



WTO Accessions Newsletter

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

IGA-AGENDA:

The 8th meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2013 took place today, 20 September. The meeting was chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division. The IGA was briefed on: (i) the overall pace of accessions in technical focus for 2013; (ii) accession WP maintenance work; and, (iii) outreach and technical assistance. The WTO Secretariat consulted Members on the ECAM: Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2013/2014 (annexed).

OVERALL PACE OF ACCESSIONS

The 8th meeting of the IGA was chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division, Mr Chiedu Osakwe. He welcomed Members to this first meeting following the Summer Break and noted that although Members faced a busy calendar of 'non-stop' meetings in the lead-up to MC9, a number of accessions were on track. Resources and a 'feasible' work program had been deployed. The Secretariat was commended for its work and Members reiterated the necessity to focus on those priorities that could actually be delivered and to take account of their overall workload.

Director Accessions confirmed for Members that Director-General Roberto Azevêdo shared their position that accessions were a strategic priority for the WTO.



WTO Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo

2013 ACCESSION WP FOCUS

Yemen: The IGA was informed that the Draft Accession Package was complete and had been circulated. A final Working Party (WP) meeting was scheduled for 26 September 2013 to consider and adopt the Draft Accession Package, *ad referendum*. The WP Chairperson would be proposing that WP Members submit the Draft Accession Package, adopted *ad referendum*, to MC9 for formal action.

ACCESSIONS - TOOLBOX

- > Click here for a list of current [Accession Working Parties](#) and [Accession Working Party Chairpersons](#)
- > Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings (ECAM)
- > [WTO Director-General Annual Reports on Accessions](#)
- > Find all Article XII Members' specific accession commitments and related information provided in the Working Party Reports and Accession Protocols - in the [Accession Commitments Database \(ACDB\)](#)
- > [Handbook on Accessions to the WTO](#)
- > WTO Accessions Internship - "[China Programme](#)"
- > [Accession-Related Technical Assistance Activities](#)
- > For all official (de-restricted) documents relating to the accession processes of Article XII Members, click [here](#)
- > Accession Portal on the WTO Website ([En](#), [Fr](#), [Es](#))
- > All earlier [WTO Accessions Newsletters](#) are available on the Accession Portal of the WTO website, in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).
- > For enquiries related to the contents of the WTO Accessions Newsletter, send an e-mail to: Acceding-Government-Newsletter@wto.org

Afghanistan: On the bilateral front, Kabul had concluded and signed its market access negotiations with Canada and Japan. Several outstanding negotiations were on the threshold of completion. On the multilateral front, the Draft Working Party Report (DWPR) had been advanced but there remained outstanding technical work. Inputs, including the consolidation of Members' questions, had been sent to Afghanistan and the Secretariat was awaiting feedback. Although it was maturing rapidly, this accession appeared to no longer be on track for conclusion this year. A visit to Kabul had been tentatively scheduled for the end of September. Kabul was yet to confirm details and timing of the visit.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: This accession was apace. Sarajevo had confirmed to enact pending legislation by the end of September. Multilaterally, technical work on the DWPR had been completed and specific commitment language had been agreed in all areas, except for Trading Rights. The outstanding bilateral market access negotiations were envisaged for conclusion and deposit in the Secretariat by first week of October. A final WP meeting was envisaged for 11 November 2013.

Kazakhstan: The IGA was informed that the Secretariat received inputs from Astana on 16 September on particular chapters, namely SPS, AGSTs and Legislative Action Plan. This was an important and economically significant accession. However, the major impeding factor was the unresolved question of tariff adjustment and compensation. The progress of this accession turned on the resolution of this exercise. In addition, technical work remained in several other areas of the Foreign Trade Regime, principally, *inter alia*, SPS, Agriculture, TRIMs, local content.

Serbia: The situation remained unchanged. Belgrade needed to adopt outstanding legislation on WTO-consistent GMO regulation.

MAINTENANCE WORK

The IGA was briefed on the progress in 4 other active accessions:

On Seychelles: The IGA was informed that this accession had advanced to intermediate status. A comprehensive set of updated documents had been submitted to the Secretariat and circulated for consideration at the next WP meeting. In support of a WP meeting before the end of this year, a Member noted the effort all parties had made in driving this accession to this stage. Members had invested considerable time and effort and a meeting in November with the Seychellois senior leadership would facilitate feedback to the Delegation of Seychelles.

On Algeria: The deadline for Members' submission of questions on the AGSTs was 31 August. Algiers had submitted its responses to the Secretariat and a legislative notice was circulated in August. A meeting between the WP Chairperson and the Secretariat had recently taken place. A WP meeting was envisaged for the 1st quarter for 2014, if possible.

On Azerbaijan: Inputs had been received from Baku. The next cycle of meetings was envisaged for 14-15 November 2013.

On Bahamas: Inputs had been circulated in August. If action was finalised in a timely manner on the Factual Summary, then a WP meeting could be envisaged for 12 November 2013.

On WP maintenance work (4 - Seychelles, Algeria, Azerbaijan and Bahamas), Members strongly requested the Secretariat to be sensitive to the pressure of work on Members in the horizontal process of meetings, preparatory for MC9. Accessions with a low likelihood of delivery in 2013 should be carried over to the 1st quarter of 2014.

OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The IGA was briefed on the 2 major activities planned for this year: the Global Seminar on WTO Accessions and the Second China Roundtable for LDCs, which were scheduled to take place in Geneva, from 23 to 27 September and Luang Prabang, from 15 to 18 October respectively. These two activities were designed to take stock of the deposited 31 WTO Accession Protocols and improve the understanding of their effects on the rules-based trading system. The programme for the Global Seminar was available on the Accessions webpage and would be forwarded electronically to all IGA Members. Director-General Azevêdo would open the Global Seminar on Monday, 23 September 2013.

Due to resource allocation constraints under the jurisdiction of the Institute of Training and Technical Cooperation, the implementation of the Second China Roundtable was uncertain. Enquiries should be directed to Director ITTC and DDG Jara.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW WP CHAIRPERSON - COMOROS

The IGA was informed that Ambassador Luis Enrique Chávez Basagoitia (Peru) had been approved as the Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Comoros.

Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings (ECAM)¹

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
Wednesday, 11 September	Yemen	Technical Verification on Goods Schedule	COMPLETED on 11 September 2013	S2	NO	NO
Friday, 20 September	IGA	8 th 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Fax dated 12 September 2013 refers	S3	NO	NO
Monday, 23 – Friday, 27 September	2013 Accessions TA Activity Theme: "The Present and the Future of the Rules-Based Trading System: Contributions of WTO Accessions" – Part I: GLOBAL SEMINAR ON WTO ACCESSIONS (GENEVA) <i>"...safeguarding and strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading system..."</i>					
Thursday, 26 September	Yemen	11 th and final Working Party meeting (PM)	WTO/AIR/4174 dated 3 September 2013 refers	CRI	YES	NO
[Tuesday, 1 – Thursday, 3 October]	WTO PUBLIC FORUM 2013					
[Tuesday, 8 – Wednesday, 9 October]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[Thursday, 10 October]	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral Meeting on SPS (AM)	Convening Notice pending	D	NO	TBC
		Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (PM)	Convening Notice pending	D	NO	TBC
[Friday, 11 October]	Kazakhstan	18 th Working Party Meeting (AM/PM)	Convening Notice pending	CRII	YES	TBC
[Tuesday, 15 – Friday, 18 October 2013]	2013 Accessions TA Activity Theme: "The Present and the Future of the Rules-Based Trading System: Contributions of WTO Accessions" – Part II: SECOND CHINA PROGRAMME ROUNDTABLE FOR LDCs (LUANG PRABANG, LAO PDR) <i>"The Future of the Multilateral Trading System: Perspectives of LDCs and Article XII Members"</i>					
[Tuesday, 5 – Wednesday, 6 November]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[Thursday, 7 November]	Afghanistan	5 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	D	YES	NO
[Monday, 11 November]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	13 th Working Party meeting (AM)	Convening Notice pending	W	YES	NO
[Tuesday, 12 November]	The Bahamas	3 rd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	W	YES	NO
[Thursday, 14 November]	Azerbaijan	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (PM)	Convening Notice pending	S1	YES	NO
[Friday, 15 November]	Azerbaijan	11 th Working Party meeting (AM)	Convening Notice pending	S1	YES	NO
[November]	Seychelles	5 th Working Party meeting (AM)	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Tuesday, 3 – Friday, 6 December]	NINTH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (MC9) - BALI					

¹ Dates are suggested to assist planning by Members, Acceding Governments and the Secretariat. However, listed meetings are not automatic and will only go ahead on the basis of inputs from Acceding Governments, received with sufficient time for review by Members, normally a period of at least four weeks.

Scheduling and confirmation of meetings also take account of the distribution of meetings in any particular period, and hence, the capacity of Members and the Secretariat alike to cope.

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
1 st Quarter 2014						
1 st Quarter 2014]	Algeria	12 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[1 st Quarter 2014]	Ethiopia	4 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[1 st Quarter 2014]	Liberia	2 nd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO

Note:

Enquiries related to this calendar should be addressed to:

- Ms. Souda Tandara-Stenier (Tel: 022 739 6321; e-mail: Souda.Tandara-Stenier@wto.org);
- Ms. Nadia Ferdi Demierre (Tel: 022 739 6560; e-mail: Nadia.Ferdi@wto.org); or
- accessions@wto.org