting of the Working Party was held in November 2017. The third meeting of the Working Party will be scheduled when Iraq submits negotiating inputs, including its initial market access offers on goods and services.



Informal meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Iraq
— 17 November 2017

64. Lebanese Republic: The Lebanese Republic applied for WTO accession in January 1999. The Working Party on the Accession of the Lebanese Republic was established in April 1999. The seventh meeting of the Working Party was held in October 2009. The most recent version of the draft Working Party Report was circulated in April 2017. The latest revisions of the market access offers on goods and services were circulated in June 2004. In preparation for the eighth meeting of the Working Party, in 2017, the Lebanese Republic circulated updated negotiating inputs to the Working Party. The timing of the next meeting will depend on the resumption of bilateral market access negotiations with interested Members, based on revised offers on goods and services.



Accession of the Lebanese Republic — Technical working session —
Beirut - 20-25 February 2017

65. Libya: Libya applied for WTO accession in June 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Libya was established in September 2004. The Working Party has never met. Libya has not submitted any negotiating inputs to initiate the process of accession negotiations. Libya is subject to Category III administrative measures³⁰.

66. Sao Tome and Principe: Sao Tome and Principe applied for WTO accession in February 2005. The Working Party on the Accession of Sao Tome and Principe was established in June 2005. Sao Tome and Principe has not submitted any inputs to initiate the process of accession negotiations. Sao Tome and Principe is subject to Category III administrative measures³¹.

67. Serbia: Serbia applied for WTO accession in December 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Serbia was established in February 2005. The 13th meeting of the Working Party was held in June 2013. The latest version of the draft Working Party Report was circulated in October 2012. Thirteen bilateral market access agreements have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat. Bilateral market access negotiations remain with only a limited number of Members. The next meeting of the Working Party will be convened when: (i) outstanding domestic legislative action is completed; (ii) work on the latest draft of the Working Party Report is finalized; and (iii) substantial progress on the remaining bilateral market access negotiations is registered.

68. Somalia: Somalia applied for WTO accession in December 2015. The Working Party on the Accession of Somalia was established in December 2016. No Working Party meeting has been held to date. Somalia has not yet submitted any negotiating inputs to initiate the process of accession negotiations.

69. Sudan: Sudan applied for WTO accession in October 1994. The Working Party on the Accession of Sudan was also established in October 1994. The second meeting of the Working Party was held in March 2004. After many years of dormancy, the Working Party resumed its activities in 2017, and the third and fourth meetings of the Working Party were held in January and July 2017. The Factual Summary of Point Raised was circulated in June 2017. Three bilateral market access agreements have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat. Bilateral market access negotiations are ongoing with interested Members on the basis of revised market access offers

³⁰ As of November 2017.

³¹ As of November 2017.

circulated to the Working Party in November 2016 (goods) and in May 2017 (services). The fifth meeting of the Working Party is envisaged for the first quarter in 2018, subject to the submission of required negotiating inputs by Sudan.



Accession of Sudan— 4th Working Party Meeting —
Geneva, 14 July 2017

70. Syrian Arab Republic: The Syrian Arab Republic applied for WTO accession in October 2001. Its application was reviewed in 2004, 2005, and 2010. The Working Party on the Accession of the Syrian Arab Republic was established in May 2010. No Working Party meeting has been held to date. The Syrian Arab Republic has not submitted any negotiating inputs to initiate the process of its accession negotiations.

71. Timor-Leste: The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste applied for WTO accession in November 2016. The Working Party on the Accession of Timor-Leste was established in December 2016. The MFTR was circulated in June 2017. The first meeting of the Working Party is envisaged for the first quarter in 2018.



Accession of Timor-Leste — H.E. Mr. Estanislau Aleixo
da Silva, Minister of State

72. Uzbekistan: Uzbekistan applied for WTO accession in December 1994. The Working Party on the Accession of Uzbekistan was also established in December 1994. The third meeting of the Working Party took place in October 2005. This accession is inactive.

IV. LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES' ACCESSIONS

73. Since the establishment of the WTO, nine Members have acceded as LDCs pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO³². In the year under review, there are seven ongoing LDC accessions, many of which have registered significant progress. Equatorial Guinea graduated from the LDC status in June 2017. Under the Work Programme for the LDCs, the Secretariat provides regular briefings on the state of play on the accessions of LDCs to the Sub-Committee on LDCs³³.

74. There have been a number of positive developments the accessions of the Union of the Comoros and Sudan. The Union of the Comoros sustained its renewed level of engagement politically and technically, and has made considerable progress towards the conclusion of its accession. Since December 2016, the Working Party on the accession of the Union of the Comoros held three meetings and the Union of the Comoros concluded two bilateral market access negotiations. Similarly, Sudan remained committed to advance its accession negotiations. Since January 2017, the Working Party on the accession of Sudan held two meetings and Sudan concluded one bilateral market access negotiation.

75. Following the establishment of the Working Parties on their respective accessions by the General Council in December 2016, Somalia and Timor-Leste kick-started their technical preparations for the fact-finding phase. Timor-Leste circulated its MFTR to Members in June 2017. After the first round of questions and replies, and the submission of additional negotiating inputs, the first Working Party meeting on the accession of Timor-Leste could be convened in the first half of 2018. Somalia appointed a Chief Negotiator for WTO accession in July 2017. With the support of international partners, Somalia has prepared its MFTR, which was expected for circulation to WTO Members by the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference.



Accession of Somalia — Ms. Maryan Hassan Chief
Negotiator

³² Article XII Members that acceded to the WTO as LDCs were: Afghanistan (2016), Cabo Verde (2008), Cambodia (2004), Lao People's Democratic Republic (2013), Liberia (2016), Nepal (2004), Samoa (2012), Vanuatu (2012), and Yemen (2014).

³³ In 2017, the Accessions Division provided a presentation on the state of play on LDC accessions at the 81st session of the Sub-Committee on LDCs held on 3 October.

76. Ethiopia indicated its intention to reactivate its accession process, with the submission of updated negotiating inputs envisioned for the first half of 2018. Bhutan sustained contacts with the Secretariat, but there has been no substantive technical engagement at the level of the Working Party. Sao Tome and Principe is still subject to Category III Administrative Measures.

77. The Union of the Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia a, South Sudan and Timor-Leste supported the initiative of Afghanistan, with the participation of Liberia and Yemen, to establish the g7+ WTO Accessions Group, as a sub-group of the g7+ association of 20 fragile and conflict-affected states³⁴, consisting of its WTO acceding governments and Article XII Members. The main objectives of the g7+ WTO Accessions Group are: (i) to facilitate the integration of post-conflict and fragile economies into the multilateral trading system through WTO accession-related reforms, including the establishment of credible economic and trade policy frameworks and institutions, and the promotion of transparency and good governance, based on international best practices; and (ii) to support the efforts of the WTO acceding governments in the Group, including through information and experience sharing. The official inauguration of the Group is envisaged on the margins of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in December.



The g7 plus WTO Accessions Group —Informal Meeting
13 November 2017

78. To maintain regular and effective contact with capital-based technical negotiating teams and facilitate LDC participation at Working Party meetings, the Secretariat made use of its video-conference facilities. In total, the Secretariat held 15 video-conference meetings with Acceding Governments and three Working Party meetings were broadcast live to capital-based representatives. These efforts engendered a great deal of positive feedback from participants.



Accession of Sudan — Videoconference with Khartoum
6 November 2017

79. In response to the human-capital and resource constraints of LDCs, the Secretariat continues to provide a combination of generalized start-up technical assistance activities with tailored accession-specific activities to acceding LDCs at all stages of their WTO accessions processes. This year, as in previous years, technical assistance to acceding LDCs' delegations in Geneva was combined with assistance to capital-based officials, including to Union of the Comoros, Somalia, and Sudan³⁵.

80. In addition to in-house Secretariat support, Members have continued to provide technical support for LDC accessions. This includes, amongst others, capacity building on the platform of "China's LDCs and Accessions Programme" (the China Programme)³⁶. So far, 11 of the 24 interns that have been trained under the WTO Accessions Internship Programme were from LDCs³⁷, including two from acceding LDCs and three from Article XII LDCs³⁸.

81. Several WTO Members continue to sustain and upgrade their capacity building and technical support for acceding LDCs. Some do so through national programmes and institutions, while others do so through the Enhanced Integrated Framework. Steady support has been extended from a number of Members, including the European Union (including dedicated programmes from its individual member States), Japan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.

82. In 2012, the General Council adopted the Addendum to WT/L/508 to strengthen, streamline and operationalize the 2002 LDC Accession Guidelines³⁹. Members are mindful of these Guidelines in ongoing active LDCs' accessions. The Director-General has underscored the vital importance of Members to be cognizant of these Guidelines in facilitating negotiations with LDCs.

³⁴ Twelve of the g7+ group are original WTO Members (Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, and Togo); three are Article XII LDC Members (Afghanistan, Liberia, and Yemen); four are acceding LDCs (Union of the Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, and Timor-Leste); and one is a non-observer currently considering an application for WTO accession (South Sudan).

³⁵ See above, Section II(4)(i).

³⁶ See above, Section II(4)(ii).

³⁷ Ethiopia and Timor-Leste.

³⁸ Afghanistan, Liberia, and Yemen.

³⁹ WT/L/508/Add.1.

V. WTO ACCESSION AND THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

83. A business-friendly environment is a *sine qua non* of strong economies. Indeed, as the World Bank has explained, "[t]he role of the private sector is now almost universally recognized as a key driver of economic growth and development. Nearly 90% of employment (including formal and informal jobs) occurs within the private sector"⁴⁰. Governments, however, "play a vital role by ensuring that the conditions are in place for strong private sector-led growth and by alleviating the constraints that hinder the private sector from creating good jobs for development."⁴¹ In short, the business environment and the regulatory environment are intertwined.

84. WTO accession has a significant impact on Acceding Governments' regulatory environments, and thus also their business environments. This is so for two main reasons. First, the constellation of WTO obligations to which governments accede apply not only at Members' customs borders, but extend into their domestic regulatory and institutional regimes. Second, as observed in previous Annual Reports, Acceding Governments use WTO accessions processes as platforms from which to launch domestic structural reforms that touch upon a vast array of economic issues⁴². Thus, that WTO accession will have effects on an Acceding Government's business environment is plain.

85. This Thematic Section explores those effects. It proceeds in six parts. First, it examines the reasons for accession identified by the Acceding Governments. Second, it examines how the private sector is involved in the accessions process. Third, it explores how commitments undertaken as part of accessions processes can affect Acceding Governments' domestic businesses in specific ways. Fourth, it recounts Acceding Governments' and Article XII Members' own descriptions regarding how the accession process facilitated improvements to their business environments. Fifth, it uses data from the World Bank "Doing Business" reports to empirically explore the relationship between the business environment and WTO accession. Finally, it offers some conclusions.

2. ENHANCING THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

86. To date, 36 states or separate customs territories have acceded to the Organization under Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO. In the Introductory Statements in their Working Party Reports, they have offered a variety of reasons for their respective accessions, each reflecting the future Member's own unique circumstances. Notwithstanding such diversity, certain reasons were common to many. These include, for example, the desire to enhance economic growth and stability, increase economic diversification, and/or achieve poverty reduction. Moreover, and importantly, half of the Article XII Members cited the desire to transition their economies from a centrally planned model to a market-based economy as a main reason to join the WTO⁴³. Such goals, of course, are strongly connected to the need for an environment friendly to business.

87. Some Article XII Members have explicitly highlighted this connection in their Working Party Reports. For example, Liberia, an LDC which became a WTO Member in July 2016, explained that "future growth and ability to reduce poverty [lay] in increasing Liberian trade with the rest of the world" and as part of that strategy "it was critical [...] to stimulate the development of local business"⁴⁴. Samoa, which joined the WTO as an LDC in 2012 but graduated from LDC status in 2014, stated that "[a]ccession was considered important to help maintain a stable macroeconomic environment and improve private sector development and employment creation."⁴⁵ Ukraine, one of the largest states from the former Soviet Republics to join the Organization, which it did in 2008, explained that "accession to the WTO was an integral part of overall domestic economic reform and a major component of Ukraine's economic policy"⁴⁶, and stated the desire to see "accelerated investment, [and] small and medium sized enterprise development" as part of that policy. The Russian Federation, which joined in 2012, also cited the desire to enhance the role of small- and medium-sized enterprises, and thus "since requesting accession to the GATT and afterwards to the WTO, the Russian Federation had undertaken an unprecedented process of reform of its economy, progressively adopting laws and regulations consistent with WTO multilateral rules and disciplines", and further aspired to make itself a "better, more competitive and rewarding place in which to work and do business."⁴⁷

⁴⁰ The World Bank Group, *Doing Business 2017*, p. v (2017).

⁴¹ The World Bank Group, *Doing Business 2013*, p. 15 (2013).

⁴² World Trade Organization, *WTO Accessions: 2016 Annual Report by the Director-General*, WT/ACC/28 (2 Dec. 2016), section V.

⁴³ See generally World Trade Organization, *WTO Accessions: 2016 Annual Report by the Director-General*, WT/ACC/28 (2 Dec. 2016), p. 2 and Table 1 (discussing reasons for accession).

⁴⁴ WT/ACC/LBR/23 and WT/MIN(15)/2, para. 4.

⁴⁵ WT/ACC/SAM/30 and WT/MIN(11)/1, para. 6.

⁴⁶ WT/ACC/UKR/152, paras. 4–5.

⁴⁷ WT/ACC/RUS/70, para. 5.

88. If an Acceding Government intends to use the WTO accession process as a means by which to enhance its domestic business environment, one would expect to see private sector involvement in that process. Notwithstanding the government-to-government character of the WTO accession negotiations themselves, such involvement does regularly occur. Indeed, the participation of the private sector during the accession process is likely to have a substantial influence on benefits of accession once finalized. We explore that dynamic below.

3. BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT IN THE ACCESSIONS PROCESSES

89. Acceding Governments' private sectors are regularly and actively involved in accessions processes, though in varying degrees. A primary arena in which such activity occurs is at the domestic level through regular political discourse and consultations between an Acceding Government and its domestic stakeholders. In many Acceding Governments, private sector representatives are formally part of the national inter-ministerial steering committee on WTO accession, as in the case of Afghanistan, Belarus, the Union of the Comoros, and Liberia. They also participate in Geneva-based accession activities, including Working Party meetings and bilateral market access negotiations, as in the case of the Afghanistan⁴⁸, Sudan⁴⁹, and the Union of the Comoros⁵⁰. Working Party Chairpersons and the Secretariat often meet with the private sector, including the Chambers of Commerce, during their country visits to Acceding Governments⁵¹.

90. Moreover, the Secretariat provides outreach activities dedicated to the private sector, regularly bringing together the business community in a variety of settings to discuss the challenges and opportunities

they face in conducting trade operations and to discuss how the WTO can help in dealing with them⁵². Also in Geneva, at the request of Acceding Governments, the Secretariat provides briefings to private sector representatives. For instance, in 2016, the Secretariat met a 50-member delegation of Iran's Chamber of Commerce to discuss the process, opportunities, and challenges of the WTO accession process.

4. THE OUTCOMES OF ACCESSION: COMMITMENT PARAGRAPHS AND THE DOMESTIC REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

91. Upon accession, Acceding Governments undertake commitments embodied in commitment paragraphs (CPs) in, or that are incorporated by reference into, their Accession Protocols. Many CPs refer to obligations already present in the WTO agreements, whereas some others go beyond those obligations. Whichever is the case, they reflect the accessions negotiations' focus on the topics addressed in the accession process.

92. The acceptance of CPs, ranging from those that address tariff reductions to disciplines governing technical regulations, by Acceding Governments, will have an impact on and potentially benefit their businesses, and the business enabling environment more broadly. This Section takes special note of a variety of CPs undertaken by Article XII Members that focus on something of necessarily great importance for domestic business, i.e. the structure of the domestic regulatory environment. Below appears a summary of these types of CPs that have appeared in the Working Party Reports of the 36 Article XII Members, along with a synopsis of the primary way(s) in which they can benefit domestic business.

⁴⁸ The fourth and fifth Working Party meetings held in 2013 and 2015, respectively).

⁴⁹ The third Working Party meeting held in 2017.

⁵⁰ The second Working Party meeting held in 2017 .

⁵¹ See WTO Accessions Newsletter for March and April 2017, available at https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/newsletter_archive_e.htm. Also, in July 2016, for example, the Secretariat led a delegation to Liberia on post-accession issues, which included representatives of the private sector. In 2015, the Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan visited Kabul, accompanied by the Accessions Division Director, during which they consulted with members of the private sector. In 2014, WTO Deputy Director-General David Shark visited the Bahamas, during which he met with members of the business community to discuss the accession process. In 2013, the Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Seychelles visited Victoria, during which she met with private sector stakeholders to discuss WTO accession.

⁵² See, e.g. Business, trade and the WTO, https://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/business_e/business_e.htm.

Table 2: Summary of commitment paragraphs relating to domestic business

Issue and Significance for Domestic Businesses	Summary of Commitment Paragraphs ⁵³
Transparency <u>Significance:</u> Commitments enhance domestic businesses' access to domestic rules.	• A total of 74 CPs in the dedicated "Transparency" section of Article XII Members' Working Party Reports reaffirm and detail the general transparency obligations in the WTO Agreements to publish information on trade and to notify the trade regime and new trade measures to the WTO (esp. GATT Art. X; GATS Art. III; and TRIPS Art. 63). • Additionally, Article XII Members have undertaken over 200 CPs in other sections of their Working Party Reports and/or Accession Protocols, reaffirming or referencing specific transparency commitments in the WTO Agreements, or representing additional transparency requirements with respect to specific subjects.
Clarification of Domestic Legal Framework <u>Significance:</u> Commitments create legal certainty for businesses by clarifying the legal framework under which businesses operate.	• Confirm the international status of the WTO Agreement and its precedence over national legislation. • Clarify that, as an international agreement, the provisions of the WTO Customs Valuation Agreement (CVA) supersede domestic law, upon accession. • Clarify that WTO commitments shall be respected at the regional trade agreement (RTA) level. • Confirm the specific obligation to apply WTO provisions uniformly throughout the entire customs territory and other territories under Members' control, including in regions engaging in border trade or frontier traffic, special economic zones, and other areas where special regimes for tariffs, taxes and regulations are established. • Confirm that sub-central authorities shall have no jurisdiction or autonomous authority over issues covered by WTO provisions. • Confirm also that all laws, regulations and other measures of sub-central authorities (must) comply with the WTO provisions and are administered in a uniform, impartial and reasonable manner, and that all measures taken by sub-central authorities that are inconsistent with the WTO Agreement are eliminated or nullified. • Confirm the obligation to have the WTO Agreement as the legal basis of trade with other Members and to ensure consistency with WTO rules. • Clarify that sub-central authorities have no right to formulate non-tariff measures; only the central government can issue regulations on non-tariff measures; and that these measures would be implemented or enforced only by the central government or subnational authorities with authorisation from the central government. • Regarding Other Customs Formalities, there shall be application in a uniform, impartial and reasonable manner of any such legislation, rulings and/or measures throughout the territory of the member, as required by the WTO Agreement. • Confirm that voluntary standards contained in private sector agreements would not be enforced. • Confirm that free zones and special economic areas are fully subject to specific obligations in the Accession Protocols. • Clarify that normal customs formalities, tariffs and taxes are applied when goods produced or imported into the free zones enter the rest of the Acceding Governments' economy under the special tax and tariff regime of those zones. • Accept the obligation to identify, list and make precise those specific WTO agreements for which Acceding Governments would ensure enforcement and compliance of their WTO obligations in free zones and special economic areas. • Accept the specific commitment to list and notify WTO-inconsistent requirements (such as export performance, trade balancing, or local content requirements) that shall be banned in the free zones and special economic areas of the Acceding Governments. • Clarify for Members the meaning of specific legal provisions as found in national intellectual property laws and provisions in order to ensure compatibility with the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement and, in some instances, confirm the content of specific intellectual property laws and provisions in place. • Identify, explicitly, the relevant domestic laws on certain services sectors, boosting Members' confidence in legislation-based domestic reform in the Acceding Governments.

⁵³ This list is not intended to be, nor is it, exhaustive. Different numbers of Article XII Members possess the types of CPs described below. Types of CPs described below may be expressed in different technical language in different Working Party Reports.

Issue and Significance for Domestic Businesses	Summary of Commitment Paragraphs
Enforcement of Rules, Establishment of Tribunals, and Impartiality <u>Significance:</u> Commitments create obligations to enforce rules that will likely apply to domestic businesses or affect their activities, and help ensure that such enforcement will be performed by impartial tribunals and regulators.	- Establish the obligation that when appraised of a situation where WTO provisions are not being applied or are applied in a non-uniform manner, central authorities shall act to enforce WTO provisions without requiring affected parties to petition through courts. - Confirm and elaborate the right of traders to appeal administrative rulings on matters subject to the WTO Agreement to an independent tribunal (i.e. the provision of the right to an independent review) in conformity with the WTO commitments, including but not limited to Article X:3(b) of the GATT 1994, and the relevant provisions of the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM), the Agreement on Customs Valuation, the TRIPS Agreement and the GATS. - Establish the obligation for the definition of a special mechanism or a tribunal responsible for prompt review of all administrative actions relating to the implementation of laws, regulations, judicial decisions and administrative rulings of general application, to be established/designated and operated, and that the government authorities shall act promptly to address the situation, and inform the individual or entity of the decision or action taken in writing with an opportunity to appeal. Also, establish the obligation that such tribunals shall be impartial and independent of the agency entrusted with administrative enforcement and shall have no substantial interest in the outcome of the matter. - Upon accession, consularisation/notarisation by consular officers in the country of export would not be required for the import of goods. A dispute settlement mechanism, as part of the customs service, would be established to address concerns raised on smuggling and any other customs administration issues, within a specific time-frame. - Reinforce the right of appeal of decisions taken by Preshipment inspection (PSI) service providers, and identify the relevant legislation. - With respect to intellectual property, confirm for Members that all laws, administrative regulations and implementing rules would be enforced by national courts. - Regarding intellectual property rights, confirm for Members the enhancement of enforcement measures and reduction of infringement efforts by relevant agencies, in number of instances, referring to special border measures. - Confirm that for the services consolidated in the Schedule of Specific Commitments, relevant regulatory authorities would be separate from, and not accountable to, any service suppliers that the authorities regulated.
Identities and Responsibilities of Domestic Economic Actors <u>Significance:</u> Commitments clarify the identities of certain major economic actors (e.g. state-trading enterprises and state-owned enterprises) or actors upon whom the government relies for certain services, and clarify such entities' responsibilities and expected behaviour.	- Clarify the relationship between Articles XVII:1(a) and XVII:1(b) of the GATT 1994 by the distinction of a separate category of commitment on State Trading Enterprises/State Owned Enterprises (STEs/SOEs) pursuant to operation 'in accordance with commercial considerations'. - Regarding STEs/SOEs, identify the criteria for commercial considerations for making purchases and sales (including price, quality, availability, marketability and transportation); and the listing of the existing STEs/SOEs in Working Party Reports. - Define STEs/SOEs through state ownership criteria, allowing a wider sub-set of entities to be covered by WTO rules, so a broader range of discriminatory or anti-competitive practices could be internationally regulated, and listing of the STEs. - Confirm and enhance the non-discrimination requirements for STEs/SOEs by setting out market-specific obligations applied to entities provided with financial or regulatory advantages, for example: Setting out a list of products subject to state trading. - Clarify whether the Acceding Governments have concluded contracts with PSI service providers, and reaffirm that any existing or future PSI regimes/programmes would fully adhere to/implement the requirements of the Agreement on Preshipment Inspection. - Ensure that any existing or future PSI regimes conducted by PSI service providers, on behalf of the government, would be solely temporary, until customs authorities could carry out the activities, which were temporarily performed by PSI service providers. - Confirm that Acceding Governments have the sole responsibility in ensuring that PSI enterprises, operating on behalf of Acceding Governments, comply with the provisions of the WTO Agreement. - Identify patterns for WTO-consistent price-control measures regulating tariff rates for goods and services rendered by natural monopolies (including their operation on the basis of normal commercial considerations).

Issue and Significance for Domestic Businesses	Summary of Commitment Paragraphs
Minimization of Trade-Restrictive Regulations <u>Significance:</u> Commitments seek to minimize certain rules that may hinder domestic business' trading activities.	• Accept the obligation that the application of any measures/restrictions on foreign exchange shall be consistent with WTO provisions, and accept the elimination of prior authorisation requirements on foreign exchange and payments upon WTO accession. • Set out that existing registration systems regarding trading rights shall conform to WTO rules. They shall not restrict trade or be more burdensome than necessary. • Encourage the removal of export licensing requirements. • Extend the requirements of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures to export licensing procedures, and reaffirm that such procedures shall comply with Article XI of the GATT 1994 and other WTO requirements. • Accept a commitment to minimise the use of export taxes, post-accession. • Extend the scope of commitments to elimination of all internal taxes, charges and fees applied to exports (with exemptions for listed products) and specific export-related measures, including re-export and non-automatic export licences. • Accept a commitment to foreclose the use of export duties. • Enhance the requirement of Article V:4 of the GATT 1994 on the reasonableness of charges imposed on traffic in transit. • Improve, significantly, GATS Article VI (Domestic Regulation), so that licensing procedures and conditions in Acceding Governments are more transparent, user-friendly and impartial.
Involvement of Private Sector in Legislative Process <u>Significance:</u> Commitments empower domestic actors to participate in the legislative process regarding laws that could affect their businesses.	• Confirm that internal mechanisms exist to inform and consult with government agencies and private sector interests on the rights and obligations under the GATT 1994 and the TBT Agreement. • Enhance, significantly, a binding commitment that requires public comments on SPS proposals prior to the adoption of SPS measures.
Equal Business Opportunities <u>Significance:</u> Certain CPs encourage the liberalization of criteria under which entities may perform certain economic functions.	• Confirm the right to trade in goods (import/export) on a non-discriminatory basis, at any level of distribution. • Liberalise the scope and availability of trading rights, including through granting the right to trade to all enterprises and the elimination of the system of examination and approval of trading rights. • Clarify that any enterprise shall be permitted to register as importer/exporter. • Confirm the trading right to select distributor(s). • Confirm that requirements for commercial registration or application for trading rights shall be for customs and fiscal purposes only. • Improve, significantly, GATS Article VI (Domestic Regulation), so that licensing procedures and conditions in Acceding Governments are more transparent, user-friendly and impartial. This result, thus, provides a degree of certainty to Members that their services providers in the Acceding Governments would be treated fairly, predictably, and in a non-discriminatory manner. • Guarantee the freedom of foreign services suppliers, so that they have the right to choose their partners.

93. Such types of CPs reflect how the accession process often results in concrete, legally binding outcomes that can benefit domestic businesses of Acceding Governments⁵⁴.

5. ACCESSION AND BEYOND: ACCEDING GOVERNMENTS' AND ARTICLE XII MEMBERS' REFLECTIONS ON IMPROVEMENTS TO THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

94. This Section focuses on the extent to which Article XII Members themselves considered whether the accession process has a positive impact on their business environments. It does so by exploring Article XII Members' reflections on their accessions processes made in two main contexts: (i) statements made by their representatives during their final Working Party meetings; and (ii) the first WTO Trade Policy Reviews for Article XII Members following accession.

i. Final Working Party Meetings

95. At the end of the substantive accession negotiations, the Working Party adopts the Acceding Government's accession package, including the draft Accession Protocol and Working Party Report, which contain the Acceding Government's CPs, which is then sent to the General Council for consideration. The final Working Party meeting, which is the only meeting where the official record is produced in the entire accession process during the Working Party stage, generally provides an opportunity for reflection, often after long years of negotiations, regarding the associated domestic reforms performed as part of the accession process. The representatives of recently acceded Members took this opportunity to highlight the benefits that had accrued, and that were expected to accrue going forward, for their private sectors as a result of the accession process.

Table 3: Examples of statements of recently acceded Article XII Members at final Working Party meetings regarding the business environment

Acceding Government	Final Working Party Meeting	Representative	Comments
Afghanistan	Fifth Meeting November 2015	H.E. Humayoon Rasaw, Minister of Commerce and Industries	The representative stated that "[o]ur President views WTO membership as a catalyst for implementation of reforms that will [...] strengthen market institutions and mechanisms" and "adherence to WTO agreements [is] critical for strengthening the rule of law, increasing transparency, and building the foundation for sound economic development", and that "WTO membership is essential to strengthen our trade and investment framework for developing our private sector". The WTO accession will result in "a win-win accession package that is commercially meaningful for WTO Members and, at the same time, enables us to achieve our goals of creating new economic opportunities". He also stressed the private sector's support for WTO accession.
Kazakhstan	20 th Meeting June 2015	H.E. Zhanar Aitzhanova, Minister of Economic Integration	The representative summarized a multitude of measures taken by Kazakhstan during the accession process, explaining that "[a]ll these steps were taken to improve the business and investment climate in Kazakhstan. Moreover, Kazakhstan's accession terms to the WTO will guarantee transparent, predictable and stable investment and trade climate in the country." Moreover, the representative explained that "continued efforts of the Government were reflected in the World Bank's Doing Business Report, where Kazakhstan ranks 77th in the list of 189 countries."
Lao PDR	Tenth Meeting September 2012	H.E. Dr Nam Viyaketh, Minister of Industry and Commerce	The representative stated that, as part of its accession process, Lao PDR had "made tremendous efforts in improving investment climate and opening its market for goods and services", and that "Lao PDR has used the accession process as a useful blueprint for reforms in our trade and economic framework on the basis of international best practices." "The accession process ... has provided us with the necessary basis to achieve our goal of meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and graduating from the LDC by 2020."
Liberia	Fourth Meeting October 2015	H.E. Axel M. Addy, Minister of Commerce and Industry	The representative stated that "domestic reforms, however painful at times; will facilitate an enabling business environment that will lead to fair and healthy competition that will drive innovation and economic diversification ensuring our economic resilience to crises."
Tajikistan	Ninth Meeting October 2012	H.E. Sharif Rahimzoda, Minister of Economic Development and Trade	The representative stated that since its application for accession was made in 2001, "significant changes have occurred in Tajikistan. Many of these can be directly linked to the WTO accession process [...] [such as] improvements in the financial and banking systems. In turn, this has strengthened a number of economic sectors and has led to their rapid development. To a large extent, this has also allowed Tajikistan's economy to successfully overcome the potential negative impact of the global economic and financial crisis."
Yemen	11 th Meeting September 2013	H.E. Dr Saadaldeen Talib, Minister of Industry and Trade	The representative stated that "WTO membership shall result in positive progression and would significantly contribute to domestic efforts to consolidate and stabilize the country [...] [and] also marks [the] Yemen economy as being open for business".

⁵⁴ CPs are enforceable in WTO dispute resolution procedures.

96. Of course, a certain amount of time following accession may often be required in order for an Article XII Member to more fully assess the effects that accession had on its business environment. This is especially so because, as reflected in certain statements above, reforms undertaken during the accession process often provide a basis for future economic development of the private sector. The next Section investigates the outcomes observed in the years following WTO accession.

ii. Trade Policy Reviews of Article XII Members

97. The Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM) enhances the transparency of Members' trade regimes by subjecting them to examination by the entire WTO Membership. All WTO Members are subject to the

TPRM at intervals depending on their shares of world trade. Many, but not all, Article XII Members have had their first TPR⁵⁵. The focus of such TPRs is to discuss developments in the Member's trade regime. It should be noted, therefore, that the effects of a Member's WTO accession, *per se*, is not the focus of Article XII Members' TPRs, and that many years may pass between an Article XII Member's accession and its first TPR. Nevertheless, of the Article XII Members that have had their first TPR, many have taken the opportunity to reflect on the impacts that their accessions have had on their business environments. They have done so both in the governments' reports submitted to the WTO as part of the TPR, and in their government officials' statements in the Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB). Examples of such statements appear below.



Article XII Members attending Working Party Meetings in 2017

⁵⁵ At this writing, the most recently acceded Member to have had a TPR is the Russian Federation, which acceded in 2012.

Table 4: Examples of statements of recently acceded Article XII Members during first Trade Policy Reviews regarding the business environment

Article XII Member	Date of Accession	Date of First TPR	Statements by Article XII Member ⁵⁶
Bulgaria	December 1996	October 2003	In the TPRB, the government explained that "[a]ccession to the WTO has facilitated the country's transition to a market economy, ensured stability of the domestic market, and promoted investment" ⁵⁷ .
Cambodia	October 2004	November 2011	In the TPRB, the government explained that, "[t]o date, Cambodia has adopted 19 laws and regulations to fulfil specific WTO legal obligations, and has also adopted a number of other trade- and business-related laws and regulations that have improved the overall legal environment." Further, "[w]e work constantly to improve the legal framework for business. [...] Full compliance with WTO rules is an important component of these improvements." ⁵⁸
Nepal	April 2004	March 2012	In the TPRB, the government explained that "the [economic] liberalization process gained momentum after our accession to the WTO", "while the private sector has been encouraged to take the leading role in the economy". ⁵⁹
Panama	September 1997	September 2007	In the TPRB, the government explained that when Panama first began negotiating its accession, it "lacked clear rules". But "[t]he accession process had triggered a series of reforms", and in this way the "accession had [...] a clear impact on Panama's trade and economic structure. [...] [I]t also contributed towards attracting new investment and boosting productivity." ⁶⁰
The Russian Federation	August 2012	September 2016	In its TPR Report, Russia stated that "Russia's accession to the WTO was accompanied by fundamental legislative changes that laid solid and predictable foundations in the Russian market for all its participants, including foreign trade operators. As a result, the implementation of the WTO rules into the national legislation has contributed towards an improvement in Russia's international ratings. For instance, since 2012, Russia has been annually moving upwards in the Doing Business rating compiled by the World Bank Group. From being ranked 120th (out of 183) in 2012, Russia moved to the 51st place (out of 189) in 2016." ⁶¹
Chinese Taipei	January 2002	June 2006	In its TPR Report, Chinese Taipei explained that "[s]ince its accession to the WTO in 2002, the evidence clearly shows that [Chinese Taipei] has continued to benefit from the multilateral trading system. Its trade value has increased by an impressive 41.62%, with more jobs being created and unemployment diminishing" ⁶² . In the TPRB, the government explained that "economic growth that had been accelerated by its accession to the WTO", and explained that "Chinese Taipei had used its accession to the WTO to establish a foundation for domestic reforms" that had continued to benefit the economy. ⁶³
Tonga	July 2007	February 2014	In its TPR Report, Tonga stated that "WTO membership has been, and continues to be, a key catalyst to the legislative, regulatory and administrative reforms which are necessary to revitalise Tonga's economy. Important reforms stimulated in whole or in part by WTO accession have taken place in <i>[inter alia]</i> [...] the business regulatory environment". Further, "[b]uilding on the momentum from its WTO accession, Tonga is currently reviewing a range of key laws and regulations that affect import and export trade. This review process is aimed at not only ensuring compatibility with Tonga's WTO obligations, but also to create a more private sector oriented and investment-friendly climate for firms operating in Tonga." ⁶⁴

⁵⁶ Statements by representatives before the TPRB are taken from the Minutes of these meetings circulated by the Secretariat.

⁵⁷ WT/TPR/M/121, para. 8.

⁵⁸ WT/TPR/M/253, paras. 21–22.

⁵⁹ WT/TPR/M/257, para. 143.

⁶⁰ WT/TPR/M/186, paras. 4, 7, and 9.

⁶¹ WT/TPR/G/345, para. 1.2.

⁶² WT/TPR/G/165, para. 3. (footnote omitted).

⁶³ WT/TPR/M/165, paras. 26 and 28.

⁶⁴ WT/TPR/G/291, paras. 3.10 and 8.22.

Article XII Member	Date of Accession	Date of First TPR	Statements by Article XII Member ⁵⁶
Ukraine	May 2008	April 2016	In its TPR Report, Ukraine stated that "Ukraine's accession to the WTO [...] was an integral part of domestic economic reform and a major component of Ukraine's economic policy." ⁶⁵ Before the TPRB, the government explained that "[s]ince its accession to the WTO, Ukraine has already improved its ranking in World Bank 'Doing Business' by 43 positions" ⁶⁶ .
Viet Nam	January 2007	September 2013	In the TPRB, the government explained that "the recent WTO accession have catalysed the country's legislative and regulatory drafting process, which results in a more transparent, stable, predictable, and efficient legal system that has gone well beyond the framework of international trade. [...] Not so long ago few people in the business community would have expected the Government to solicit their comments or inputs for a draft law, a government regulation, or a ministerial circular. [...] Not so long ago, the business community would not have thought of being consulted on Market Access and Trade Liberalization issues for the on-going FTAs negotiations, such as TPP or EVFTA. These changes, which implied a radical departure from traditional legal and institutional practices, ultimately have brought about a rule-of-law mindset, which in turn significantly induces economic and social changes." ⁶⁷



Article XII Members attending Working Party Meetings in 2017

⁶⁵ WT/TPR/G/334, para. 1.3.⁶⁶ WT/TPR/M/334, para. 2.19.⁶⁷ WT/TPR/M/287, paras. 2.7–2.8.

98. These statements, made by a diverse set of Article XII Members often years following their respective accessions, reflect that the expected benefits of accession for the domestic business environments of Acceding Governments often not only do in fact accrue, but endure as a result of the WTO commitments the Article XII Members carry moving forward.

6. EMPIRICAL CORRELATION BETWEEN THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND WTO ACCESSION: THE WORLD BANK DOING-BUSINESS INDICATORS

99. Since it first appeared in 2004, the World Bank's annual "Doing Business" Report measures business regulations for local firms in economies around the world. The reports rank countries according to how attractive those regulatory environments are for firms. An economy's rank, however, is necessarily relative to others. Thus, to analyse how a single economy has individually improved its business environment over time requires a somewhat different metric. The Doing Business Reports created the Distance-to-Frontier (DTF) metric to do precisely this. With respect to a given economy, DTFs score certain regulatory indicators on a standardized scale from 1 to 100, the former being the worst and the latter being the best, or the "frontier".⁶⁸

100. Currently, the World Bank assigns DTFs to the following ten regulatory indicators: (i) Starting a Business; (ii) Dealing with Construction Permits; (iii) Getting Electricity; (iv) Registering Property; (v) Getting Credit; (vi) Protecting Minority Investors; (vii) Paying Taxes; (viii) Trading Across Borders; (ix) Enforcing Contracts; and (x) Resolving Insolvency.⁶⁹

101. This Section uses these DTFs to empirically explore the relationship between WTO accession and changes to the domestic business environments of Article XII Members. It does so by analysing DTF scores between 2004⁷⁰ and 2014⁷¹, inclusive, assigned to the economies of the 12 Article XII Members⁷² that acceded to the WTO between 2005⁷³ and 2014, inclusive⁷⁴, thus ensuring a reasonable temporal nexus between the accession of these Members and the examined DTF scores. It examines the evolution of these DTFs during three time periods: (i) during the Members' accessions processes; (ii) after the Members' accessions; and (iii) for the entire time-period of 2004–2014, inclusive. For each of these three periods, the DTF data is organised in two different ways: (i) DTF changes by Member; and (ii) DTF changes by regulatory indicator. This yields six data tables. These Tables appear in Annex 7⁷⁵. The following tables summarize the DTF changes observed.

⁶⁸ The frontier represents essentially the best that any economy has managed to do with respect to that indicator in recent years. For a full explanation of DTFs, see World Bank, *Doing Business 2018: Distance to Frontier and Ease of Doing Business Ranking* (2018), available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/~media/WBG/DoingBusiness/Documents/Annual-Reports/English/DB18-Chapters/DB18-DTF-and-DBRankings.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Recalling the deep structural reforms often undertaken as part of accessions processes, it stands to reason that such reforms would often touch upon these issues. This is particularly so because, as demonstrated above in Table 2, many commitments undertaken as part of an accession process are generally geared at making Acceding Governments' regulatory regimes more transparent and efficient.

⁷⁰ This is the first year for which DTF scores are available for any indicator.

⁷¹ The year 2014 was chosen as the cut-off because starting in 2015 the World Bank changed the methodology it used to calculate DTFs for a number of indicators, thus rendering them incomparable to prior years. (See explanation at World Bank: Doing Business (Distance to Frontier), <http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/distance-to-frontier>).

⁷² Cabo Verde, Lao PDR, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Tonga, Ukraine, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, and Yemen.

⁷³ The year 2005 was chosen so that for every Article XII Member examined, at least one year of DTF scores would be available for the period *during* that Member's accession. For purposes of this Section, the accession process is measured from the time of the establishment of an Acceding Government's Working Party.

⁷⁴ The first uses the first year for which data is available for each indicator through the year of accession, inclusive. The second time-period uses the year of accession through the 2014, inclusive.

⁷⁵ Notes accompany these Tables explaining the relevant data presentations.

Table 5: Indicators' DTF score changes across Article XII Members⁷⁶

	Avg. No. Indicators Improved Per Member	Weighted Avg. Improvement Per Indicator	Avg. No. Indicators Declined Per Member	Weighted Avg. Decline Per Indicator	Avg. No. Indicators Unchanged Per Member	Overall Weighted Avg. Change Per Indicator
During Accession	5.33	+ 10.55	1.33	- 2.62	2.42	+5.81
After Accession	6.45	+ 10.75	1.27	- 4.54	2.27	+6.37
Overall	7.00	+ 16.88	1.33	- 5.29	1.67	+ 11.11

Table 6: Members' DTF score changes across indicators

	Avg. No. Members Improved Per Indicator	Weighted Avg. Improvement Per Member	Avg. No. Members Declined Per Indicator	Weighted Avg. Decline Per Member	Avg. No. Members Unchanged Per Indicator	Overall Weighted Avg. Change Per Member
During Accession	6.40	+ 10.54	1.60	- 2.63	2.90	+ 5.80
After Accession	7.10	+ 10.76	1.40	- 4.54	2.50	+ 6.37
Overall	8.40	+ 16.88	1.60	- 5.29	2.00	+ 11.11

102. With respect to the period *during* accession, the Members enhanced their DTF scores by an average of 5.81 DTF points. Further, every Member improved its average DTF scores. Moreover, across all Members, all individual indicators' average DTFs increased except one (Enforcing Contracts), which only decreased by 0.05 DTF points. The top three most improved DTFs by indicator were: Starting a Business (16.86 DTF points); Getting Credit (9.66 DTF points); and Trading Across Borders (8.42 DTF points). All sampled Members improved their DTF scores with respect to the indicators of Starting a Business and Trading Across Borders.

103. With respect to the period *after* accession, the Members enhanced their DTF scores by an average of 6.37 DTF points. Every Member but one⁷⁷ improved its average DTF scores. Moreover, across all Members, average DTF scores improved for all indicators. The top three most improved indicators were: Getting Credit (15.57 DT points); Starting a Business (10.12 DTF points); and Dealing with Construction Permits (8.98

DTF points). The most consistent gains were registered with respect to Dealing with Construction Permits, Getting Electricity, Starting a Business, and Trading Across Borders.

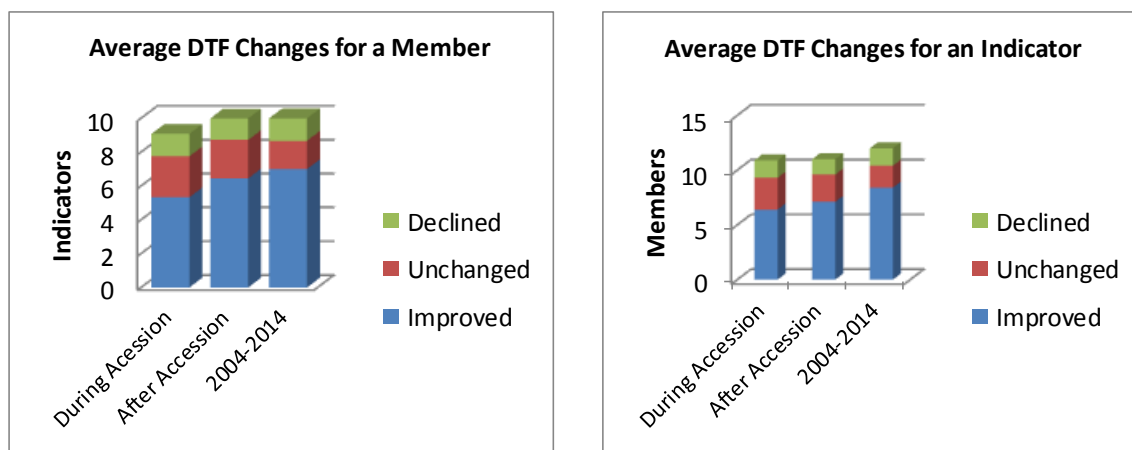
104. Overall, between 2004 and 2014, inclusive, the 12 Article XII Members increased their average DTF scores by 11.11 points. Further, every Member increased its average DTF score (across indicators). Moreover, the average DTF scores of all individual indicators increased (across Members). Every Member increased its DTF scores with respect to Starting a Business and Trading Across Borders, with a strong majority of Members increasing their DTF scores with respect to most indicators.

105. Such data indicate that these Members' accessions were generally accompanied by material improvements to their domestic business environments. The following graphs visually illustrate this point:

⁷⁶ Any discrepancies between the data in Tables 5 and 6 or Annex 7 are due to rounding.

⁷⁷ The Member whose score declined had a very low number of years for which data were available with respect to this time-period, and the drop was very low, i.e. 0.60 DTF points. We also note that this Member had a significant improvement in its DTF scores for the overall period including during and after, i.e. +10.66 DTF points.

Figure 2: Average DTF changes for Members and indicators



7. CONCLUSION

106. This Section has explored the relationship between the WTO accession process and the domestic business environments for Acceding Governments. It indicates that accessions processes are generally accompanied by both expectations and realizations of improvements to the domestic business environments of Acceding Governments. We therefore recall the following statement made by the representative of the Seychelles at its seventh and final Working Party meeting:

We recognized that we had to become a member of the WTO, not simply because it was a process or because most others are in and we have to be too, but rather because it was the right decision for Seychelles; due to the benefits that WTO membership would bring to our economy and to our people.

VI. WTO POST-ACCESSION SUPPORT

107. The post-accession implementation support framework, which had been developed in 2014-2016, consists of the following five pillars:

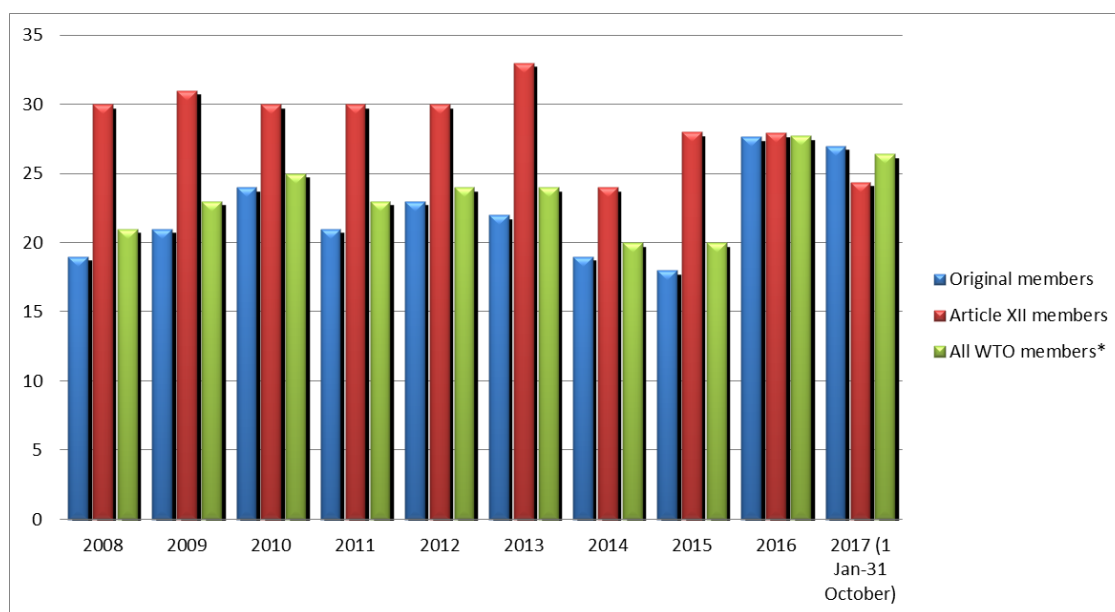
- i. Country-Specific Post-Accession Implementation Strategy;
- ii. Specialized training on WTO post-accession;
- iii. Secretariat Note on "Best Practices on WTO Post-Accession";
- iv. Dedicated web-page on "Post-accession — what next?" in the WTO Accession Website;
- v. Internal Secretariat Note on Post-Accession Implementation and Monitoring.

108. Based on this five-pillar framework, in 2017, the Secretariat continued its work on post-accession support to the recently acceded Members, focusing on the provision of tailor-made technical assistance and support.

109. A tailor-made Programme on the implementation of the WTO commitments of Afghanistan was organized by the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation in collaboration with the US Department of Commerce from 23 to 27 January 2017, in Geneva. Building on the first specialised training on post-accession in July 2016, this programme focused on practical issues related to the implementation of Afghanistan's WTO accession commitments, based on the identified post-accession needs and priorities; the rights and obligations of Afghanistan as a Member; and its day-to-day participation in the work of the WTO, including sharing of best practices by the Coordinator of the LDC Consultative Group. The objective was also to expose senior officials to the work carried out by partner institutions, such as the Advisory Centre on WTO Law and the International Trade Centre, and forge a network of contacts among the officials of Afghanistan and the WTO. A key output of this programme included a clear plan for the training and technical-assistance needs and priorities of Afghanistan over the post-accession period.

110. In addition, the Secretariat regularly monitors the participation of Article XII Members in the work of the WTO. Overall, Article XII Members are active, often more active than the original WTO Members, in several WTO bodies. Such active participation is reflected in a generally higher average annual number of WTO notifications (see Figure 3, below), as well as in the membership and observership in the plurilateral Government Procurement Agreement.

Figure 3: Average notifications made annually



111. At present, out of 47 Members that have acceded to the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA), ten are Article XII Members (which also acceded to the revised GPA which entered into force on 6 April 2014), namely: Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Chinese Taipei, and Ukraine. Currently, 15 out of the 31 GPA observers are Article XII Members, and nine of them are in the process of acceding to the GPA, accounting for 90% of the ongoing GPA accession negotiations. These nine Article XII Members are: Albania, China, Georgia, Jordan, Kyrgyz Republic, Oman, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁷⁸. As of November 2017, 29 Article XII Members ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement, which entered into force on 22 February 2017⁷⁹. Thirteen Article XII Members (Albania, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Georgia, Jordan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Oman, Panama, Chinese Taipei, Ukraine, and Viet Nam) participate in the Information Technology Agreement.

VII. TRADE AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF ARTICLE XII MEMBERS⁸⁰

112. According to the World Trade Statistical Review 2017, world trade registered positive growth, albeit at a modest rate, with the volume of global trade growing by 1.3% in 2016 compared to 2015. In contrast, its nominal value decreased by 2.3% compared to 2015. The US dollar value of world trade in commercial services increased by 0.7% in 2016, while the value of world merchandise trade decreased by 3.2% from 2015. The discrepancy in trade growth was mostly attributed to strong fluctuations in commodity prices and exchange rates. Also, structural factors have been suggested to explain the global slowdown of trade growth. These include the lack of coordination between monetary policies of leading economies, geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and falling demand in emerging economies. Against this background, individual situations reflect diversity.

⁷⁸ Five other Article XII Members have undertaken commitments to initiate accession to the GPA, in future. They are: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, and Seychelles.

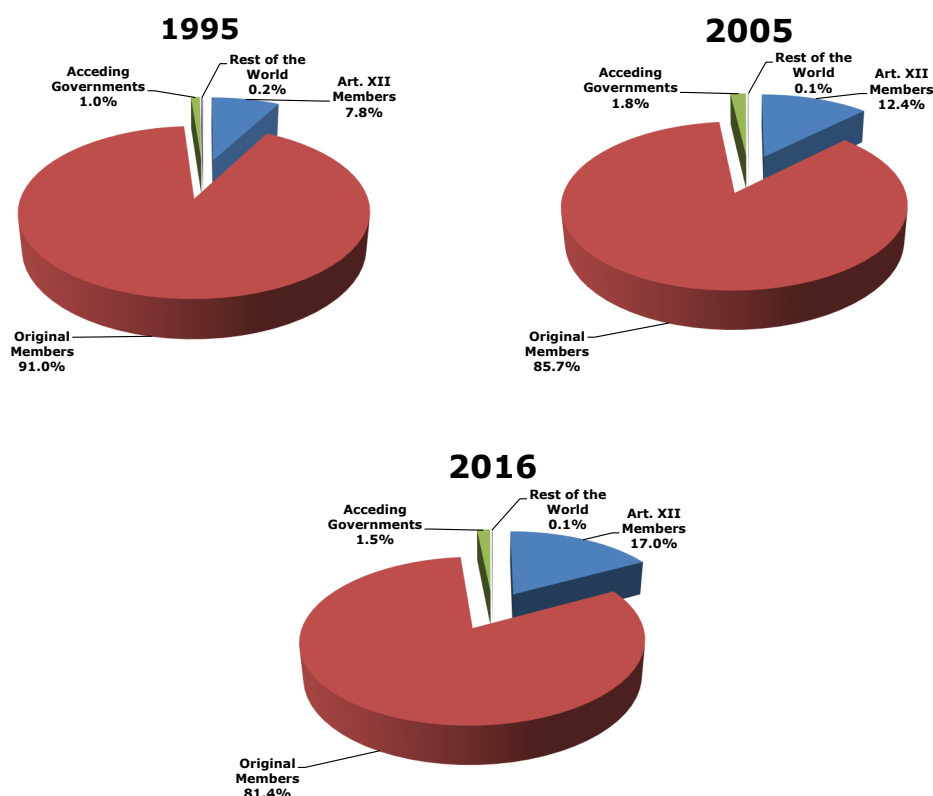
⁷⁹ Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Lao PDR, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nepal, Oman, Panama, Russian Federation, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Chinese Taipei, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, Viet Nam.

⁸⁰ See Annex 6 to this Report.

113. Figure 4 provides three snapshots that illustrate the evolution of market shares of world trade by WTO membership status. Original Members' share of world trade decreased from 91% in 1995, to 86% in 2005, and again to 81% in 2016. The share of world trade of

Article XII Members' increased from 8% in 1995, to 12% in 2005, and to 17% in 2016, thus expanding the reach of the multilateral trading system to cover approximately 98.4% of world trade in 2016.

Figure 4: Share of world trade by membership status (1995, 2005 and 2016)

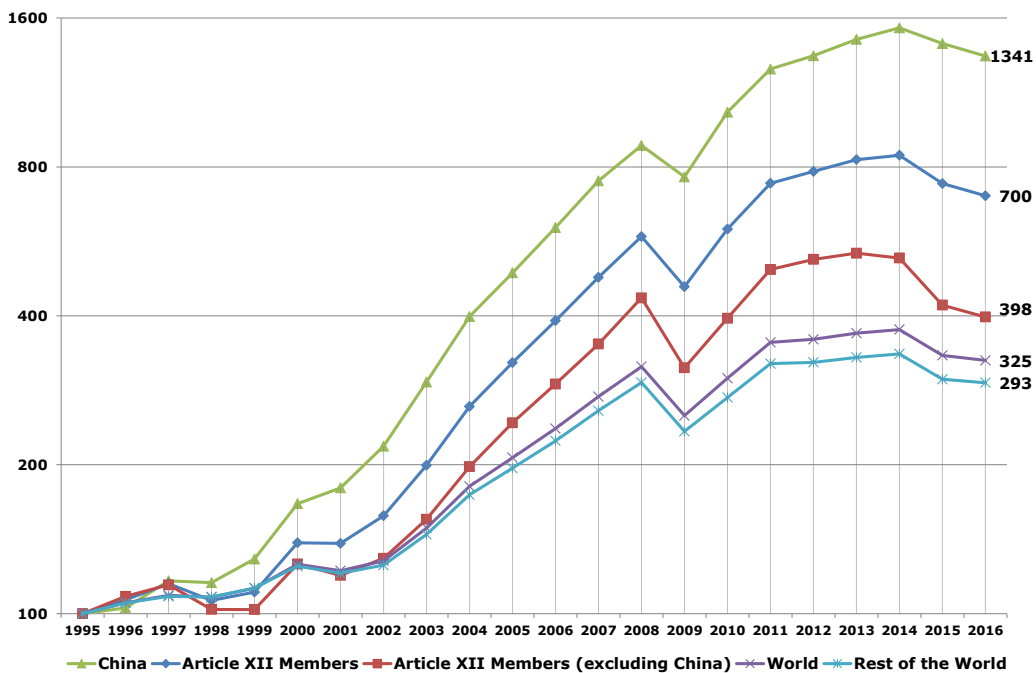


114. Figure 5 shows that since the establishment of the WTO in 1995, the nominal value of world trade in goods and commercial services grew by 225%, or at an average annual growth rate of 5.8%. Over the same period, that value attributed to of Article XII Members increased by 600%, or at an average annual growth

rate of 9.7%. Even excluding the largest Article XII Member by trade value (China), over the same period, the other Article XII Members' nominal value of trade increased by 298%, or at an average annual growth rate of 6.8%, i.e. approximately 18% faster than global trade growth rate.

Figure 5: Evolution of world trade in nominal value by membership status (1995–2016)

(Index, 1995=100. Logarithmic scale)



115. Overall, Article XII Members have consistently registered rapid trade growth above the world average. Figures 6 and 7 show that, in the period 1995 to 2016, the nominal value of trade in merchandise goods and commercial services of Article XII Members increased by 591% and 645% respectively. This was

faster than the increase of the nominal value of global trade in goods and services, which in comparison increased by 208% and 301%. Even if China, a major trader, is excluded from the calculations, the trend remains. In other words, the trade growth of Article XII Members is faster than that of the rest of the world.

Figure 6: Value of merchandise trade of Article XII Members (1995–2016)

(Index, 1995=100)

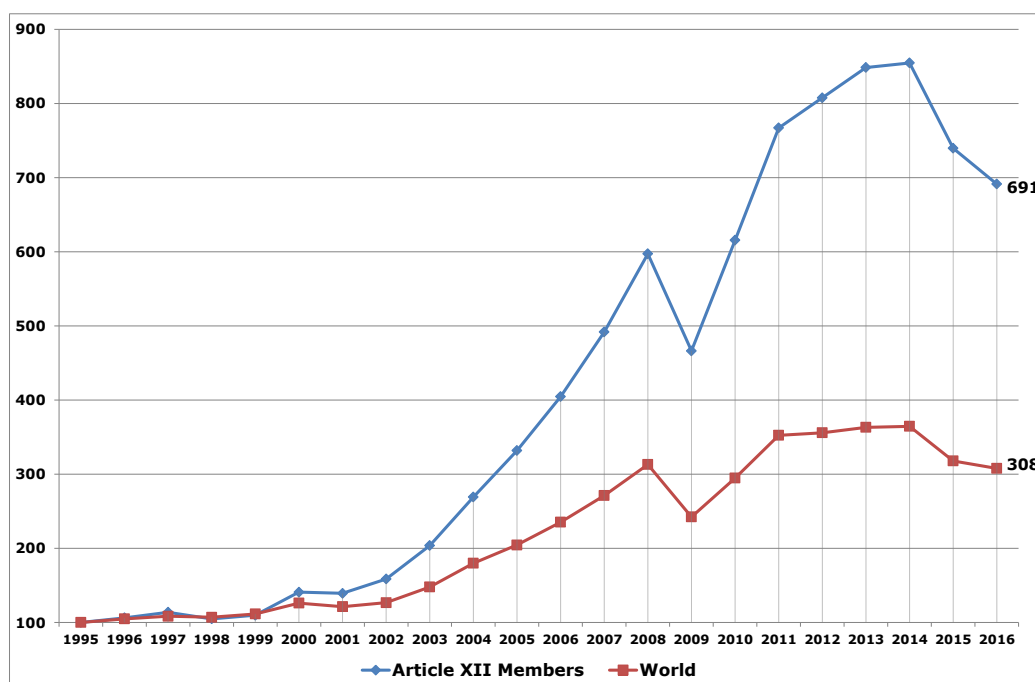
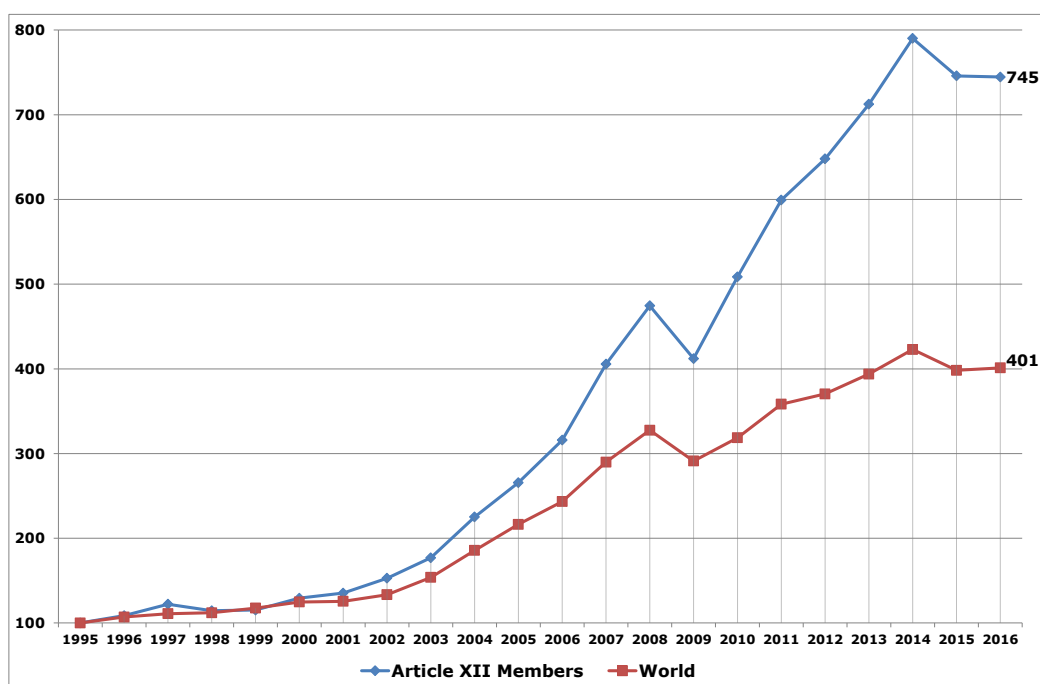


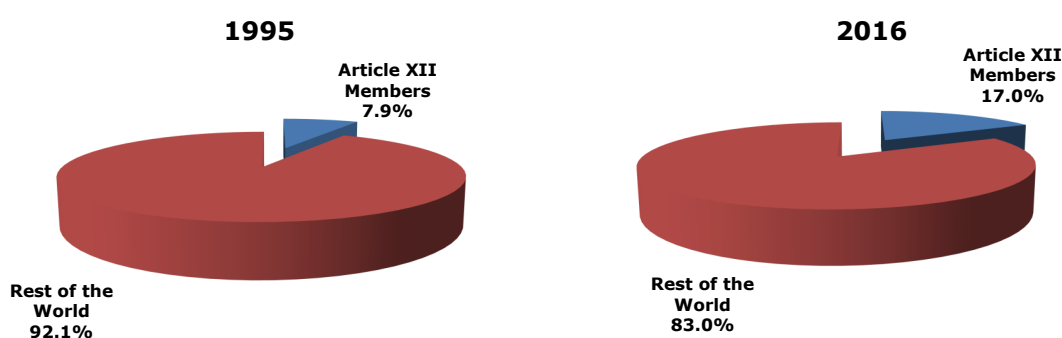
Figure 7: Value of trade in commercial services of Article XII Members (1995–2016)

(Index, 1995=100)



116. As a result of their stronger trade performance relative to the world average, Article XII Members have expanded their share of global trade of merchandise goods and commercial services

significantly. As shown in Figure 8, from 1995 to 2016, the share of global trade of Article XII Members has more than doubled, increasing from 7.9% to 17.0%.

Figure 8: Share of global trade of Article XII Members (1995 and 2016)

Source: WTO Statistics Database

ANNEX 1 - ACCESSIONS DIVISION WORK INDICATORS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2017

Year	Formal WP Meetings	Informal WP Meetings/ Consultations	Technical Verification Meetings	Plurilateral Meetings	IGA	Technical Assistance, Capacity-Building & China Round Table Process	Article XII Accessions	Newsletters	DG's Annual Report on Accessions	Accessions Annual Outreach Cycle
2017	7 Azerbaijan (1) Belarus (2) Sudan (2) Union of the Comoros (2)	1 Iraq	0	3 Azerbaijan (1) Belarus (1) Sudan (1)	10	21	0	11	1 WT/ACC/31 WT/GC/189 WT/MIN (17)/6	6 African Group*; Arab Group; Asian Group of Developing Members (AGDM); Informal Group of Latin-American members of the WTO (GRULAC); Informal Group of Developing Countries (IGDC); Sub-Committee on LDCs.

Source: Accessions Division internal data.

* At this writing, the annual outreach with the African Group is scheduled for December 2017.

ANNEX 2 - ACCESSIONS NEGOTIATED PURSUANT TO ARTICLE XII

	Government*	Membership Date	Working Party Report	Goods Schedule	Services Schedule	Protocol of Accession	General Council Decision
1.	Ecuador	21/01/1996	WT/L/777 & Corr.1	Add.1 & Corr.1, 2	Add.2	WT/ACC/ECU/6	WT/ACC/ECU/5
2.	Bulgaria	01/12/1996	WT/ACC/BGR/5 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/BGR/7	WT/ACC/BGR/6
3.	Mongolia	29/01/1997	WT/ACC/MNG/9 & Corr.1	Add.1 & Corr.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/MNG/11	WT/ACC/MNG/10
4.	Panama	06/09/1997	WT/ACC/PAN/19 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/PAN/21	WT/ACC/PAN/20
5.	Kyrgyz Republic	20/12/1998	WT/ACC/KGZ/26 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/KGZ/29	WT/ACC/KGZ/28
6.	Latvia	10/02/1999	WT/ACC/LVA/32	Add.1 & Corr.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/LVA/35	WT/ACC/LVA/34
7.	Estonia	13/11/1999	WT/ACC/EST/28	Add.1	Add.2 & Corr.1	WT/ACC/EST/30	WT/ACC/EST/29
8.	Jordan	11/04/2000	WT/ACC/JOR/33 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/JOR/35	WT/ACC/JOR/34
9.	Georgia	14/06/2000	WT/ACC/GEO/31	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/GEO/33	WT/ACC/GEO/32
10.	Albania	08/09/2000	WT/ACC/ALB/51 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2 & Corr.1, 2	WT/ACC/ALB/53 & Corr.1	WT/ACC/ALB/52 & Corr.1
11.	Oman	09/11/2000	WT/ACC/OMN/26	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/OMN/28	WT/ACC/OMN/27
12.	Croatia	30/11/2000	WT/ACC/HRV/59	Add.1	Add.2 & Corr.1, 2	WT/ACC/HRV/61	WT/ACC/HRV/60
13.	Lithuania	31/05/2001	WT/ACC/LTU/52	Add.1 & Corr.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/LTU/54	WT/ACC/LTU/53
14.	Moldova, Republic of	26/07/2001	WT/ACC/MOL/37 & Corr.1-4	Add.1	Add.2	WT/ACC/MOL/40	WT/ACC/MOL/39
15.	China	11/12/2001	WT/ACC/CHN/49 & Corr.1 WT/MIN(01)/3	Add.1 Add.1	Add.2 Add.2	WT/L/432	WT/L/432
16.	Chinese Taipei	01/01/2002	WT/ACC/TPKM/18 WT/MIN(01)/4	Add.1 Add.1	Add.2 Add.2	WT/L/433	WT/L/433
17.	Armenia	05/02/2003	WT/ACC/ARM/23 & Corr.1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/506	WT/L/506
18.	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	04/04/2003	WT/ACC/807/27	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/494	WT/L/494
19.	Nepal	23/04/2004	WT/ACC/NPL/16	Add.1	Add.2	WT/MIN(03)/19	WT/MIN(03)/19
20.	Cambodia	13/10/2004	WT/ACC/KHM/21	Add.1	Add.2	WT/MIN(03)/18	WT/MIN(03)/18
21.	Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	11/12/2005	WT/ACC/SAU/61	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/627	WT/L/627
22.	Viet Nam	11/01/2007	WT/ACC/VNM/48	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/662	WT/L/662
23.	Tonga	27/07/2007	WT/ACC/TON/17 WT/MIN(05)/4	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/644	WT/L/644
24.	Ukraine	16/05/2008	WT/ACC/UKR/152	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/718	WT/L/718
25.	Cabo Verde	23/07/2008	WT/ACC/CPV/30	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/715	WT/L/715
26.	Montenegro	29/04/2012	WT/ACC/MNE/38 WT/MIN(11)/7	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/841	WT/MIN(11)/28 WT/L/841
27.	Samoa	10/05/2012	WT/ACC/SAM/30 WT/MIN(11)/1	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/840	WT/MIN(11)/27 WT/L/840
28.	Russian Federation	22/08/2012	WT/ACC/RUS/70 WT/MIN(11)/2	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/839	WT/MIN(11)/24 WT/L/839
29.	Vanuatu	24/08/2012	WT/ACC/VUT/17	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/862	WT/L/823
30.	Lao People's Democratic Republic	02/02/2013	WT/ACC/LAO/45	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/865	WT/L/865
31.	Tajikistan	02/03/2013	WT/ACC/TJK/30	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/872	WT/L/872
32.	Yemen	26/06/2014	WT/ACC/YEM/42	Add.1	Add.2	WT/MIN(13)/24 WT/L/905	WT/MIN(13)/24 WT/L/905
33.	Seychelles, Republic of	26/04/2015	WT/ACC/SYC/64	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/944	WT/L/944
34.	Kazakhstan	30/11/2015	WT/ACC/KAZ/93	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/957	WT/L/957
35.	Liberia	14/07/2016	WT/ACC/LBR/23	Add.1	Add.2	WT/MIN(15)/38 WT/L/973	WT/MIN(15)/38 WT/L/973
36.	Afghanistan	29/07/2016	WT/ACC/AFG/36	Add.1	Add.2	WT/MIN(15)/39 WT/L/974	WT/MIN(15)/39 WT/L/974

ANNEX 3 - WTO ACCESSIONS WORKING PARTY (WP) CHAIRPERSONS

No.	Government	Date Working Party established	WP Chairperson*	Geneva-based (Y/N)
1.	Algeria	17 June 1987	Pending	
2.	Andorra	22 October 1997	Pending	
3.	Azerbaijan	16 July 1997	H.E. Dr Walter WERNER (Germany)	Y
4.	The Bahamas	18 July 2001	H.E. Mr Wayne McCOOK (Jamaica)	Y
5.	Belarus	27 October 1993	H.E. Mr Kemal MADENOĞLU (Turkey)	Y
6.	Bhutan	6 October 1999	H.E. Mr Thomas HAJNOCZI (Austria)	Y
7.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	15 July 1999	Pending	
8.	Comoros, Union of the	9 October 2007	H.E. Mr Luis Enrique CHÁVEZ BASAGOITIA (Peru)	N
9.	Equatorial Guinea	5 February 2008	Pending	
10.	Ethiopia	10 February 2003	H.E. Mr Carsten STAUR (Denmark)	Y
11.	Iran	26 May 2005	Pending	
12.	Iraq	13 December 2004	H.E. Mr Omar HILALE (Morocco)	N
13.	Lebanese Republic	14 April 1999	Mr Jean-Paul THUILLIER (France)	Y
14.	Libya	27 July 2004	Mr Victor ECHEVARRÍA UGARTE (Spain)	N
15.	Sao Tome and Principe	26 May 2005	Pending	
16.	Serbia	15 February 2005	H.E. Mrs. Marie-Claire SWÄRD CAPRA (Sweden)	N
17.	Somalia	7 December 2016	Pending	
18.	Sudan	25 October 1994	Mr Ryosuke KUWANA (Japan)	Y
19.	Syrian Arab Republic	4 May 2010	Pending	
20.	Timor-Leste	7 December 2016	H.E. Mr Pedro Nuno BÁRTOLO (Portugal)	Y
21.	Uzbekistan	21 December 1994	H.E. Mr Seokyoung CHOI (Korea)	N

ANNEX 4 – LENGTH OF TIME OF COMPLETED ACCESSIONS

No.	Article XII Member	Date of WP Establishment	Date of Membership	Total Time of Accession Process
1.	Ecuador	09/1992	01/1996	3 years 4 months
2.	Bulgaria	11/1986	12/1996	10 years 1 month
3.	Mongolia	10/1991	01/1997	5 years 3 months
4.	Panama	10/1991	09/1997	5 years 11 months
5.	Kyrgyz Republic	04/1996	12/1998	2 years 8 months
6.	Latvia	12/1993	02/1999	5 years 2 months
7.	Estonia	03/1994	11/1999	5 years 8 months
8.	Jordan	01/1994	04/2000	6 years 3 months
9.	Georgia	07/1996	06/2000	3 years 11 months
10.	Albania	12/1992	09/2000	7 years 9 months
11.	Oman	06/1996	11/2000	4 years 5 months
12.	Croatia	10/1993	11/2000	7 years 1 month
13.	Lithuania	02/1994	05/2001	7 years 3 months
14.	Moldova, Republic of	12/1993	07/2001	7 years 7 months
15.	China	03/1987	12/2001	14 years 9 months
16.	Chinese Taipei	09/1992	01/2002	9 years 4 months
17.	Armenia	12/1993	02/2003	9 years 2 months
18.	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	12/1994	04/2003	8 years 4 months
19.	Nepal*	06/1989	04/2004	14 years 10 months
20.	Cambodia*	12/1994	10/2004	9 years 10 months
21.	Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	07/1993	12/2005	12 years 5 months
22.	Viet Nam	01/1995	01/2007	12 years
23.	Tonga	11/1995	07/2007	11 years 8 months
24.	Ukraine	12/1993	05/2008	14 years 5 months
25.	Cabo Verde*	07/2000	07/2008	8 years
26.	Montenegro	02/2005	04/2012	7 years 2 months
27.	Samoa*	07/1998	05/2012	13 years 10 months
28.	Russian Federation	07/1993	08/2012	19 years 1 month
29.	Vanuatu*	07/1995	08/2012	17 years 1 month
30.	Lao PDR*	02/1998	02/2013	15 years
31.	Tajikistan	07/2001	03/2013	11 years 8 months
32.	Yemen*	07/2000	06/2014	13 years 11 months
33.	Seychelles	07/1995	04/2015	19 years 9 months
34.	Kazakhstan	02/1996	11/2015	19 years 9 months
35.	Liberia*	12/2007	07/2016	8 years 7 months
36.	Afghanistan*	12/2004	07/2016	11 years 7 months

Overall Average	10 years 2 months
LDCs Accessions	12 years 6 months
Non-LDCs Accessions	9 years 4 months

* LDC. Cabo Verde and Samoa acceded to the WTO as LDCs. They graduated from LDC status in 2007 and in 2014, respectively .

ANNEX 5 – BASIC ECONOMIC PROFILES OF ARTICLE XII MEMBERS AND ACCEDING GOVERNMENTS

Table 5-1: Acceding Governments

Acceding Government	Population ¹ (thousands)	GDP ² (millions USD)	GDP per Capita ³ (USD)	Trade per capita ³ (USD)	Trade as % GDP ³	Merchandise exports ⁴ (millions USD)	Merchandise imports ⁴ (millions USD)	Commercial services exports ⁴ (millions USD)	Commercial services imports ⁴ (millions USD)
Algeria	40 606.05	160 784	4 498	1 360	30.2	28 883	46 727	3 498	10 317
Andorra	77.28				No data available				
Azerbaijan	9 762.27	37 556	5 790	2 201	38.0	10 900	9 200	4 347	7 438
Bahamas	391.23	8 939	24 186	10 562	43.7	440	2 340	2 784	1 430
Belarus	9 507.12	48 847	6 465	3 728	57.7	23 340	27 573	6 787	4 244
Bhutan*	797.76	2 115	2 557	1 184	46.3	470	1 030	142	191
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3 516.82	16 605	4 434	1 977	44.6	5 327	9 130	1 700	473
Comoros, Union of the*	795.60	620	789	264 ⁵	31.9 ⁵	14	206	80 ⁶	82 ⁶
Equatorial Guinea	1 221.49	11 636	19 583	12 693 ⁵	51.7 ⁵	4 800	2 800	41 ⁶	2 407 ⁶
Ethiopia*	102 403.20	72 523	716	141	19.7	4 612	16 588	2 763	3 579
Iran	80 277.43	376 755	4 891	957	19.6	66 000	40 000	9 949	13 907
Iraq	37 202.57	167 026	5 512	1 448	26.3	43 735	47 900	4 744	9 901
Lebanese Republic	6 006.67	51 991	11 175	5 654 ⁵	51.6 ⁵	3 930	18 955	15 584 ⁶	13 330 ⁶
Libya	6 293.25	33 157	5 101	4 663 ⁵	69.5 ⁵	6 000	10 600	483 ⁶	4 067 ⁶
Sao Tome and Principe*	199.91	350	1 668	697	41.8	12	142	83	55
Serbia	7 057.41	37 745	5 608	2 883	51.4	14 852	19 230	5 056	4 034
Somalia*	14 318.00	6 217							
Sudan*	39 578.83	94 421	2 141	192	9.0	2 368	8 656	1 526	1 429
Syrian Arab Republic	18 430.45	60 043 ⁷	2 642	867 ⁸	32.8 ⁷	1 800	4 500	2 434 ⁹	2 818 ⁹
Timor-Leste*	1 268.67	2 498	2 727	484	17.7	20	780	62	444
Uzbekistan	31 848.20	66 502	2 100	482 ¹⁰	27.9 ⁸	10 000	11 500	2 526 ¹¹	1 032 ¹¹

* Source: WTO Statistics Database, unless otherwise indicated. For dates of establishment of Working Parties for Acceding Governments, and dates of Membership for Article XII Members, see Annexes 3 and 4, respectively.

¹ For year 2016. Source: World Bank. Population: All Countries and Economies, available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>.

² For 2016 unless otherwise indicated.

³ For 2014–2016 unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ For 2016 unless otherwise indicated.

⁵ For 2013–2015.

⁶ For 2015.

⁷ For 2010.

⁸ For 2008–2010.

⁹ For 2011.

¹⁰ For 2011–2013.

¹¹ For 2013.

Table 5-2: Article XII Members

Article XII Member	Population ¹² (thousands)	GDP ¹³ (millions USD)	GDP per Capita ¹⁴ (USD)	Trade per capita ³ (USD)	Trade as % GDP ³	Merchandise exports ¹⁵ (millions USD)	Merchandise imports ⁴ (millions USD)	Commercial services exports ⁴ (millions USD)	Commercial services imports ⁴ (millions USD)
Afghanistan*	34 656.03	18 886	609	143	23.5	520	9 150	281	1 139
Albania	2 876.10	12 126	4 241	1 545	36.4	1 962	4 669	2 611	1 711
Armenia	2 924.82	10 499	3 640	1 353	37.2	1 783	3 293	1 578	1 703
Bulgaria	7 127.82	52 418	7 422	4 720	63.6	25 978	28 846	2 579	1 862
Cabo Verde	539.56	1 636	3 222	1 726	53.6	60	666	573	341
Cambodia*	15 762.37	19 398	1 157	831	71.8	10 040	12 600	3 850	1 943
China	1 378 665.00	11 218 281	7 995	1 601	20.0	2 098 161	1 587 431	207 275	449 833
Croatia	4 170.60	50 441	12 385	5 901	47.6	13 736	21 688	13 490	3 866
Ecuador	16 385.07	98 010	6 153	1 457	23.7	16 798	16 324	1 972	3 111
Estonia	1 316.48	23 130	18 233	14 356	78.7	13 171	14 948	6 062	4 166
Georgia	3 719.30	14 222	4 012	2 098	52.3	2 114	7 236	3 272	1 680
Jordan	9 455.80	38 743	5 479	2 707	49.4	7 509	19 207	6 041	4 335
Kazakhstan	17 797.03	133 757	10 170	3 049	30.0	36 776	25 175	6 044	10 816
Kyrgyz Republic	6 082.70	6 551	1 148	659	57.4	1 545	3 919	857	963
Lao PDR*	6 758.35	13 790	1 811	583 ⁵	34.3 ⁵	3 020	4 720	798 ⁶	580 ⁶
Latvia	1 960.42	27 684	14 460	8 548	59.1	12 101	14 269	4 652	2 604
Liberia*	4 613.82	2 111	478	256	25.6	170	1 311	47	196
Lithuania	2 872.30	42 749	15 254	11 671	76.5	24 946	27 196	7 375	4 982
Moldova	3 552.00	6 750	1 992	1 058	53.1	2 045	4 020	1 010	799
Mongolia	3 027.40	11 031	3 922	1 944	49.6	4 917	3 358	798	1 924
Montenegro	622.78	4 126	6 825	3 544	51.9	361	2 283	1 396	517
Nepal*	28 982.77	21 154	730	188	25.8	740	9 650	993	1 238
Oman	4 424.76	63 171	18 589	12 178 ⁵	59.1 ⁵	25 302	22 700	3 483 ⁶	10 102 ⁶
Panama	4 034.12	55 122	13 117	6 912	52.7	10 060	18 710	12 221	4 343
Russian Federation	144 342.40	1 280 731	10 946	2 622	24.0	281 825	191 406	49 679	72 872
Samoa	195.13	786	4 128	1 564	37.9	56	350	160	80
Saudi Arabia	32 275.69	639 617	21 894	7 379	33.7	174 919	139 390	15 268	50 966
Seychelles	94.68	1 405	14 795	15 261	103.1	448	1 043	879	505
Chinese Taipei	16	528 550	22 483	15 115	67.2	280 321	230 568	41 105	51 739
Tajikistan	8 734.95	6 922	944	256	27.1	900	3 100	232	364
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2 081.21	10 912	5 206	2 933	56.3	4 787	6 757	1 594	1 134
Tonga	107.12	403	4 026	1 681	41.8	22	260	73	82
Ukraine	45 004.64	93 263	2 476	1 279	51.7	36 364	39 151	12 081	10 131
Vanuatu*	270.40	773	2 882	1 504	52.2	51	424	327	154
Viet Nam	92 701.10	201 326	2 103	1 869	88.9	176 785	174 231	12 236	18 296
Yemen*	27 584.21	27 318	1 276	343 ⁵	23.3 ⁵	1 000	6 770	562 ⁶	1 246 ⁶

¹² For year 2016. Source: World Bank, Population: All Countries and Economies, available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>.

¹³ For 2016 unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁴ For 2014–2016 unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁵ For 2016 unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁶ Data unavailable. * Current LDC.

ANNEX 6 – DATA ON TRADE PERFORMANCE

Table 6-1: Value of merchandise trade and year-on-year percentage change (1995–2016)

(Billion dollars and percentage)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
Article XII																							
Members	Value	857	911	975	899	941	1,208	1,194	1,360	1,747	2,307	2,846	3,469	4,217	5,122	3,999	5,279	6,578	6,926	7,277	7,330	6,341	5,923
	Year-on-year percentage change		6.2%	7.1%	-7.8%	4.6%	28.4%	-1.1%	13.9%	28.4%	32.1%	21.9%	21.6%	21.4%	-21.9%	32.0%	24.6%	5.3%	5.1%	0.7%	-13.5%	-6.6%	
World	Value	10,453	10,953	11,331	11,186	11,645	13,183	12,679	13,242	15,459	18,797	21,379	24,592	28,353	32,732	25,337	30,812	36,841	37,201	37,970	38,106	33,232	32,180
	Year-on-year percentage change		4.8%	3.5%	-1.3%	4.1%	13.2%	-3.8%	4.4%	16.7%	21.6%	13.7%	15.0%	15.3%	15.4%	-22.6%	21.6%	19.6%	1.0%	2.1%	0.4%	-12.8%	-3.2%

Source: WTO Statistics Database.

Table 6-2: Value of trade in commercial services* and year-on-year percentage change (1995–2016)

(Billion dollars and percentage)		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Article XII Members	Value	155	168	189	177	179	200	210	237	274	349	412	490	629	736	639	789	929	1,004	1,105	1,225	1,156	1,154
	Year-on-year percentage change		8.6%	12.5%	-6.3%	0.7%	12.1%	4.7%	12.9%	15.8%	27.2%	18.0%	18.9%	28.4%	17.0%	-13.2%	23.4%	17.8%	8.1%	10.0%	10.9%	-5.6%	-0.2%
World	Value	2,369	2,536	2,629	2,653	2,784	2,955	2,975	3,159	3,644	4,396	5,126	5,763	6,866	7,759	6,898	7,546	8,486	8,773	9,330	10,017	9,432	9,502
	Year-on-year percentage change		7.1%	3.7%	0.9%	4.9%	6.1%	0.7%	6.2%	15.4%	20.6%	16.6%	12.4%	19.1%	13.0%	-11.1%	9.4%	12.4%	3.4%	6.3%	7.4%	-5.8%	0.7%

* From 2005 onwards, the commercial services values are compiled using a new services classification in the balance of payments (BPM 6). Thus, figures are not directly comparable to those from earlier years.

Source: WTO Statistics Database.

ANNEX 7 – WORLD BANK DISTANCE-TO-FRONTIER DATA ANALYSIS

Table 7-1: Changes in Article XII Members' DTFs during accession – by Member

Member	Number of Indicators for which Data are Available ¹	Average Number of Years for which Data are Available Per Indicator ²	Number of Indicators Improved ³	Average Improvement Per Indicator ⁴	Number of Indicators Declined ⁵	Average Decline Per Indicator ⁶	Number of Unchanged Indicators ⁷	Overall Average Change Per Indicator ⁸
Cabo Verde	9	3.00	4	+ 1.50	0	—	5	+ 0.67
Lao PDR	10	8.40	8	+ 11.48	0	—	2	+ 9.18
Montenegro	10	5.70	5	+ 10.85	3	- 1.23	2	+ 5.06
Russian Federation	10	7.40	8	+ 13.09	1	- 0.60	1	+ 10.41
Samoa	10	7.40	6	+ 8.94	1	- 0.17	3	+ 5.35
Saudi Arabia	3	1.60	1	+ 0.67	0	—	2	+ 0.22
Tajikistan	10	7.60	5	+ 25.61	3	- 5.15	2	+ 11.26
Tonga	9	2.89	4	+ 0.51	2	- 0.89	3	+ 0.03
Ukraine	9	3.89	7	+ 8.48	1	- 1.77	1	+ 6.40
Vanuatu	10	7.40	6	+ 9.67	1	- 3.71	3	+ 5.43
Viet Nam	9	2.89	5	+ 1.80	1	- 1.54	3	+ 0.83
Yemen	10	9.40	5	+ 21.46	3	- 4.41	2	+ 9.41
Weighted Average	9.08*	5.63*	5.33*	+ 10.55	1.33*	- 2.62	2.42*	+ 5.81

¹ The World Bank began assigning DTF scores to certain indicators before others, and to certain Members before others. Further, Article XII Members acceded in different years during the 2005–2014 time-period.

This column indicates the number of Members or indicators for which data were available in the specified time period.

² Of the indicators/Members for which data were available (see previous column), the average number of years for which data were available with respect to those indicators/Members. The number of years varies in light of the data issues discussed in the previous footnote.

³ The number of indicators that improved with respect to each Member over the relevant time-period.

⁴ For those indicators that improved with respect to each Member, the average amount of that improvement expressed as points on the 100-point DTF scale.

⁵ The number of indicators that declined with respect to each Member over the relevant time-period.

⁶ For those indicators that declined with respect to each Member, the average amount of that decline expressed as points on the 100-point DTF scale.

⁷ The number of indicators that did not change with respect to each Member over the relevant time-period.

⁸ With respect to all indicators for which data were available for each Member, the average change in those indicators' DTF scores expressed as points on the 100-point DTF scale.

* Equal to the simple average.

Table 7-2: Changes in Article XII Members' DTFs during accession – by indicator

Indicator	Number of Members for which Data are Available ¹	Average Number of Years for which Data are Available Per Member ²	Number of Members Improved ³	Average Improvement Per Member ⁴	Number of Members Declined ¹¹	Average Decline Per Member ¹²	Number of Members Unchanged ¹³	Overall Average Change Per Member ¹⁴
Starting a Business	12	6.67	12	+ 16.86	0	—	0	+ 16.86
Dealing with Construction Permits	11	5.17	8	+ 4.50	3	- 3.48	0	+ 2.32
Getting Electricity	7	2.08	5	+ 3.74	2	- 2.70	0	+ 1.90
Registering Property	11	5.92	9	+ 7.77	2	- 3.36	0	+ 5.75
Getting Credit	11	5.92	6	+ 18.75	1	- 6.25	4	+ 9.66
Protecting Minority Investors	11	5.17	1	+ 50.00	0	—	10	+ 4.55
Paying Taxes	11	5.17	5	+ 16.18	2	- 2.85	4	+ 6.84
Trading Across Borders	11	5.17	11	+ 8.42	0	—	0	+ 8.42
Enforcing Contracts	12	6.67	2	+ 2.59	3	- 1.93	7	- 0.05
Resolving Insolvency	12	6.67	5	+ 1.30	3	- 0.60	4	+ 0.39
Weighted Average	10.90 [*]	5.46 [*]	6.40 [*]	+ 10.54	1.60 [*]	- 2.63	2.90 [*]	+ 5.80

⁹ The number of Members that improved with respect to each indicator over the relevant time-period.

¹⁰ For those Members that improved with respect to each indicator, the average amount of that improvement expressed as points on the 100-point DTF scale.

¹¹ The number of Members that declined with respect to each indicator over the relevant time-period.

¹² For those Members that declined with respect to each indicator, the average amount of that decline expressed as points on the 100-point DTF scale.

¹³ The number of Members for whom the DTF score with respect to each indicator remained static.

¹⁴ With respect to all Members for which data were available for each indicator, the average change in those Members' DTF scores expressed as points on the 100-point DTF scale.

Table 7-3: Changes in Article XII Members' DTFs after accession – by Member

Member	No. of Indicators for which Data are Available ¹	No. of Years Data are Available Per Indicator ²	Number of Indicators Improved ³	Average Improvement Per Indicator ⁴	Number of Indicators Declined ⁵	Average Decline Per Indicator ⁶	Number of Indicators Unchanged ⁷	Overall Average Change Per Indicator ⁸
Cabo Verde	10	6.80	8	+ 9.25	0	—	2	+ 7.40
Lao PDR	10	2.00	6	+ 1.03	0	—	4	+ 0.62
Montenegro	10	3.00	7	+ 6.75	0	—	3	+ 4.73
Russian Federation	10	3.00	7	+ 15.72	2	- 1.97	1	+ 10.61
Samoa	10	3.00	5	+ 2.84	1	- 4.66	4	+ 0.96
Saudi Arabia	10	9.10	6	+ 19.51	1	- 0.06	3	+ 11.70
Tajikistan	10	2.00	4	+ 1.59	2	- 6.19	4	- 0.60
Tonga	10	7.70	7	+ 7.23	2	- 10.27	1	+ 3.01
Ukraine	10	6.80	9	+ 24.00	1	- 0.69	0	+ 21.53
Vanuatu	10	3.00	3	+ 10.48	4	- 3.40	3	+ 1.79
Viet Nam	10	7.70	9	+ 10.05	1	- 7.64	0	+ 8.29
Yemen	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Weighted Average	10.00*	4.92*	6.45*	+ 10.75	1.27*	- 4.54	2.27*	+ 6.37

Table 7-4: Changes in Article XII Members' DTFs after accession – by indicator

Indicator	Number of Members for which Data are Available ¹	Average Number of Years for which Data are Available Per Member ²	Number of Members Improved ³	Average Improvement Per Member ¹⁰	Number of Members Declined ¹¹	Average Decline Per Member ¹²	Number of Members Unchanged ¹³	Overall Average Change Per Member ¹⁴
Starting a Business	11	5.09	9	+ 12.65	2	- 1.24	0	+ 10.12
Dealing with Construction Permits	11	5.00	10	+ 10.42	1	- 5.47	0	+ 8.98
Getting Electricity	11	3.73	10	+ 9.34	1	- 0.06	0	+ 8.49
Registering Property	11	5.09	7	+ 7.11	3	- 5.11	1	+ 3.13
Getting Credit	11	5.09	7	+ 25.00	1	- 3.75	3	+ 15.57
Protecting Minority Investors	11	5.00	2	+ 11.67	0	—	9	+ 2.12
Paying Taxes	11	5.00	7	+ 10.40	2	- 8.78	2	+ 5.02
Trading Across Borders	11	5.00	9	+ 4.18	0	—	2	+ 3.42
Enforcing Contracts	11	5.09	4	+ 1.99	2	- 0.44	5	+ 0.64
Resolving Insolvency	11	5.09	6	+ 14.29	2	- 8.98	3	+ 6.16
Weighted Average	11.00 [*]	4.92 [*]	7.10 [*]	+ 10.76	1.40 [*]	- 4.54	2.50 [*]	+ 6.37

Table 7-5: Changes in Article XII Members' DTFs (2004–2014) – by Member

Member	No. of Indicators for which Data are Available ¹	Average Number of Years for which Data are Available Per Indicator ²	Number of Indicators Improved ³	Average Improvement Per Indicator ⁴	Number of Indicators Declined ⁵	Average Decline Per Indicator ⁶	Number of Indicators Unchanged ⁷	Overall Average Change Per Indicator ⁸
Cabo Verde	10	8.60	8	+10.01	0	—	2	+8.00
Lao PDR	10	9.40	8	+12.25	0	—	2	+9.80
Montenegro	10	7.70	7	+13.99	1	-0.05	2	+9.79
Russian Federation	10	9.40	8	+26.37	1	-0.78	1	+21.02
Samoa	10	9.40	7	+9.06	0	—	3	+6.30
Saudi Arabia	10	9.40	6	+19.62	1	-0.06	3	+11.77
Tajikistan	10	8.60	5	+25.73	4	-5.51	1	+10.66
Tonga	10	9.40	7	+7.48	2	-11.02	1	+3.03
Ukraine	10	9.40	9	+30.59	1	-2.46	0	+27.29
Vanuatu	10	9.40	5	+17.71	2	-8.20	3	+7.21
Viet Nam	10	9.40	9	+10.88	1	-7.64	0	+9.03
Yemen	10	9.40	5	+21.46	3	-4.41	2	+9.41
Weighted Average	10.00 [*]	9.13 [*]	7.00 [*]	+16.88 ²	1.33 [*]	-5.29 ²	1.67 [*]	+11.11 ¹

Table 7-6: Changes in Article XII Members' DTFs (2004–2014) – by indicator

Indicator	Number of Members for which Data are Available ¹	Average Number of Years for which Data are Available Per Member ²	Number of Members Improved ⁹	Average Improvement Per Member ¹⁰	Number of Members Declined ¹¹	Average Decline Per Member ¹²	Number of Members Unchanged ¹³	Overall Average Change Per Member ¹⁴
Starting a Business	12	10.42	12	+26.16	0	—	0	+26.16
Dealing with Construction Permits	12	8.92	10	+13.83	2	-6.99	0	+10.36
Getting Electricity	12	5.00	9	+12.44	3	-1.71	0	+8.90
Registering Property	12	9.67	9	+12.52	2	-7.56	1	+8.13
Getting Credit	12	9.67	10	+28.38	1	-6.25	1	+23.13
Protecting Minority Investors	12	8.92	3	+24.45	0	—	9	+6.11
Paying Taxes	12	8.92	7	+21.50	3	-6.68	2	+10.87
Trading Across Borders	12	8.92	12	+10.85	0	—	0	+10.85
Enforcing Contracts	12	10.42	5	+2.63	3	-2.22	4	+0.54
Resolving Insolvency	12	10.42	7	+12.85	2	-8.76	3	+6.04
Weighted Average	12.00 [*]	9.13 [*]	8.40 [*]	+16.88	1.60 [*]	-5.29	2.00 [*]	+11.11

ANNEX 8 – ACCESSIONS MANAGEMENT

Table 8-1: Accession Working Party Management

Accession Working Party	Code	Secretary	Co-Secretary	Administrative Manager/Support
Maika Oshikawa, Officer-in-Charge				
Algeria	DZA	Bratanov	Soumaré	Tandara-Stenier
Andorra	AND	accessions@wto.org - No Activity		
Azerbaijan	AZE	Carlson	Rasulov <i>Kouchaki</i>	Evans
Bahamas	BHS	Lee	<i>Mudliar</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Belarus	BLR	Bratanov	Varyanik Rasulov	Evans
Bhutan*	BTN	Lee	<i>Mudliar</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Bosnia and Herzegovina	BIH	Beslać	<i>Simutowe</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Comoros, Union of the*	COM	Bratanov	Sandstad Soumaré	Tandara-Stenier
Equatorial Guinea	GNQ	Sandstad	Soumaré	Evans
Ethiopia*	ETH	Carlson	Lee <i>Simutowe</i>	Evans
Iran	IRN	Varyanik	<i>Kouchaki</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Iraq	IRQ	Carlson	Varyanik <i>Kouchaki</i>	Evans
Lebanese Republic	LBN	Varyanik	<i>Kouchaki</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Libya	LBY	Soumaré	Rasulov	Evans
Sao Tome and Principe*	STP	Sandstad	<i>da Silva</i>	Evans
Serbia	SRB	Beslać	<i>Simutowe</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Somalia*	SOM	Sandstad	Soumaré <i>Simutowe</i>	Evans
Sudan*	SDN	Lee	<i>Mudliar</i> <i>da Silva</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Syrian Arab Republic	SYR	Beslać	<i>Kouchaki</i>	Evans
Timor-Leste*	TLS	Varyanik	<i>da Silva</i>	Evans
Uzbekistan	UZB	Lee	Rasulov	Evans

Table 8-2: Expressions of Interest / Watching Briefs

Country	Code	Focal Point	Co-Focal Point	Administrative Manager/Support
Curaçao	CUW	Carlson	<i>da Silva</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Kosovo	KOS	Beslać	<i>Simutowe</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Palestine	PSE	Lee	<i>Mudliar</i>	Tandara-Stenier
South Sudan ^{*1}	SSD	Soumaré	Sandstad	Evans
Turkmenistan	TKM	Rasulov	<i>Simutowe</i>	Evans

* LDCs.

¹ Application circulated (WT/L/852), but not considered by the General Council.

Table 8-3: Non-Working Party Workload Distribution

Responsibility	Focal Point	Co-Focal Point	Administrative Manager/ Support
Acting in the absence of the Director	Oshikawa		Tandara-Stenier
DG's Annual Report on WTO Accessions	Carlson	<i>Kouchaki</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Informal Group on Accessions (IGA)	Bratanov (Secretary of IGA)	Sandstad	Tandara-Stenier
Accessions Newsletter	Carlson	Soumaré	Tandara-Stenier
Annual Outreach	Varyanik	Beslać	Tandara-Stenier
TA Focal Point	Lee	Carlson	Evans
Trade Policy Forum for Central Asia, 2018	Lee	Rasulov <i>Mudliar</i>	Evans
Training on Accession Rules, Q1, 2018	Carlson	Rasulov <i>Kouchaki</i>	Evans
Post-Accession Support	Varyanik	Lee	Evans
China Programme / Accessions Interns (Pillar I)	Beslać	Lee	Tandara-Stenier
China Programme / Sixth China Round Table (Pillar II)	Bratanov	Soumaré	Tandara-Stenier
LDC Focal Point	Soumaré	<i>da Silva Simutowe</i>	Evans
Central Asia Focal Point	Lee	Rasulov	Evans
Databases:			
Accessions Commitments Database (ACDB)	Beslać	<i>Simutowe</i>	Evans
Market Access Register	Sandstad	Rasulov	Evans
Trade performance of Article XII Members	Sandstad	Rasulov	Tandara-Stenier
Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP) Update	Beslać	<i>Simutowe</i>	Evans
Knowledge and Information Management	Beslać	<i>Simutowe</i>	Evans
Accessions Division Follow-up Tracker	Tandara-Stenier	Evans	Tandara-Stenier
Accessions Annual Output Plan	Rasulov	<i>Simutowe</i>	Evans
Accessions Retreat	Beslać	<i>Simutowe</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Eurasian Book Project	Varyanik	Rasulov	Evans
Update of Accessions Handbook	Bratanov	Rasulov <i>Kouchaki</i>	Evans

ACCESSIONS STAFF DISPOSITION 2017

- Officer-in-Charge;
- Six Professionals;
- Two Administrative Managers; and
- Four rotating interns under the WTO Accessions Internship Programme.

2016 Annual Report by the Director-General



*This Journal Record follows account of construction activities filed with permits on 1/25/2008.

This document has been prepared under the Secretary's own responsibility and is without

WTO ACCESSIONS - 2015 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL*



* This Annual Report takes account of confirmed accession-related developments up until Monday, 16 November 2015.

This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

WTO ACCESSIONS 2014 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL*



^a This Annual Report takes account of confirmed accession-related developments up until 24 November 2014.

This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S 2013 ANNUAL REPORT ON ACCESSIONS



This Annual Report takes account of confirmed accession-related developments up until 1 November 2013.

This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and without prejudice to the positions of Members and to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

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