

This is an information note to assist Acceding Governments with preparations for meetings and negotiations associated with their accession. It is one of several practical steps by the WTO Secretariat to improve transparency on accessions matters.

NOTE ON ACCESSIONS INFORMATION FOR ACCEDING GOVERNMENTS

The first meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions in 2011 took place today, 24 January 2011. At today's meeting, the Secretariat consulted with Members on the evolving calendar of accessions meetings for 2011.¹ Seventeen delegations attended the meeting. The Secretariat briefed the Group on the progress of the 2011 Accession Priorities, namely, the three LDCs of Samoa, Vanuatu and Yemen; Montenegro; the Russian Federation; and, Serbia. The Group was also briefed on recent developments in ten other active accession processes.

In addition to national activities (technical missions, workshops, Working Party Chairpersons' visits) delivered on request from Acceding Governments and bilateral technical assistance provided by Members, the Group was informed on the tentative dates for the Regional Seminar on Accessions for the CEECAC Region (mid-July 2011) and the Geneva-based Workshop (second half of 2011).

Members were notified that (i) two Working Party Chairpersons were vacant (Algeria and Uzbekistan); (ii) consultations to appoint a Chairperson for the Working Party on the Accession of Iran were underway; (iii) Ambassador Kitajima, Chairperson for the Working Party on the Accession of Samoa, would return to Tokyo. Members were informed that it has been proposed that Mr. Atsoyuki Oike, Minister at the Japanese Mission, be appointed as Chairperson on the Accession of Samoa; and (iv) Ambassador Black, Chairperson for the Working Party on the Accession of The Bahamas, had also vacated his position as Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the UNOG/WTO. Members were also informed that he has retired from the foreign service of Jamaica. The preferences of the Acceding Government and CARICOM were being sought.

Members agreed with the proposed calendar of accession meetings for 2011 (annexed). However, Members converged that Meetings could only go ahead on the basis of inputs received with sufficient time for consideration and review, normally a period of 4-6 weeks.

¹ Accessions-related meetings are scheduled, based on the submission of substantive and qualitative inputs on the multilateral track of accession negotiations; and, meaningful offers and progress on bilateral market access negotiations.

ACCESSIONS MEETING SCHEDULE – EVOLVING CALENDAR²

24 January 2011

24 January 2011							
Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation		Conf Office Advised
					French Spanish English	Own	
25 January 2011	Bosnia and Herzegovina	8 th Working Party	WTO/AIR/3685 refers (AM only)	CRI	yes	no	√
27 January 2011	Russian Federation	Informal Chair Consultations	Fax dated 17 January refers (AM/PM)	W	no	no	√
28 January 2011		Informal Chair Consultations	Fax dated 17 January refers (AM only)	W	no	no	√
		Plurilateral on Agriculture	Fax dated 14 January refers (PM only)	D	no	no	√
31 January 2011	Afghanistan	1 st Working Party	WTO/AIR/3687 refers (AM only)	D	yes	no	√
[early February 2011]	Yemen	Informal/Formal Meeting	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	tbc	√
[22-23 February 2011]	General Council			CR			√
[17 March 2011]	Serbia	10 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	CRI	yes	no	√
[29 March 2011]	Russian Federation	Informal Chair Consultations	Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)	D	no	no	√
[30 March 2011]		Informal Chair Consultations	Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)	D	no	no	√
[31 March 2011]				E	no	no	√
[end February/early March 2011]	Samoa	Working Party Consultations	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	tbc	yes	no	√
[2–6 May 2011]	Geneva Week						
[3 May 2011]	Samoa	2 nd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	E	yes	no	√
[4-5 May 2011]	General Council						
[After summer break 2011]		Geneva-based Seminar	Convening Notice Pending	tbc			√
Date TBC at any moment	Montenegro	8th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	tbc	√
[Date TBC]	Ethiopia	2nd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	tbc	yes	tbc	√

²Dates are suggested to assist planning by Members, Acceding Governments and the Secretariat. However, meetings will only go ahead on the basis of inputs received with sufficient time for consideration and review by Members, normally a period of 4 to 6 weeks.

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