



WTO ACCESSIONS

2018 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 10 December 2018.

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I. OVERVIEW 2018 AND OUTLOOK 2019

1. I am pleased to present the Tenth Annual Report on WTO Accessions. As in previous years, this Report provides up-to-date information on the state of play of accession negotiations and an overview of the activities, by the WTO Secretariat and Members, aimed at assisting acceding governments in achieving their accession goals. The Report also reviews the initiatives undertaken by the WTO Secretariat to provide more visibility, and platforms for information exchange and transparency, with respect to the ongoing accessions. It also puts a special focus on the management of the accession process.

2. One of the objectives of the WTO is to ensure that all countries wishing to do so can use trade as an instrument for promoting economic growth and development. This is why WTO accessions continue to be a systemic priority. Since 1995, the Organization has dealt with 58 accessions, 36 of which have been already concluded successfully with 22 remaining on the agenda. The continued strong interest from governments wishing to join the WTO is a testament to the systemic value of the Organization. This sends a powerful signal as the Organization begins its preparations for the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) which will be held in June 2020 in Astana.

3. There have been good developments to report over the last 12 months. First, at the 11th Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, WTO Members responded positively to the request for accession by South Sudan - currently the world's newest nation, which gained independence in 2011 - by agreeing to establish an accession Working Party. Another notable accession-related outcome from Buenos Aires was the establishment of the g7+ WTO Accessions Group, which was launched on the margins of the Ministerial Conference. The objective of this Group is to facilitate the integration of post-conflict and fragile economies into the multilateral trading system through WTO accession-related reforms.

4. Concerning the accessions identified as strategic priorities for 2018, Bosnia and Herzegovina made the most substantial progress. Notably, it concluded all but one of its remaining bilateral market access negotiations with WTO Members and worked with Members and the Secretariat to bring the text of the draft Report of the Working Party in close-to-final form. This accession is now technically very advanced and the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina targets the conclusion of the accession process in the first half of 2019. The accession of the Union of the Comoros did not advance as planned in 2018. In particular, progress slowed down after a constitutional referendum held in July. While significant work remains on the domestic legislative front, this LDC accession is a possible candidate for conclusion and another priority for 2019.

5. Having registered steady progress in 2017-2018, the accession of Belarus is now set to enter its advanced stage. Five bilateral market access agreements were concluded in 2018 and the draft Working Party Report continued to evolve. Now in its 25th year, this accession process has begun to reach technical maturity, backed by the political will of the Belarusian government to conclude accession negotiations by MC12. Belarus is the final member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in the WTO accession process, following the accessions of Russian Federation (2012) and Kazakhstan (2015) and, as such, is addressing complex questions associated with the integration of a regional economic and customs union in a rules-based multilateral system. Completing this accession process is, therefore, of systemic importance for both the WTO and the EAEU.

6. Good progress was also registered in the accession of The Bahamas after six years of inactivity. The Working Party held its first meeting on the basis of a substantial set of technical inputs. The Government of The Bahamas has now instructed its negotiating team to intensify domestic work, as well as the engagement with Members, with the goal of concluding the accession process before MC12. It is notable that this is the last remaining WTO accession in the Western Hemisphere.

7. Following clear indications received from the government of Serbia, I expect this technically advanced accession process to make significant progress once its reactivation is confirmed, subject to the enactment of outstanding legislation. I believe that this accession could then move towards finalization in the lead-up to MC12.

8. In addition to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Union of the Comoros, the Secretariat is ready to support the aspirations of Belarus, The Bahamas, and Serbia by making their accessions a priority

for the Secretariat in 2019. As always, progress towards the finalization of negotiations will hinge on the willingness of the acceding government to place WTO accession as a top priority on the domestic policy agenda. At the same time, Members would need to engage constructively on the critical issues which emerge as the negotiations approach the endgame.

9. In several accessions, 2018 was a year of preparatory work aimed at resuming the Working Party processes after periods of inactivity. The Working Party on the accession of Sudan is expected to reconvene in the new year, following the lifting of a number of trade restrictive measures by the acceding government. Following clear indications received from the governments of Ethiopia and Uzbekistan, the Secretariat has carried out technical work to update key accession documents with a view to reactivating these accession processes. I expect that these Working Parties will formally resume their work in the first half of 2019. The stage is also set for the resumption of formal work in the Working Party on the Accession of Iraq following the submission of an updated Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime early in 2018. Furthermore, some of the mature accession dossiers (Azerbaijan, Lebanese Republic) may not have registered formal progress in 2018, but can see resumed intensive activity at any time.

10. The accessions of Somalia, South Sudan and Timor-Leste remain at the initial activation stages after the establishment of their respective Working Parties in the last 24 months. The formal Working Party processes, however, could begin in the near future - as soon as the necessary documentary base, including the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime and the first round of questions and replies, is provided by the acceding governments. In addition, Equatorial Guinea, which graduated from LDC status in 2017, has recently indicated readiness to submit its Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime in the near future. This would pave the way for holding the first meeting of the Working Party, some ten years after its establishment.

11. While acknowledging the progress made this year and the positive prospects for the year ahead, it is fair to say that substantial work remains with many governments which are still at early or intermediate stages in the process of accession. This is why this year's thematic focus is a "Report on Recent Developments in the Management of Accession Negotiations" (section VII). The thematic section offers a historical record of how accessions work has been handled through 2018. It covers, in particular, the approval of accession applications, rights and obligations linked to observer status, the role of Working Party Chairpersons, accession documents and templates, the practical steps involved in convening and conducting Working Party meetings, and the closing stages of an accession process.

12. The purpose of this year's thematic section is to enhance transparency, which is in line the pledge of the WTO Secretariat to provide Members with a clear idea of how the WTO manages its functions. It is aimed at assisting delegations in participating more effectively in accessions work. This section has no normative content and does not in any way replace or modify the established accession procedures set out in the WT/ACC/22 WTO document series, which are reviewed on a periodic basis in consultation with WTO Members. It does not forecast procedures that will be in effect in future years.

13. I seize this opportunity to express my appreciation to WTO Members and all the Working Party Chairpersons, and to welcome the seven new Chairpersons who were appointed since the publication of the last Annual Report on Accessions. The engagement of Working Party Chairpersons continues to be a critical component in the conduct of accession negotiations, as well as in the activation and reactivation of dormant processes. The new Chairpersons will have an important role to play in steering the work in their respective Working Parties and I invite them to engage closely and proactively with Members, the acceding governments, and the Secretariat.

14. Monthly meetings of the Informal Group of Accessions, chaired by the Secretariat, continue to serve as the principal platform for information exchange with Members, and when necessary, Working Party Chairpersons. The Accessions Newsletter provides monthly up-to-date information on active accessions to a wider audience, which has continued to grow steadily.

15. Addressing Members' standing request to widen the outreach and support to acceding governments, in 2018 the Secretariat offered technical assistance and capacity building activities to over 600 participants from acceding governments. In particular, the Secretariat carried out accession-specific national seminars, workshops and technical missions in the case of eight acceding

governments. Furthermore, since the circulation of the last Annual Report, three accession related experience-sharing activities were carried out: the Sixth and Seventh China Round Tables on Accessions, hosted respectively by Argentina and Kazakhstan, and sponsored by China; and the second Regional Dialogue for acceding governments from the Greater Horn of Africa, hosted by Djibouti. In early 2019, the Secretariat will offer a specialized training on WTO accessions rules which will provide an in-depth focus on the WTO legal disciplines at issue in the accession Working Party Reports.

16. In addition, in the year under review, significant efforts were invested in the expansion of outreach activities and the establishment of platforms aimed at promoting dialogues and experience-sharing among acceding governments. A newly established Informal Group of Acceding Governments was launched to address a growing need for better coordination among acceding governments, while an Informal Dialogue of Acceding LDCs was established to promote cooperation among acceding LDCs. Both of these initiatives are led by acceding governments. In addition, a series of new activities, including experience-sharing events, were launched under the "Trade for Peace" initiative, coordinated by the Accessions Division.

17. I welcome these new initiatives as they create additional support networks that can play an important role in addressing the challenges associated with the WTO accession process, which remains complex, multifaceted and demanding. This is of particular relevance for many of the applicants which are currently in the accession queue – i.e., small and medium-sized economies, including a number of conflict-affected and fragile states.

18. By acceding to the WTO, governments send a message that they are committed to the core values of openness, transparency, good governance, and the rule of law. But each accession is also a building block for the multilateral trading system itself. This synergy is particularly relevant today as fundamental questions are being raised about the validity of the rules-based approach to international trade.

19. Together with the Secretariat staff, I remain committed to building, in 2019, on the foundation of what was achieved this year, and to use WTO accessions to continue expanding the reach of WTO rules and disciplines while also providing acceding governments with a development tool via domestic reform. The prospects for results on accessions in 2019 are positive:

- Several accessions are at an advanced state of technical maturity. Specifically, the accessions of The Bahamas, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Union of Comoros should be of strategic priority for the Secretariat in 2019 and in the lead-up to MC12.
- Focus will also be sustained on other active accession files, in particular the ones in which significant progress is anticipated in the near future, such as Ethiopia, Sudan, Serbia and Uzbekistan.
- As always, the Secretariat will invest resources and channel energy in particular to LDC accessions.

20. I look forward to working with WTO Members and acceding governments in the year ahead with a view to welcoming new Members and/or deciding on those that will be ready for approval at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference.

Roberto Azevêdo

II. 2018 DEVELOPMENTS

1. ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES: AN OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

21. At the start of the year, 22 acceding governments were in the process of WTO accession¹. 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:

- Four formal Working Party meetings were held. These were on the accessions of The Bahamas (one² meeting), Belarus (one³ meeting), Bosnia and Herzegovina (one⁴ meeting), and the Union of Comoros (one⁵ meeting).
- One meeting addressing specific technical issues in the area of agriculture was held for The Bahamas⁶. This plurilateral meeting was chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division.

22. In 2018, progress in the accession Working Parties was documented as follows:

- An updated Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) was circulated for the Working Party on the accession of Iraq.
- A Factual Summary of Points Raised was prepared and circulated by the Secretariat for the Working Party on the accession of The Bahamas.
- A first version of a draft Report of the Working Party was prepared by the Secretariat for the Working Party on the accession of the Union of Comoros.
- A draft Report of the Working Party was revised by the Secretariat for the Working Party on the accession of Belarus.

2. WORKING PARTY CHAIRPERSONS

23. There were a number of changes in the status of Accession Working Party Chairpersons since the circulation of the 2017 Annual Report, in chronological order:

- H.E. Mr Atanas Paparizov (Bulgaria) was designated as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 30 November 2017, following the departure of H.E. Mr Rajmund Kiss (Hungary).
- H.E. Mr José Luís Cancela Gómez (Uruguay) was designated as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Algeria in 8 May 2018, following the departure of H.E. Mr Gustavo Miguel Vanerio Balbela (Uruguay).
- H.E. Mr Andrew Staines (United Kingdom) was designated as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of The Bahamas on 8 May 2018, following the departure of H.E. Mr Wayne McCook (Jamaica).
- H.E. Dr Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger (Austria) was designated as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Bhutan on 26 July 2018, following the departure of H.E. Dr Thomas Hajnoczi (Austria).

¹ The Working Party on the Accession of South Sudan was established on 13 December 2017.

² The Third Meeting of the Working Party held on 21 September 2018.

³ The 10th Meeting of the Working Party held on 15 May 2018.

⁴ The 13th Meeting of the Working Party held on 7 February 2018.

⁵ The Fourth Meeting of the Working Party held on 28 March 2018.

⁶ Held on 20 September 2018.

- H.E. Ms Ji-ah Paik (Republic of Korea) was designated as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Uzbekistan on 26 July 2018, following the departure of H.E. Mr Seokyoung Choi (Republic of Korea).
- The position of Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Ethiopia became vacant following the departure of H.E. Mr Carsten Staur (Denmark).
- The position of Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Sudan became vacant following the departure of Mr Ryosuke Kuwana (Japan).

24. As of November 2018, of the 13 Working Parties which have a Chairperson, nine Chairpersons are Geneva-based. Three Chairpersons are women. There are nine 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 present. As of the date of writing, consultations are ongoing with regards to the Chairmanships of the Accession Working Parties of Ethiopia and Sudan.

25. In 2018, 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.

26. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina, H.E. Mr Atanas Paparizov (Bulgaria), led a mission, accompanied by the Director of the Accessions Division and the Secretary of the Working Party, to Sarajevo from 22 to 23 January 2018, at the invitation of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The WTO delegation held high-level meetings with the Government, including with: H.E. Mr Mirko Šarović, Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers; and Mr Hamdo Tinjak, Head of the WTO Accession Negotiating Team and his team. The Chairperson also met with Mr Mehmedalija Hadžović, Economic Advisor at the Office of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers; Members of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Chair and Members of the Parliamentary Commissions on Trade Policy and Customs from both House of Representatives and House of Peoples, and Mr Nemanja Vasić, Vice President of the Foreign Trade Chamber. The meetings confirmed all stakeholders' support for a speedy conclusion of the accession process. The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed readiness to engage in dialogue with Members to find solutions on the few remaining multilateral issues and to conclude outstanding bilateral market access negotiations with Members concerned.

27. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Azerbaijan, H.E. Dr Walter Werner (Germany), led a mission, accompanied by the Director of the Accessions Division and the Secretary of the Working Party, to Baku from 27 to 28 June 2018, at the invitation of the Government of Azerbaijan. The WTO delegation held high-level meetings with: H.E. Mr Shahin Mustafayev, Minister of Economy and Chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Commission on Preparation for WTO Accession; H.E. Mr Rufat Mammadov, Deputy Minister of Economy; H.E. Mr Mahmud Mammad-Guliyev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chief Negotiator for WTO Accession; and Mr Ziyad Samadzadeh, Chairman of the Economic Policy Committee of the Milli Majlis (Parliament). The meetings confirmed broad support for Azerbaijan's future membership in the WTO and clarified Azerbaijan's policy priorities, the domestic dynamics of the accession process, and certain challenges facing the process. The WTO delegation also visited the Azerbaijan State University of Economics and met the University's Rector, Professor Adalat Muradov. During the meeting, it was agreed to explore the University's interest to establish academic collaboration with the WTO.

28. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Algeria, H.E. Mr José Luís Cancela Gómez (Uruguay), visited Algiers in November 2018 at the invitation of the Government of Algeria.

29. 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 Accessions.⁷

3. TRANSPARENCY IN THE ACCESSION PROCESS

30. Ensuring transparency and predictability in the accession process remain key priorities for the WTO Director-General and WTO Members. The transparency measures that have been in place since 2010 continued to be implemented and reinforced in 2018.

i. Informal Group on Accessions (IGA)

31. As of the time of writing, the IGA has held nine meetings in 2018. Consultations in the IGA focused on: (i) information exchange on accessions; (ii) Secretariat reports on technical developments in accession 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

32. In the period under review the Secretariat prepared nine WTO Accessions Newsletters. The Newsletter ensures transparency on accession matters, reports on monthly meetings of the IGA, and enhances communication with acceding governments, Chairpersons, Members, and the broader global trade policy community. The number of subscribers to the Newsletter in 2018 was 990, excluding the Secretariat.

iii. 2018 Annual Outreach Dialogue with WTO Regional Groups

33. As part of its 2018 annual outreach dialogue with WTO regional groups, a briefing for least-developed countries was provided at the 83rd session of the Sub-Committee on LDCs held on 14 September 2018. The annual outreach dialogue on accessions was also conducted with the ASEAN Group on 27 November 2018; the Group of Latin American and the Caribbean on 28 November 2018; and the Informal Group of Acceding Governments on 30 November 2018.⁸ 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.

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OUTREACH

i. Technical Assistance

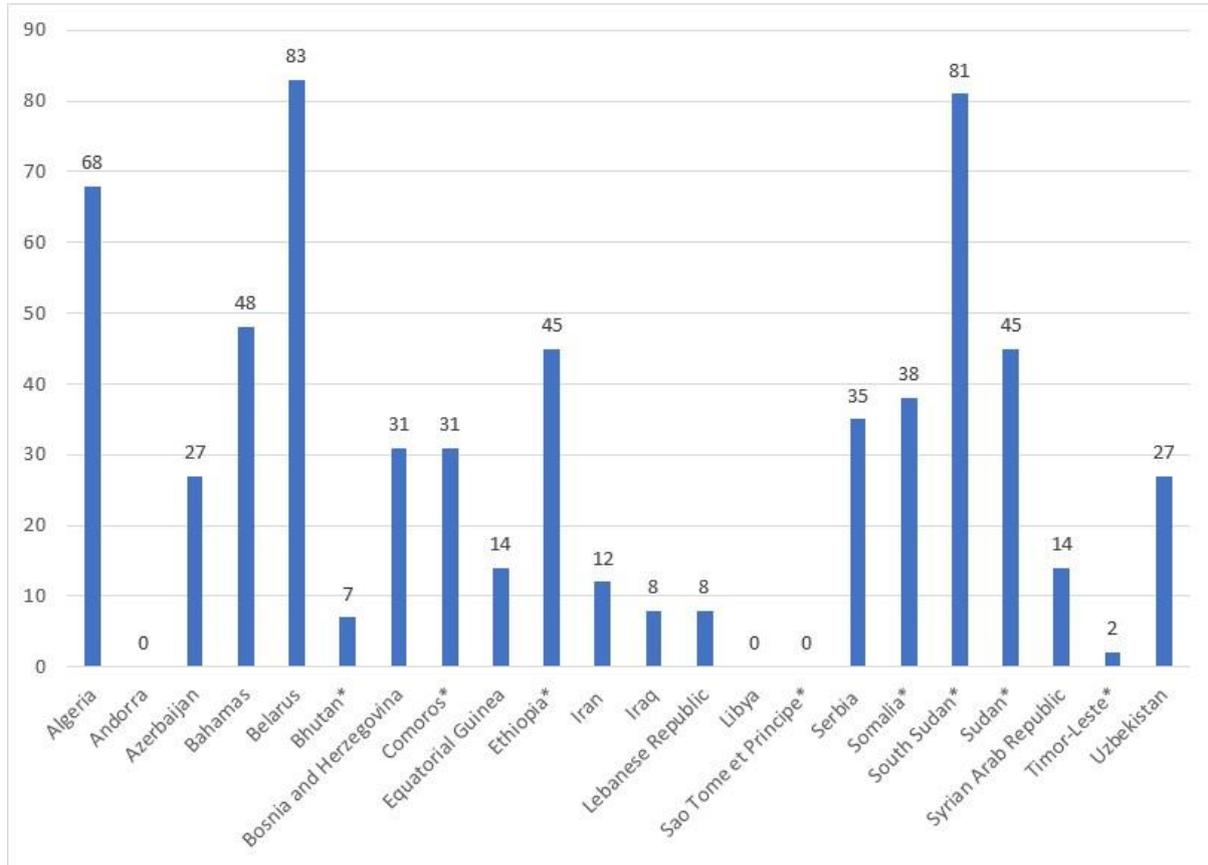
34. The WTO Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan for 2018–2019 establishes support for acceding governments as one of four key results that technical assistance should contribute to achieve.⁹ The Plan grants priority attention to acceding LDCs. Traditionally, accession-related technical assistance 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.

35. In 2018, acceding governments were invited to participate in numerous technical assistance and capacity building WTO activities, including activities at the global, regional and national levels and e-training courses. Overall, over 600 participants from acceding governments took part in WTO technical assistance activities. Figure 1, below, shows the number of participants from acceding governments that completed technical assistance activities during 2018.

⁷ The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of the Bosnia and Herzegovina, H.E. Mr Atanas Paporizov (Bulgaria), reported to the IGA on 1 February 2018. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Azerbaijan, H.E. Dr Walter Werner (Germany), reported to the IGA on 5 July 2018.

⁸ At the time of writing an outreach dialogue with the African Group is planned for early 2019.

⁹ WT/COMTD/W/227/Rev.1.

Figure 1: Participants from Acceding Governments in WTO technical assistance activities (2018)

* LDC

36. In the period under review, the Accessions Division was involved in the delivery of 23 technical assistance activities. These included, *inter alia*: (i) national and Geneva-based seminars; (ii) sessions on accessions in advanced trade policy courses¹⁰, and introductory courses for LDCs; (iii) workshops; (iv) technical missions; (v) e-Learning; (vi) outreach dialogue with WTO groupings¹¹; (vii) presentations to students¹²; and (viii) participation in conferences.

37. Specifically, the Accessions Division, sometimes in collaboration with other Secretariat Divisions, provided tailor-made technical assistance to Azerbaijan, The Bahamas, Belarus, Serbia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uzbekistan.

38. At the request of the Government of Azerbaijan, the Secretariat participated in a conference which launched a project supporting Azerbaijan's WTO accession and delivered a presentation on WTO accession. The Secretariat also held bilateral meetings with government officials.

39. At the request of the Government of the Bahamas, the Secretariat undertook a technical mission to Nassau from 19-24 March 2018. The mission's specific objectives were to: (i) re-establish contacts with the relevant authorities; (ii) review the domestic state of play; (iii) assist the negotiating team in updating the negotiating inputs required for the reactivation of the accession process; and (iv) establish a Roadmap for concluding the accession process in 2019.

40. At the request of the Government of Belarus, the Secretariat delivered (i) a national workshop on the SPS Agreement (23-24 January); and (ii) a national workshop on quantitative restrictions

¹⁰ The Accessions Division participated in the Advanced Trade Policy Course on 29 June.

¹¹ See, e.g. above paragraph 33.

¹² E.g. the Accessions Division met with students from Kyunghee University (30 January).

and the Information Technology Agreement (8-9 November). During these missions, the Secretariat also provided technical assistance on the update of the relevant chapters of Belarus' draft Working Party Report and met with government officials to discuss the state of play in the accession process.

41. At the request of the Government of Serbia, the Secretariat undertook a technical mission to Belgrade from 29 to 31 May 2018. The specific objectives of the mission were to: (i) re-establish contact with the Government, following five years of dormancy in the accession process; (ii) assist the negotiating team in updating the negotiating inputs necessary for the resumption of the Working Party process; and (iii) agree on the next steps in the accession process. The Accessions Division also contributed to the WTO/PAM High-Level Parliamentary Conference on "Investments and Trade Facilitation in the Western Balkans" in Belgrade from 12 to 13 July 2018.

42. At the request of the Government of South Sudan, the Secretariat undertook a visit to Juba from 18 to 21 February 2018 to create awareness of the accession process by meeting with members of the Government and relevant domestic stakeholders. Another national activity delivered by the Secretariat, aimed at assisting South Sudan in the preparation of its Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime, took place from 28 to 30 November.

43. At the request of the Government of Sudan, the Secretariat undertook a mission to Khartoum from 29 April to 4 May 2018. The objective of the mission was (i) to gather information on the introduction of a temporary ban on imported products and the introduction of foreign exchange restrictions; and (ii) to explore specific steps to normalize the Working Party process. A second mission took place in early December.

44. At the request of the Government of Uzbekistan, the Secretariat undertook two missions to Tashkent. From 14 to 18 May 2018, the Secretariat contributed to a 3-day workshop on the "Resumption of the Accession Process of Uzbekistan to the WTO", co-organized by the World Bank and USAID. The team met with Government officials to develop a Roadmap for the official resumption of the Working Party process after over a decade of dormancy. From 17 to 19 October 2018, the Secretariat delivered a training course on goods schedules; participated in the Central Asian Trade Forum; and met with Governmental officials to discuss the state of play in the accession process.

45. Accession-related technical assistance and capacity building activities 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 US Agency for International Development, the World Intellectual Property Organization, and the World Bank. Activities have been coordinated with positive results.

ii. Outreach

46. In the year under review, significant efforts were invested in the expansion of outreach activities and the establishment of platforms aimed at promoting dialogues and experience-sharing among acceding governments. These platforms included: (i) the g7+ WTO Accession Group; (ii) the Trade for Peace initiative; (iii) the Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa; (iv) the Informal Dialogue of Acceding LDCs; and (v) the Informal Group of Acceding Governments (IGAG).

47. The g7+ WTO Accessions Group was launched on 10 December 2017 on the margins of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Established as a subgroup of the larger g7+¹³ it comprises eight LDCs associated with WTO accession, including three Article XII Members (Afghanistan, Liberia, Yemen) and five acceding governments (Comoros, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, South Sudan and Timor-Leste). The Group aims to facilitate the integration of post-conflict

¹³ The g7+ is an association of 20 fragile and conflict-affected states, established in 2010 in Dili, Timor-Leste, with the aim of forging pathways out of fragility and conflict and to facilitate transition and economic development of its members. Its members are: Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, and Yemen.

and fragile economies into the multilateral trading system through WTO accession-related reforms, and to support the WTO accession efforts its members through information and experience-sharing. In the year under review, the Group, coordinated by Afghanistan, held three formal meetings, including a special session with the representatives of the g7+ Secretariat, and one outreach event which focused on experience-sharing.

48. In 2018, a series of new activities were launched under the "Trade for Peace" initiative, coordinated by the Accessions Division (www.wto.org/tradeforpeace¹⁴). Approximately two thirds of acceding governments are considered conflict-afflicted or fragile economies. The initiative is aimed at promoting WTO accession as a pathway towards economic growth, development and stability, thereby contributing to peace. A series of activities under the theme "Trade for Peace" in the context of WTO accession took place in 2018, including a Trade for Peace seminar organized in partnership with the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (19 September); a joint g7+/WTO/EIF/UNDP high-level session entitled "Trade for Peace: Integration of Fragile States into the Global Economy as a Pathway towards Peace and Resilience" during the WTO 2018 Public Forum (4 October); a panel discussion on "Trade for Peace: WTO Membership for Peace and Nation-Building" during the Geneva Peace Week (9 November); and a Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa organized under the theme Trade for Peace (3-6 December – see next paragraph). The g7+ WTO Accessions Group was an active participant in these activities.

49. As follow-up to the first Regional Dialogue held in Nairobi on 28-30 August 2017, the Secretariat will organize the second Regional Dialogue on WTO Accessions for the Greater Horn of Africa in Djibouti on 3-6 December 2018. The theme of the Regional Dialogue is *Promoting Trade for Peace through WTO Accessions*.

50. At the initiative of acceding governments, an Informal Dialogue of Acceding LDCs took place on 11 December 2017, on the margins of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This dialogue brought together Ministers and representatives of seven acceding LDCs - Bhutan, Comoros, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan¹⁵, Sudan and Timor-Leste - to discuss issues pertaining to the accession of LDCs. A second Informal Dialogue took place on 2 June 2018 in Geneva. At this meeting, delegations supported the continuation of the Dialogue for promoting cooperation between acceding LDCs.

51. A newly established Informal Group of Acceding Governments (IGAG), which comprises all acceding governments, met for the first time on 27 March 2018. This group was launched in direct response to the need for better coordination among acceding governments in a recent surge of accession activities, as highlighted in the DG's 2017 Annual Report on WTO Accessions. The group is chaired by Belarus. A second meeting of the IGAG was held on 2 June, followed by a third meeting on 30 November.

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

52. The "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 sixth renewal and extension on 9 December 2017, with a contribution of US\$500,000.

53. 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

¹⁴ To be launched shortly.

¹⁵ South Sudan became an acceding government on 13 December 2017.

V. LDCs' Trade Policy Review follow-up workshops.

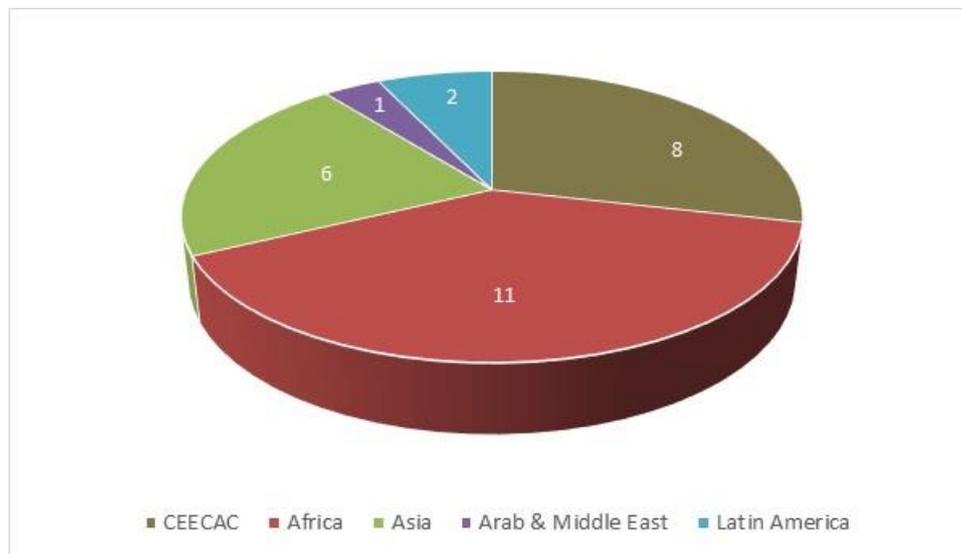
54. The Accessions Division is responsible for the implementation of Pillar I and Pillar II, as well as other accession-specific support.¹⁶

55. With respect to the WTO Accessions Internship Programme, under which the WTO Secretariat selects candidates, four interns benefited from this Programme in the year under review.¹⁷ Of the 28 interns that have participated in the Programme since its launch, 13 have been from LDCs and 15 from non-LDCs.¹⁸ There have been nine men and 19 women.

The WTO Accessions Internship Programme

The WTO Accessions Internship Programme, initiated in 2012, aims to help recent graduates and young professionals from least developed countries and developing countries increase their understanding of the WTO and of trade law, international economics and international relations in general. Under the programme, sponsored by the Government of China, five intern positions are available in the Accessions Division on an annual basis. The maximum duration of the internship is 10 months. To qualify for the programme, interns must be: 1) nationals of LDCs or developing countries that are already WTO Members; or 2) nationals of countries or customs territories engaged in the WTO accession process. Also, eligible candidates must have completed undergraduate studies in a relevant discipline (e.g. economics, law, political science, international relations or in other subjects relevant to the WTO); completed at least 1 year of postgraduate (Masters) studies; and be less than 30 years old. The breakdown of interns per region is represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: China Programme interns by region (2012-2018)



¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ The China WTO Accession Internship participants are from Azerbaijan (non-LDC acceding government), India (non-LDC developing WTO Member), Iran (non-LDC acceding government), Serbia (non-LDC acceding government), Somalia (acceding LDC government), Timor-Leste (acceding LDC government), Uganda (LDC WTO Member) and Zambia (LDC WTO Member).

¹⁸ 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.

56. The Sixth China Round Table took place in Buenos Aires on 9 December 2017, back to back with MC11. The focus of this Round Table, attended by over 200 participants, was twofold: (i) to reconfirm the importance of WTO accessions, and in particular, their systemic contributions to the multilateral trading system; and (ii) to launch a Network of WTO Accession Negotiators. Over 80 former negotiators, former Working Party Chairpersons and other accession experts became members of this Network. China pledged a total of USD 1.5 million to the China Programme and the TFA Facility Trust Fund.

57. The Seventh China Round Table on WTO Accessions took place on 26-27 September 2018 in Astana, Kazakhstan, under the theme "*Eurasian perspectives on the Future of the Multilateral Trading System: Accessions and the evolution of WTO rules*". The Astana Round Table was attended by representatives of 6 acceding governments and 12 Article XII Members, including former and current Chief Negotiators on WTO accessions. Representatives of several other WTO Members, current and former accession Working Party Chairpersons, and partner institutions also participated. The Round Table provided a platform for an exchange of views on the future of trade and the WTO through the perspective of WTO accessions and their systemic contributions. The main elements of the discussions are outlined in the Chair's Report on the Outcome of the Astana Round Table.¹⁹

5. ACCESSIONS TRANSPARENCY TOOLBOX

i. WTO Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP)

58. 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>.

59. The Accessions Intelligence Portal provides access to documentation and data on the WTO accessions processes, including 36 completed accessions and 22 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.

60. The Portal is regularly updated based on the documentation received from the acceding governments and produced by the Secretariat with respect to ongoing accessions.

61. 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 Members and acceding governments.

ii. Accession Commitments Database (ACDB)

62. 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>.

63. In 2018, the Accessions Division updated the Database to include the Accession Protocols of all Article XII Members.

¹⁹ The Chair's Report was circulated in document WT/ACC/32/Rev.1. More information on this and previous round tables can be found at https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/pillar2_e.htm.

iii. Secretariat Register of Bilateral Market Access Agreements

64. 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.

65. 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

66. 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 2018, there was mixed progress in the 22 ongoing accessions. Some advanced whereas others did not advance as planned. A range of factors, as in the past, remain 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 ongoing accessions, as of November 2018. 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.

Table 1: Current accessions by general status, as of November 2018

General Status	Accessions
Strategic focus	The Bahamas, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Union of the Comoros*
Work in progress	Azerbaijan, Sudan*
Reactivation	Ethiopia*, Equatorial Guinea, Iraq, Lebanese Republic, Serbia, Uzbekistan
Activation	Somalia*, South Sudan*, Timor-Leste*
Inactive	Andorra, Algeria, Bhutan*, Iran, Libya, Sao Tomé and Príncipe*, Syrian Arab Republic

Notes: * LDCs.

"Strategic focus" indicates accessions which could be concluded in 2019 or by MC12, based on the level of technical advancement of the dossiers.

"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 exchange of information with the Secretariat with the objective to begin the Working Party process.

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

67. 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. Seven bilateral market access agreements have been 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.

68. 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 intention to re-start the process.

69. 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. Required inputs for the next meeting of the Working Party have not yet been submitted by Azerbaijan.

70. 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 third meeting of the Working Party was held in September 2018 following six years of inactivity. Multilateral discussions are ongoing on the basis of a Factual Summary of Points Raised circulated in June 2018. Bilateral negotiations are ongoing on the basis of market access offers on goods and services with interested Members. The fourth meeting of the Working Party is envisaged for the first quarter of 2019.

71. Belarus: Belarus submitted a request for accession in September 1993. The Working Party on the Accession of Belarus was established in October 1993. The Working Party process resumed in 2017, following 12 years of no formal activity. In 2018, the Working Party held its tenth meeting in May. Five bilateral market access agreements were concluded in this period. Bilateral negotiations are currently ongoing with seven interested Members on the basis of revised market access offers circulated on a bilateral basis. Multilateral negotiations are underway on the basis of a revised draft Working Party Report circulated in March 2018. The eleventh meeting of the Working Party is envisaged for the first quarter of 2019.

72. 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.

73. 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 13th meeting of the Working Party was held in February 2018. Three bilateral agreements were signed in 2018, bringing the total number of concluded agreements to 16. Only one bilateral market access agreement remains to be finalized. Multilateral negotiations are underway on the basis of a revised draft Working Party Report circulated in October 2017. The 14th meeting of the Working Party will be convened after the conclusion of the remaining bilateral negotiation.

74. 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. The Working Party held its fourth meeting in March 2018. Multilateral negotiations are ongoing on the basis of a draft Working Party Report circulated in February 2018. Three bilateral market access agreements have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat. Bilateral negotiations are currently ongoing with three interested Members. The fifth meeting of the Working Party will be convened subject to progress on Comoros' legislative action plan and the submission of required negotiating inputs.

75. 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 inputs to initiate the accession process. Work has reportedly begun on the preparation of a Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime.

76. 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 fourth meeting of the Working

Party will be convened once Ethiopia submits negotiating inputs, including its market access offers on goods (revised) and services (initial).

77. 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.

78. Iraq: Iraq applied for WTO accession in September 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Iraq was established in December 2004. An informal meeting of the Working Party was held in November 2017. An updated MFTR was circulated in February 2018. 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, and replies to questions raised by Members on the updated MFTR.

79. 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 Lebanese Republic circulated updated negotiating inputs to the Working Party in 2017. The most recent version of the draft Working Party Report was circulated in April 2017. The eighth meeting of the Working Party will be scheduled after the resumption of bilateral market access negotiations with interested Members, based on revised offers on goods and services.

80. 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 measures.²⁰

81. Sao Tomé and Príncipe: Sao Tomé and Príncipe applied for WTO accession in February 2005. The Working Party on the Accession of Sao Tomé and Príncipe was established in June 2005. Sao Tome and Principe has not submitted any inputs to initiate the process of accession negotiations. Sao Tomé and Príncipe is subject to Category III administrative measures.²¹

82. 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 14th meeting of the Working Party will be convened subject to outstanding domestic legislative action and the submission of required negotiating inputs, including inputs needed for the revision of the draft Working Party Report.

83. Somalia: Somalia applied for WTO accession in December 2015. The Working Party on the Accession of Somalia was established in December 2016. Somalia has not yet submitted any inputs to initiate the process of accession negotiations. Work has reportedly begun on the preparation of a Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime. Somalia is subject to Category I administrative measures.²²

84. South Sudan: South Sudan applied for WTO accession in December 2017. The Working Party on the Accession of South Sudan was also established in December 2017. South Sudan has not yet submitted any negotiating inputs to initiate the process of accession negotiations. No Working Party meeting has been held to date.

85. 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 years of dormancy, the Working Party resumed its activities in 2017. The fourth meeting of the Working Party was held in July 2017. Multilateral discussions are conducted on the

²⁰ As of November 2018.

²¹ As of November 2018.

²² As of November 2018.

basis of a revised Factual Summary of Points Raised circulated in December 2017. Three bilateral market access agreements have been signed and deposited with the Secretariat. Bilateral market access negotiations are ongoing with several interested Members. The fifth meeting of the Working Party is envisaged for the first quarter of 2019.

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

87. Timor-Leste: 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 will be scheduled subject to the circulation of required inputs, including replies to questions on the MFTR.

88. 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. Following years of dormancy, the resumption of the Working Party is expected in 2019 subject to the submission of required negotiation inputs, including an updated MFTR and revised market access offers on goods and services.

IV. LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES' ACCESSIONS

89. Since the establishment of the WTO, nine Members have acceded as LDCs pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO.²³ Currently, eight LDCs are in the process of WTO accession, including South Sudan whose Working Party was established in December 2017 at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires. The Secretariat provides regular briefings on the state of play on the accessions of LDCs to the Sub-Committee on LDCs.²⁴

90. While positive developments were registered in the accessions of the Union of the Comoros and Sudan, overall progress has been slow in 2018. The accession of the Union of the Comoros carried over the momentum from the previous year into the first half of 2018, with a Working Party meeting held in March. Progress slowed down thereafter, as a constitutional referendum was held in July. The new interim government has retained WTO accession as a priority dossier and is seeking to register progress in the near term. While two bilateral market access agreements were signed in April, Sudan's accession process slowed down after the introduction of trade restrictive measures in early 2018. These measures were subsequently lifted in October, which paves the way for resuming Working Party activity in the near future.

91. Somalia, South Sudan and Timor-Leste are still at the initial stages of their accession processes. Timor-Leste submitted its MFTR in July 2017 and now needs to provide replies to Members' questions on the MFTR and a legislative action plan. Somalia is in the process of finalizing its MFTR. South Sudan has begun the MFTR drafting process.

92. Ethiopia has begun updating accession documents, with a view to reactivating its accession process in the near term. Bhutan has sustained contact with the Secretariat. Sao Tomé and Príncipe is currently subject to Category III Administrative Measures, but has expressed readiness to address the financial arrears issue and resume its accession process in the near future.

93. The g7+ WTO Accessions Group, comprising of eight LDCs associated with WTO accession, was officially launched on 10 December 2017 on the margins of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires. One of the group's objectives is to support the accession efforts of acceding LDCs, namely Comoros, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, South Sudan and Timor-Leste, through information and experience-sharing. An Informal Dialogue of Acceding LDCs took place on the margins of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina. A second meeting under the Informal Dialogue took place on 2 June 2018 in Geneva. This dialogue brought together

²³ 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).

²⁴ In 2018, the Accessions Division provided a presentation on the state of play on LDC accessions at the 82nd session of the Sub-Committee on LDCs held on 16 September.

representatives of seven acceding LDCs - Bhutan, Comoros, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan²⁵, Sudan and Timor-Leste - to discuss issues pertaining to the accession of LDCs (see "Technical Assistance and Outreach" above).

94. The Secretariat continued to provide a combination of generalized start-up technical assistance activities with tailored accession-specific activities to acceding LDCs at all stages of their accession 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 South Sudan and Sudan.

95. Members have also continued to provide technical support for LDC accessions, including China, the European Union (with dedicated programmes from its individual member States), Japan, Oman, New Zealand and the United States. Some members provide technical assistance via national institutions and programmes, while others use platforms such as the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF). The "China's LDCs and Accessions Programme (the China Programme)" also offers a capacity building platform for acceding LDCs (see "Technical Assistance and Outreach" above). So far, 13 of the 28 interns that have been trained under the WTO Accessions Internship Programme were from LDCs, including three from acceding LDCs²⁶ and three from Article XII LDCs.²⁷

96. In 2012, the General Council adopted an Addendum to document WT/L/508 to strengthen, streamline and operationalize the 2002 LDC Accession Guidelines.²⁸ Members are mindful of these Guidelines in ongoing active LDC accessions. The Director-General has underscored the vital importance of Members to be cognizant of these Guidelines in facilitating negotiations with LDCs.

V. POST-ACCESSION

1. Post-accession support

97. 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.

2. Participation of Article XII Members

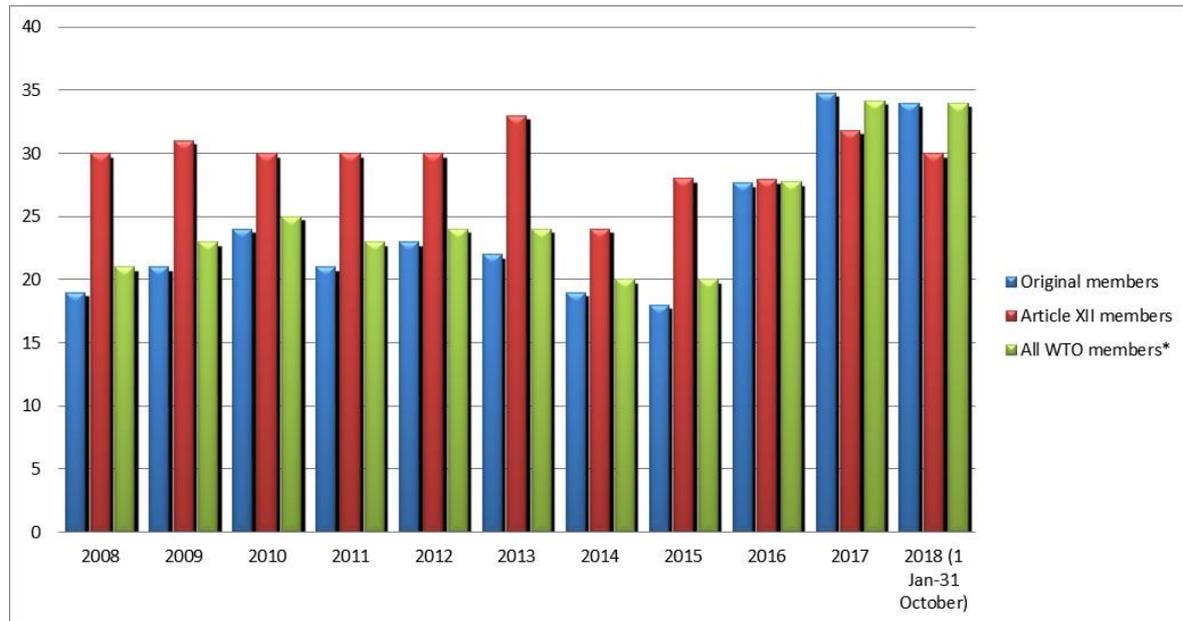
98. The Secretariat regularly monitors the participation of Article XII Members in the work of the WTO. Overall, Article XII Members are active, often more active than the original WTO Members, in several WTO bodies. Such active participation is reflected in a generally higher average annual number of WTO notifications, with the exception of 2017-2018 (see Figure 3, below).

²⁵ South Sudan became an acceding government on 13 December 2017.

²⁶ Ethiopia, Somalia and Timor-Leste.

²⁷ Afghanistan, Liberia and Yemen.

²⁸ WT/L/508/Add.1.

Figure 3: Average notifications made annually

* This includes Original Members and Article XII Members.

Source: WTO Central Registry of Notifications database

99. Active participation is also evident in the Article XII Members' participation in the plurilateral agreements.

100. 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 Members²⁹, 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 Macedonia.³⁰

101. 23 Article XII Members (Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Oman, Panama, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Chinese Taipei, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Viet Nam) participate in the Information Technology Agreement.

102. As of November 2018, 29 Article XII Members ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement, which entered into force on 22 February 2017.³¹

103. Article XII Members have also been active in the Joint Initiatives in Trade launched by groups of WTO Members at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017 (see Table 2).

²⁹ In addition, on 27 June 2018, Belarus was granted observer status in the Government Procurement Committee. This is the first acceding government to become an observer to the revised GPA while still in the process of WTO accession.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ 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.

Table 2: Participation of Article XII Members in Joint Initiatives

No.	Member	Total	MSMEs	Investment Facilitation for Development	Electronic Commerce
1.	Afghanistan	1	✓		
2.	Albania	2	✓		✓
3.	Bulgaria (EU)	3	✓	✓	✓
4.	Croatia (EU)	3	✓	✓	✓
5.	Cambodia	2		✓	✓
6.	China	2	✓	✓	
7.	Ecuador	1	✓		
8.	Estonia (EU)	3	✓	✓	✓
9.	Kazakhstan	3	✓	✓	✓
10.	Kyrgyz Republic	2	✓	✓	
11.	Latvia (EU)	3	✓	✓	✓
12.	Lao PDR	3	✓	✓	✓
13.	Liberia	1		✓	
14.	Lithuania (EU)	3	✓	✓	✓
15.	former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2	✓		✓
16.	Moldova	3	✓	✓	✓
17.	Montenegro	3	✓	✓	✓
18.	Panama	3	✓	✓	✓
19.	Russian Federation	3	✓	✓	✓
20.	Chinese Taipei	2	✓		✓
21.	Tajikistan	1		✓	
22.	Viet Nam	1	✓		
23.	Ukraine	1			✓
Total number of Article XII Members			19	16	16
Total number of Article XII Members (EU counted as one)			15	12	12
Total number of Joint Initiative participants			88 Members	70 Members	72 Members

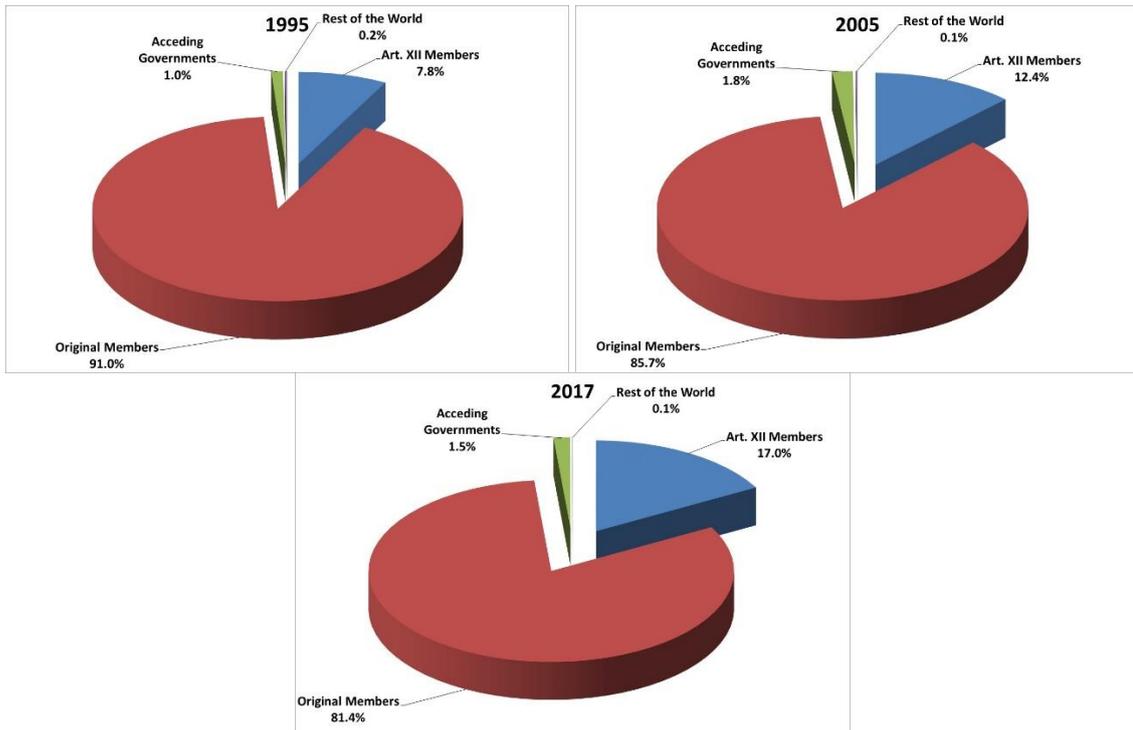
Note: 23 Article XII Members participate in the Joint Initiatives. Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania participate as part of the EU. 11 Article XII Members participate in all three Joint Initiatives.

VI. TRADE AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF ARTICLE XII MEMBERS³²

104. According to the World Trade Statistical Review 2018, global trade witnessed its highest growth rate in six years – the annual increase in merchandise trade volume registered in 2017 stood at 4.7% which is notably above the post financial crisis average of 3.0%. Moreover, world trade in commercial services increased by 7.0% on average. Overall, trade volume registered increased growth in 2017 due to robust global GDP growth. Despite rising trade tensions and pressures on the multilateral trading system, this positive development can be credited to rising consumption rates, notably in Asia, and increased investment spending in the United States.

105. Figure 4 provides three snapshots that illustrate the evolution of market shares of world trade by WTO Membership status. The share of world trade of original Members has decreased from 91% in 1995, to 86% in 2005, and further down to approximately 81% in 2017. Conversely, the share of world trade of the 36 Article XII Members has increased from about 8% in 1995, to 12% in 2005, and then to 17% in 2017, reflecting the positive effect that WTO Membership has had on trade growth.

³² See Annexes 5 and 6 to this Report.

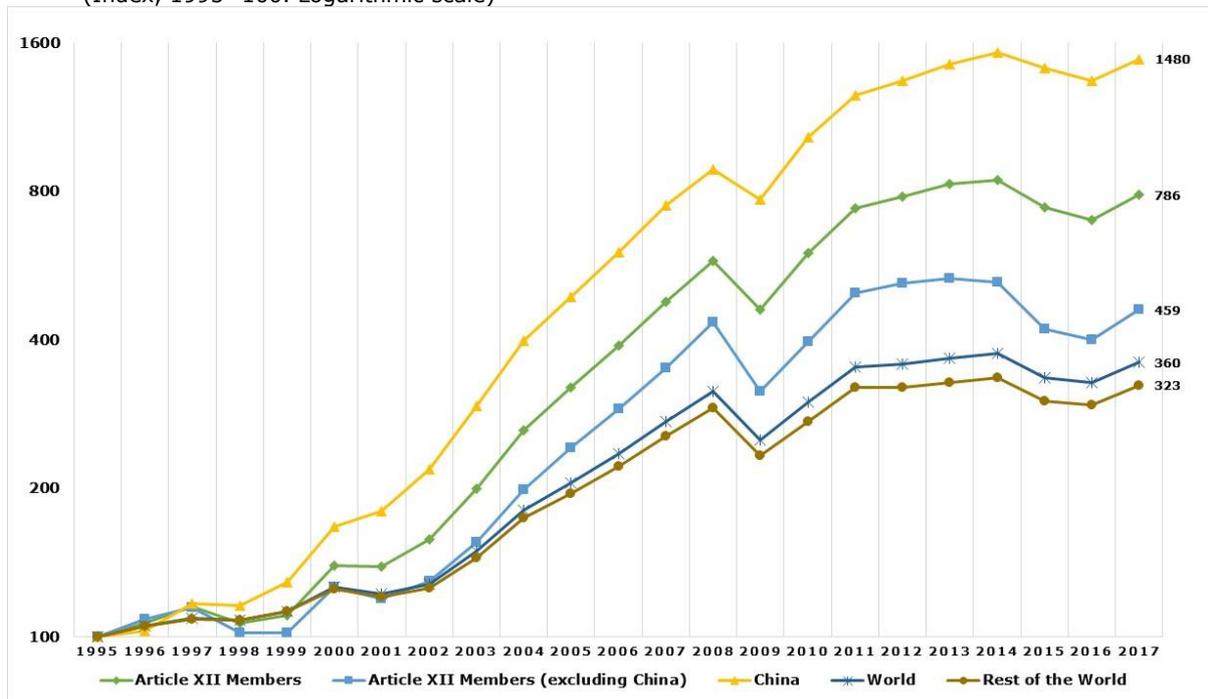
Figure 4: Share of world trade by membership status (1995, 2005 and 2017)

Source: WTO Statistics Database

106. Figure 5 graphically depicts the nominal change in the value of world trade in goods and commercial services since the establishment of the WTO. Between 1995 and 2017, world trade in goods and commercial services has increased by 260%, or at an average annual rate of 6.0%. Over the same period, the 36 Article XII Members have seen their trade grow by 686%, or at an average annual rate of close to 10%. Even excluding the largest Article XII Member by trade value (China), over the same period, the other Article XII Members' nominal value of trade has increased by 359%, or at an average annual rate of 7.2%, i.e. significantly faster than the rate of growth of world trade.

Figure 5: Evolution of world trade in nominal value by membership status (1995–2017)

(Index, 1995=100. Logarithmic scale)

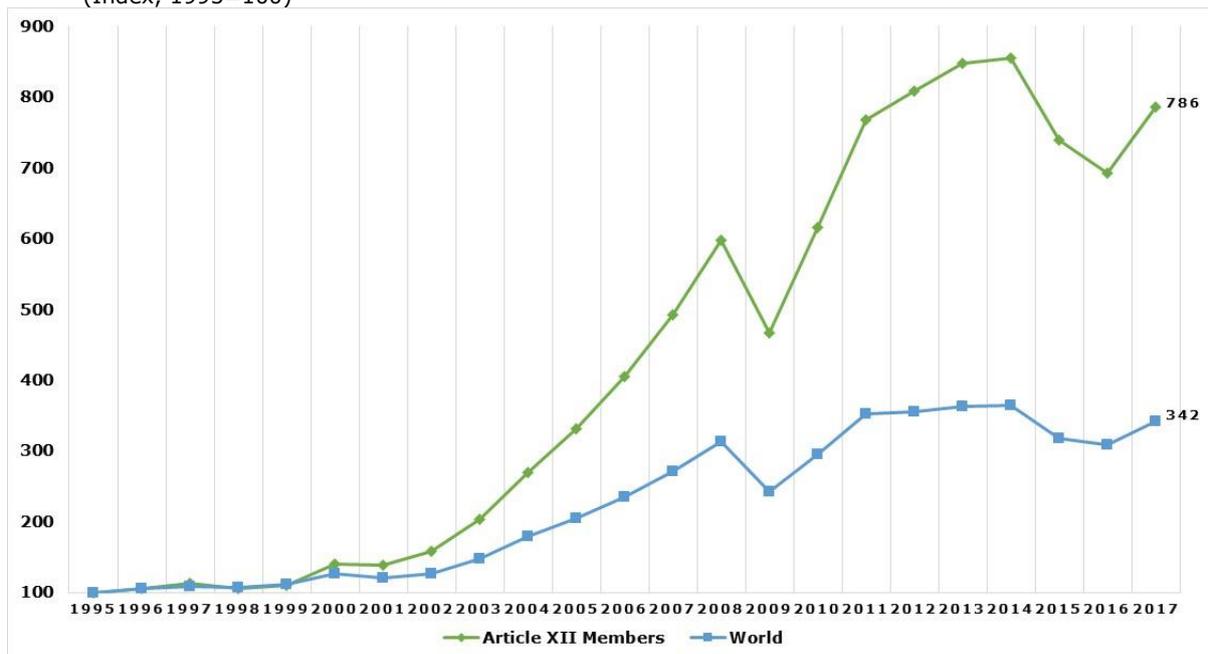


Source: WTO Statistics Database

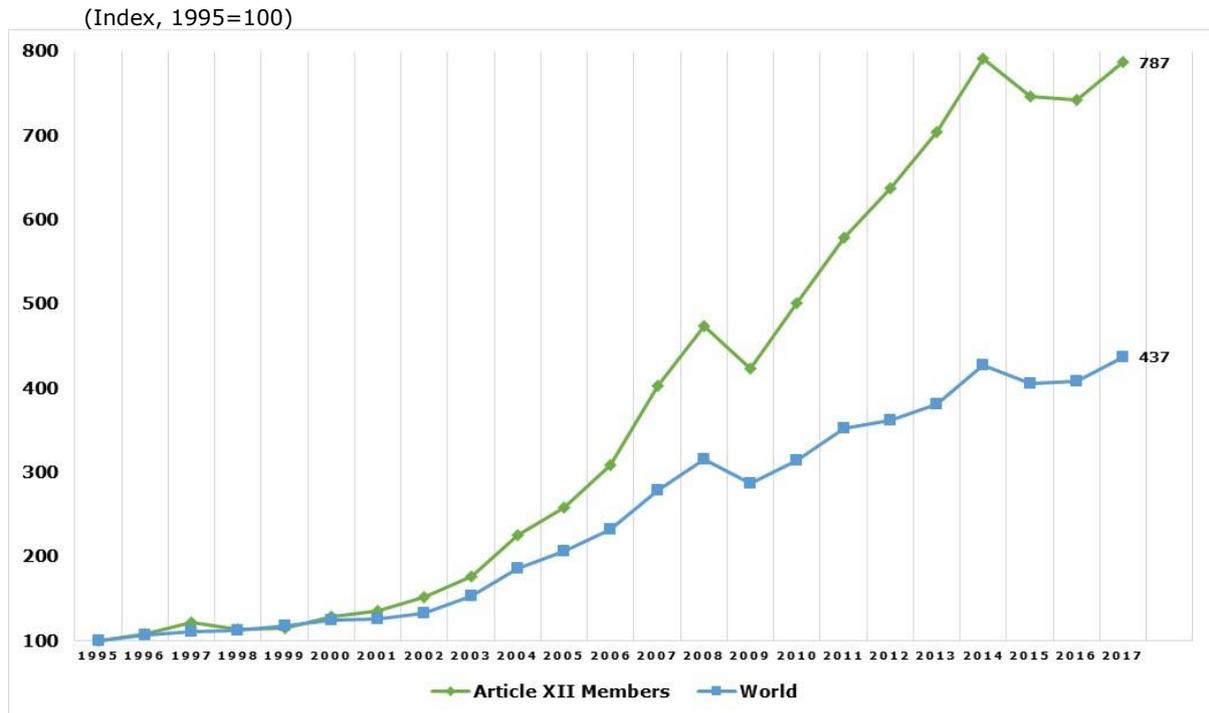
107. Overall, Article XII Members have consistently registered rapid trade growth above the world average. Figures 6 and 7 show that, in the period from 1995 to 2017, the nominal value of trade in merchandise goods and commercial services of Article XII Members has increased by 686% and 687%, respectively. This is faster than the increase in the nominal value of global trade in goods and services, which in comparison has increased by 242% and 337%, respectively. Even if China, a major contributor to world trade, is excluded from the calculations, this trend persists.

Figure 6: Value of merchandise trade of Article XII Members (1995–2017)

(Index, 1995=100)



Source: WTO Statistics Database

Figure 7: Value of trade in commercial services of Article XII Members (1995–2017)

Source: WTO Statistics Database

VII. REPORT ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

108. Since the establishment of the WTO in 1995, 58 accession negotiations have been pursued pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO. To date, 36 of these have been successfully concluded and 22 are ongoing.

109. This thematic section provides a historical record of the way in which recent accessions have been handled through 2018. It is not normative. The following narrative is factual and is neither intended to establish nor does it have the effect of establishing any rule or decision of the Members. Facts are recorded here in the interest of transparency, which is in line with the pledge of the WTO Secretariat to provide Members with a clear idea of how the WTO manages its functions. By enhancing transparency, this thematic section aims at assisting delegations in participating more effectively in accessions work.

110. The factual narrative below is presented without prejudice to future practice and rules of the WTO. The procedural framework of accession negotiations is outlined in WTO document series WT/ACC/22 entitled "Accession to the World Trade Organization – Procedures for Negotiations under Article XII".³³ This thematic section does not in any way replace or modify the procedures set out in the WT/ACC/22 document series, which are reviewed on a periodic basis in consultation with Members and may be subject to further revision.³⁴

³³ References in this thematic section of the Annual Report are based on document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1 of 5 April 2016. The WT/ACC/22- series replaces an earlier document, WT/ACC/1, which had been drawn up by the Secretariat in 1995 shortly after the establishment of the WTO.

³⁴ Issues pertaining to the management of accession negotiations will be further explored in the second edition of the Handbook on Accession to the WTO, which will be published in 2019.

2. APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AND OBERVER STATUS

111. Governments wishing to explore a closer relationship with the WTO have had to consider two options:

- (i) a request for observer status in the General Council and its subsidiary bodies; or
- (ii) a request for accession under Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement.

2.1 Request for observer status in the General Council and its subsidiary bodies

112. Requests for observer status in the General Council and its subsidiary bodies have been made in accordance with the Guidelines for Observer Status for Governments in the WTO, contained in Annex 2 of the Rules of Procedure for Sessions of the Ministerial Conference and Meetings of the General Council³⁵. Interested governments have had to express an intent to initiate negotiations for WTO accession within five years and to provide a description of their economic and trade policies, including intended future reforms. Requests for an extension of the observer status have been made in writing, accompanied by an updated description of current economic and trade policies, as well as an indication of future plans to initiate accession negotiations. Ten governments have been granted observer status under these procedures.³⁶

113. When governments have decided to apply for observer status in the General Council, they have submitted a letter to the Director-General. There has been no standard language used, but the basic elements are contained in the following text:

"I have the honour to submit the application of [...] for Observer Status in the General Council of the World Trade Organization and its subsidiary bodies. It is the intention of the Government of [...] to apply for accession to the WTO Agreement in the future. A memorandum on the economy and foreign trade regime of [...] is enclosed herewith."

114. In accordance with the Guidelines for Observer Status for Governments in the WTO, some governments have also sought (ad hoc) observer status in the WTO Ministerial Conference. Such requests have been examined on a case-by-case basis by the Ministerial Conference. Governments accorded observer status at sessions of the Ministerial Conference have not automatically received that status for meetings of the General Council or its subsidiary bodies.

2.2 Request for accession under Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement

115. When governments have decided to apply for WTO membership, they have submitted a letter to the Director-General. There has been no standard language used, but all recent communications have included the following basic elements:

"I have the honour to inform you of the wish of [...] to accede to the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization and to the Multilateral Trade Agreements annexed thereto, in accordance with Article XII of the said Agreement."

116. Some letters have added further language, for example a request that the application be circulated to all WTO Members and included for consideration on the agenda of an early future meeting of the General Council. Some recent requests have also included a short description of the applicant's current economic and trade policies as well as any intended future reforms of these policies.³⁷

³⁵ WTO document WT/L/161.

³⁶ The Bahamas in 2000, WTO documents WT/L/349 and WT/GC/M/57; Bhutan in 1998, WTO documents WT/L/262 and WT/GC/M/28; Cabo Verde in 1998, WTO documents WT/L/ 258 and WT/GC/M/26; Equatorial Guinea in 2002, WTO documents WT/L/448 and WT/GC/M/74; Ethiopia in 1997, WTO documents WT/L/229 and WT/GC/M/23; Georgia in 1996, WTO documents WT/L/152 and WT/GC/M/12; Iraq in 2004, WTO documents WT/L/560 and WT/GC/M/85; Oman in 1995, WTO documents WT/L/33 and WT/GC/M/3; Sao Tomé and Príncipe in 2001, WTO documents WT/L/389 and WT/GC/M/63; and Yemen in 1999, WTO documents WT/L/296 and WT/GC/M/40.

³⁷ For instance Somalia, WTO document WT/ACC/SOM/1, and Timor-Leste, WTO document WT/ACC/TLS/1.

117. Over time, the Secretariat has begun checking if the requests would enjoy consensus among WTO Members before they are placed on the agenda of the General Council.³⁸ When this has been the case, requests for accession have been placed on the agenda of the next or an early future meeting of the General Council/Ministerial Conference³⁹. Requests have been circulated to all Members as the first in the series of formal documents relating to each accession.⁴⁰

118. When requests for accession from separate customs territories have been considered, the territories in question have provided information describing how they possess "full autonomy in the conduct of its external commercial relations and of the other matters provided for in [the WTO] Agreement and the Multilateral Trade Agreements".⁴¹

119. When the General Council/Ministerial Conference has considered requests for accession acceptable, it has established a Working Party to examine the application. Since 1995, accession Working Parties have been established by consensus.

120. Acceding governments have been granted observer status in the General Council and other WTO bodies, as appropriate, for the duration of the accession process. As a first step, new applicants have consulted with the Accessions Division of the Secretariat as to the further procedures, in particular regarding the basic documentation to be prepared for the Working Party's consideration.

2.3 Rights and obligations linked to observer status

121. The observers' financial contribution for the services provided to them has been set at 0.015% of the total WTO budget, which is the same as the minimum annual contribution made by the smallest WTO Members.⁴² This amounted to about CHF29,300 for the year 2018 (about US\$29,200; €24,700).

122. In accordance with the WTO Guidelines for Observers, most Observer governments have made use of their right to observe formal meetings of the General Council and its subsidiary bodies, including accession Working Parties (with the exception of the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration). However, informal meetings of accession Working Parties have been held without observers in attendance. Representatives of governments accorded observer status have been given the floor, but only after Members have spoken.⁴³ Observers have also had access to the main WTO document series.

123. Observers have had access to technical assistance provided by the Secretariat in relation to the operation of the WTO system in general, or in relation to the specifics of accession negotiations. In particular, observers have benefited from the regular WTO programme of Trade-related Technical Assistance organized by the WTO Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC). Requests have been channelled through the Director of the ITTC by completing an online request form, accompanied by a letter from the Geneva-based mission.⁴⁴

124. It should be noted that observers in financial arrears have become subject to administrative measures, which include the suspension of access to training and technical assistance (Category II administrative measures).

2.4 Chairperson of Accession Working Party

125. The procedures currently in document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1 suggest that "consultations on the selection of a Working Party Chairperson normally begin as soon as all documents necessary for

³⁸ Consultations have usually been undertaken by the Chairperson of the General Council.

³⁹ While applications have typically been considered by the General Council, in one case the application was considered by the Ministerial Conference (South Sudan, WTO document WT/MIN(17)/SR/6).

⁴⁰ For the most recent request for accession, see WTO document WT/ACC/SSD/1.

⁴¹ Montenegro, WTO document WT/GC/M/92, paras 27–29; Serbia, WTO document WT/GC/M/92, paras 34–36. See also document WT/ACC/SCG/3 and Add.1.

⁴² WTO document WT/L/161, Annex 2, para 11.

⁴³ In accordance with WTO document WT/L/161, Annex 2, para 10, the right to speak does not include the right to make proposals, unless a government is specifically invited to do so, nor to participate in decision-making.

⁴⁴ https://wto.formstack.com/forms/national_ta_requests.

holding the first Working Party meeting are in circulation. The Working Party Chairperson then has been designated by the Chairperson of the General Council, in consultation with Members and the acceding government. [...] An accession Working Party Chairperson has normally been an Ambassador/Permanent Representative, or a Deputy Permanent Representative, resident in Geneva."⁴⁵

126. Since 2009, the Deputy Director-General responsible for accessions has carried out these consultations on behalf of the General Council Chairperson.

127. Working Party Chairpersons have been confirmed by an announcement at the General Council under "Other business"⁴⁶. Working Party Chairpersons have also been confirmed between meetings of the Council by written procedure via communication by the Chairperson of the General Council.⁴⁷

128. The Chairpersons' main duty has been to direct the discussions in their Working Parties in an impartial and objective manner. However, their duties have not been laid down in writing. They have sometimes used the authority conferred on them by their office to make suggestions aimed at facilitating these discussions.⁴⁸

129. The Chairpersons, usually accompanied by the Secretariat, have paid visits to acceding capitals at critical stages in the process⁴⁹. These visits have sometimes played an important role in activating or accelerating accession processes. Such visits have involved contacts at the highest policy levels in government and parliament, as well as meetings with representatives of the public and private sectors and the media. The practice has emerged for Chairpersons to provide a report on their visits to acceding governments to WTO Members through the Informal Group on Accessions (see the section "Working Party Chairpersons" above). The Chairpersons have assumed the financial cost of such visits.

130. Working Party Chairpersons have typically relinquished their position when their posting in Geneva has ended and have done so by informing the Deputy Director-General responsible for accessions.⁵⁰ However, consideration has been given for Chairpersons to continue to serve the Working Party after their posting in Geneva has ended.⁵¹

2.5 Membership of Working Party

131. Under current procedures, Membership of accession Working Parties has been open to all interested WTO Members and their size has varied considerably from one accession to another. In completed accessions, the largest Working Party has had 65 members (counting the European Union and its member States as one) and the smallest 15.⁵²

132. WTO Members have joined at any stage before the completion of the Working Party mandate. Information on the membership of accession Working Parties could be found in the WTO document which contains the terms of reference for each Working Party. This document has typically been updated by the Secretariat when there has been a change in the Working Party membership or when a new Chairperson has been appointed.

⁴⁵ WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 6.

⁴⁶ "Guidelines for the Appointment of Officers to WTO Bodies" of 31 January 1995, WTO document WT/L/31.

⁴⁷ E.g. the Chairmanship of the Working Party on the Accession of Azerbaijan was announced through written procedure on 7 March 2016 by the General Council Chairperson.

⁴⁸ For a documented example of a Chairperson-led facilitation, see WTO document WT/COMTD/LDC/W/54.

⁴⁹ The visits of Working Party Chairpersons in 2018 are described in paras 26-28 above.

⁵⁰ See the section "Working Party Chairpersons" above for examples of Chairs relinquishing their positions in 2018.

⁵¹ As provided for in WTO document WT/L/31 - "Guidelines for the Appointment of Officers to WTO Bodies" of 31 January 1995. See Annex 3 of this Report for a list of Working Party Chairpersons. In November 2018, four Working Party Chairpersons were not resident in Geneva.

⁵² Russian Federation, WTO document WT/ACC/RUS/1/Rev.30, and Vanuatu, WTO document WT/ACC/VUT/3/Rev.5.

3. THE WORKING PARTY

133. The Working Party process has been conducted along three main tracks:

- multilateral negotiations in the Working Party on rules and specific accession commitments. The main documents that accompany this track of the process have been the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime, a Factual Summary of Points Raised and a draft Report of the Working Party;
- plurilateral discussions and negotiations among interested parties on agricultural domestic support and export subsidies (plurilateral discussions have sometimes dealt with other areas, such as SPS, TBT and TRIMs); and
- bilateral negotiations with interested Members on tariff concessions on goods and on specific commitments on services, which have taken place on the basis of market access offers and requests.

134. Bilateral meetings, plurilateral meetings and the multilateral meetings of the Working Party have proceeded in parallel, sometimes forming a "cycle of Working Party meetings" whereby bilateral and plurilateral meetings have taken place on the margins of a meeting of the Working Party.⁵³

135. All agreements reached at the bilateral and plurilateral levels have been multilateralized before the conclusion of accession negotiations. Working Parties have then concurred on their inclusion in the accession package (see "Completion of Working Party Mandate" below).

136. Figure 8 provides a schematic presentation of the current WTO accession process.

Figure 8



3.1 Initial set of documents

- Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime

137. Document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1 suggests that the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) - presented following the establishment of a Working Party - "provides a comprehensive

⁵³ E.g. the 9th cycle of Working Party meetings in the accession of Belarus took place from 11 to 15 September 2017 and included a plurilateral meeting on agriculture as well as a number of bilateral meetings.

summary of the acceding government's foreign trade regime"⁵⁴ set out according to an outline format.

138. While many acceding governments have taken a number of years to prepare and submit an MFTR, some acceding governments have submitted the Memorandum soon after the establishment of the Working Party.⁵⁵ The Secretariat has checked the consistency of the MFTR with the outline format⁵⁶ in WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1 and has provided comments to the acceding government. The Memorandum has been the foundation on which the Working Parties have begun the examination of the applicant's foreign trade regime.

139. In some cases where the memoranda presented have not been fully consistent with the outline format, applicants have been asked to substantiate their memoranda with additional factual information before the Working Party examination could begin.⁵⁷ In some cases, the acceding government has been invited to submit an updated version of the Memorandum after a long period of inactivity in the accession process.⁵⁸

140. Following the circulation of the MFTR, Working Party members have been invited to submit questions in writing. The first meeting of the Working Party has been scheduled once Members have been satisfied that the Memorandum, and the written questions and replies, provide an adequate factual basis to begin the examination of the applicant's trade regime. "Depending on the adequacy of the information provided, more than one round of 'questions and replies' may be organized before the first Working Party meeting."⁵⁹

- Supporting information

141. In addition, a number of documents have been developed over time requesting applicants to supply factual information in preset formats (e.g. checklists). These documents have been grouped together as Addenda to the WT/ACC/22-series (see Annex 8). While the submission of this supplementary information as early as possible in the accession process has been welcomed as it provides for a more comprehensive review of the applicant's trade regime early on the accession process, this has not been a prerequisite for convening the first Working Party meeting.⁶⁰

- Legislation

142. Document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1 suggests that "acceding governments are invited to present copies of relevant legislation at the same time as the MFTR. Laws and regulations should be provided in one of the three official WTO languages. [...] Acceding governments are also invited to present legislation for review in draft form."⁶¹

143. Acceding governments have been elaborating comprehensive Legislative Action Plans which contain "a full inventory of enacted WTO-related legislation and provides the roadmap for WTO-related domestic legislative work."⁶² As the accession process advances, governments have been requested to revise and update these plans.⁶³ Legislative action plans dealing with specific subjects

⁵⁴ WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 10.

⁵⁵ E.g. Timor-Leste: establishment of Working Party in November 2016; submission of the MFTR in June 2017.

⁵⁶ The Memorandum is arranged under the following eight main headings: (i) Introduction; (ii) Economy, Economic Policies and Foreign Trade; (iii) Framework for Making and Enforcing Policies Affecting Foreign Trade in Goods and Services; (iv) Policies Affecting Trade in Goods; (v) TRIPS Regime; (vi) Trade-Related Services Regime; (vii) Transparency; and (viii) Trade Agreements. The annexes to the MFTR also provide for the submission of specific factual information in several areas of WTO rules (see Annex 8).

⁵⁷ For example, Viet Nam, WTO documents WT/ACC/VNM/3 and Corr. 1, Add. 1 and 2; Saudi Arabia, WTO documents WT/ACC/SAU/4 and Add. 1 and WT/ACC/SAU/5.

⁵⁸ Seychelles, WTO document WT/ACC/SYC/9; Algeria, WTO document WT/ACC/DZA/14/Add.1; Sudan, WTO document WT/ACC/SDN/24; Iraq, WTO document WT/ACC/IRQ/10.

⁵⁹ WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 12.

⁶⁰ E.g. Iraq, first Working Party meeting held in May 2007 on the basis of an MFTR and replies to questions.

⁶¹ WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, paras 15 and 17.

⁶² WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 16.

⁶³ E.g. Liberia updated its legislative action plan three times during its accession process, see WTO document WT/ACC/LBR/13 and Rev.1, 2 and 3.

have also been requested.⁶⁴ The format developed by the Secretariat for a comprehensive LAP is provided in Annex 9.

- **WTO accession document series**

144. Generally, formal accession documents have been issued in two main series:

- WTO document series WT/ACC-⁶⁵ for Working Party documents containing factual information;
- WTO document series WT/ACC/SPEC-⁶⁶ for Working Party documents relating to the negotiations on rules (e.g., draft Working Party Reports), negotiations on market access for goods and services (e.g., market access offers), and the negotiations and discussions on agricultural support and export subsidies (e.g., agriculture Supporting Tables).

145. In addition, informal documents or non-papers (e.g. Factual Summary of Points Raised) and documents which relate to the activities of an accession Working Party, but have not been requested by the Working Party (e.g. statements, Chairpersons' reports), have been issued in the JOB/ACC-series.⁶⁷

146. In recent practice, each applicant has been given a three-letter identification code in all document series.⁶⁸

147. All WTO documents have had to be submitted in one of the WTO official languages: English, French and Spanish. Once circulated, these have been translated into the two other official languages of the WTO.

148. WTO Members and acceding governments have been able to consult documents via the Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP) on the WTO website.⁶⁹ Legislation submitted by the acceding governments is also available directly through the AIP.

149. Accession documents have become derestricted and accessible to the public only upon completion of an accession process.⁷⁰

3.2 Working Party meetings

150. In accordance with WTO practice, formal meetings of WTO bodies, such as accession Working Parties, have been convened by the Director-General. The convening notices (or "airgrams") of accession Working Party meetings, issued in the WTO/AIR/ACC- series, have specified the purpose of the meeting and the documentation that would be considered at the meeting. Typically, airgrams have been circulated a minimum of 10 working days in advance of Working Party meetings.

⁶⁴ E.g. SPS action plans in the areas of SPS, TBT and intellectual property (see WTO documents WT/ACC/KAZ/59 to 61 for Kazakhstan).

⁶⁵ Series distributed to all WTO Members and observers.

⁶⁶ Series only distributed to members of the Working Party, including the acceding government in question.

⁶⁷ Series only distributed to members of the Working Party, including the acceding government in question.

⁶⁸ E.g., documents relating to the accession of Azerbaijan are in the WT/ACC/AZE- series, The Bahamas' in the WT/ACC/BHS- series, etc.

⁶⁹ Accessions Intelligence Portal, https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/acc_e.htm or Documents Online, <http://docsonline.wto.org>. Acceding governments only have access to their own documents in the WTO/ACC/SPEC- and JOB/ACC/- series.

⁷⁰ Paragraphs 1 and 2(e) of the Ministerial Council Decision WT/L/452 of 14 May 2002 provide that "documents relating to working parties on accession shall be restricted and shall be automatically de-restricted upon the adoption of the report of the working party" by the Ministerial Conference/General Council. The time of completion of the de-restriction process depends on the amount and complexity of the documents involved. Prior to 2002, the de-restriction of accession-related documents was governed by a different set of rules (i.e. General Council Decision WT/L/160/Rev.1 of 26 July 1996), which only affect documents circulated prior to 2002.

151. The agenda for a Working Party meeting has commonly included the following items: (i) review of the state of play in the bilateral market access negotiations (after the submission of initial market access offers); (ii) examination of the applicant's foreign trade regime / draft Report; (iii) review of legislative developments on the basis of a legislative action plan; and (iv) next steps in the work of the Working Party.⁷¹

152. Document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1 suggests that "[a]dequate lead-time should be allowed before meetings of the Working Party are convened to enable both the acceding government and Working Party members to better prepare themselves."⁷² This "adequate lead-time" has been at least four weeks.⁷³

153. Document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1 suggests that, once the relevant documentation has been circulated, dates of meetings are set in informal consultations.⁷⁴

154. In addition to formal Working Party meetings, various informal formats have also been used in accession negotiations, including informal Working Party meetings and Chairpersons' Consultations.⁷⁵

155. Working Party meetings have typically begun with a short introductory statement by the acceding government, followed by introductory statements by Members. In their opening statements, Members have typically provided a report on the status of bilateral negotiations. Members have often made some of their specific expectations known.

156. During the technical part of Working Party meetings, in particular during the review of the acceding government's trade policy regime and legislation, discussions have been based on questions from interested WTO Members. Acceding governments have provided oral answers to these questions to the extent they have been able to do so. Typically, the head of the delegation has provided the answers, but other members of the delegation, such as technical experts in a particular area under discussion, have also intervened.

157. At the end of each meeting of the Working Party, the Chairperson "generally outlines the state of play and the next steps required for the preparation of future meetings."⁷⁶ The specific next steps have been formulated through informal consultations with the applicant, members of the Working Party and the Secretariat.

158. Typically, as part of the next steps, the Chairperson has invited the members of the Working Party to submit their questions in writing. It has also become standard for the Chairperson to invite the delegation of the acceding government to update the Legislative Action Plan.

3.3 The multilateral track (negotiations on rules)

159. The multilateral discussions on rules have invariably started with the factual examination of the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime. In the majority of cases, one meeting of the Working Party has been sufficient to review the Memorandum.⁷⁷

160. Following each meeting of the Working Party, interested WTO Members have typically been invited to submit questions in writing, usually within a period of four weeks.

161. The questions have been consolidated by the Secretariat and arranged by topic before transmission to the acceding government. Depending on the volume of questions, this technical work may take a few days following the last submission received from Members.

⁷¹ For a recent example, see WTO/AIR/ACC/17.

⁷² WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 9.

⁷³ In some accession processes characterized by a large volume of documentation, more than four weeks have been necessary to provide delegations with sufficient time to prepare for Working Party meetings.

⁷⁴ WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 9.

⁷⁵ E.g. an informal Working Party meeting was held for Iraq on 17 November 2017.

⁷⁶ WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 13.

⁷⁷ See, for example, the airgrams convening the second Working Party meetings of Comoros (2017) and Liberia (2015) in documents WTO/AIR/ACC/11 and WTO/AIR/ACC/2.

162. Applicants have been required to prepare written replies to all questions and to forward them to the Secretariat. This process can take a few weeks to several months, depending on the volume of questions and the pace of the accession process. A "Questions and Replies" document has been circulated by the Secretariat as soon as the replies to questions are submitted by the acceding government.

163. The main documentary basis for holding a meeting of the Working Party has typically consisted of the "questions and replies" and, as the accession process advances, either (i) a Factual Summary of Points Raised; or (ii) a draft Report of the Working Party.

164. The Factual Summary of Points Raised - an informal document - has been issued in the JOB/ACC series. It distils the written exchanges contained in the "questions and replies" and other relevant supporting documents.⁷⁸ The subjects covered in the Factual Summary have been broadly the same as in the Memorandum. The purpose of the Factual Summary has been to facilitate the work of the Working Party by identifying the points that are established and those that require further clarification, as well as to make the process more transparent. The Secretariat has put together the Factual Summaries at the request of the Working Party.

165. As soon as an adequate factual basis has been established, and negotiations on specific multilateral commitments on rules have begun, the Factual Summary of Points Raised evolves into a draft Report of the Working Party. This document contains not only factual information, but also the agreed specific commitments that the acceding government would undertake as a WTO Member⁷⁹. The draft Report is issued in the WT/ACC/SPEC series. When the Secretariat has been asked to prepare the text of a draft Report, the Working Party has considered that the fact-finding stage is sufficiently advanced to move to the negotiating stage of the process⁸⁰. It is often a member of the Working Party that has initiated the negotiations on commitments by putting forward proposed texts for inclusion in the draft Report. Applicants have also proposed texts. Concerns on particular issues could sometimes be settled bilaterally and have been brought to the Working Party for consideration in the shape of agreed texts. During this process, further revisions of the draft Report have been prepared and circulated to Working Party members, as necessary.⁸¹

166. The number of questions raised in the Working Parties has varied. Over the last ten years, in one completed accession the Working Party raised 264 questions⁸² whereas in another case Members submitted 3,810 questions⁸³. The number of commitment paragraphs has also varied – from as few as 26⁸⁴ to 163⁸⁵.

3.4 The plurilateral track (discussions on agricultural support and other topics)

167. The tables containing information on domestic support and export subsidies have been dealt with in plurilateral meetings with interested WTO Members as this information is of general systemic interest. These meetings have been called when the applicant has submitted the necessary tables and members of the Working Party have demonstrated an interest in pursuing the matter. These meetings have often been held on the fringes of Working Party meetings (usually before a Working Party meeting), when delegations come together to focus on the accession in question.⁸⁶

168. The discussions on agricultural commitments have been based on the factual data supplied by the applicant in the format of WTO document WT/ACC/22/Add.1. The "supporting tables" have been revised during the accession negotiations, taking into account comments formulated by Members.

⁷⁸ WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 14.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ In some cases, the Secretariat has been asked to prepare an "Elements" of a draft Report - a document which contains a very limited number of draft commitment paragraphs. See, for example WTO documents WT/ACC/SPEC/COM/4 and WT/ACC/SPEC/BLR/10.

⁸¹ E.g. the draft Working Party Report of Kazakhstan had 15 revisions (see WTO document WT/ACC/SPEC/KAZ/15 and its Revisions), while the draft Working Party Report of Afghanistan was revised three times (see WTO document WT/ACC/SPEC/AFG/3 and its Revisions).

⁸² Liberia (2016).

⁸³ Ukraine (2008).

⁸⁴ Cabo Verde (2008).

⁸⁵ Russian Federation (2012).

⁸⁶ For a recent example, see the 9th cycle of Working Party meetings in the accession of Belarus, which took place from 11 to 15 September 2017 and included a plurilateral meeting on agriculture.

The supporting tables have been made available to all Working Party members as a WT/ACC/SPEC-WTO document.⁸⁷

169. All plurilateral discussions on agricultural support have led to the circulation of a set of final tables which has formed the basis for the future commitment levels in relation to the Total Aggregate Measurement of Support (Total AMS) and Export Subsidies in Agriculture recorded in Part IV of the Schedule of Concessions and Commitments on Goods. The relevant supporting tables have also been incorporated by reference in Part IV of the Schedule.

170. Plurilateral meetings have also been convened in other areas such as SPS, TBT or TRIMs.⁸⁸ Discussions at these meetings have typically produced agreed texts for inclusion in the draft Report of the Working Party.

3.5 The bilateral track (negotiations on goods and services)

171. Bilateral market access negotiations between the applicant and interested WTO Members cover both goods and services. Overtime, the number of bilateral market access negotiations has increased, partly due to the increase in the number of WTO Members.

172. Negotiations on tariff concessions have focused on import duties, but have also covered export duties. The negotiations have been conducted bilaterally on the basis of offers and requests. While negotiations may be initiated either by the applicant or by the Members, in practice, Members have tended to wait for the acceding government to submit an initial offer of proposed bound rates before requesting bilateral negotiations and submitting requests.⁸⁹ Submission of the offers in electronic form has become a necessity. The currently applied rates of duty have also had to be supplied, particularly as some WTO Members expect these to provide a reference point for the negotiations. The offers have been sent to the Secretariat which has circulated a notice to members of the Working Party, indicating that an offer is available.⁹⁰ Bilateral meetings have not been attended by the Secretariat as the process is confidential. The usual format for the initial tariff offer, including notes on the way in which the format for scheduling has been used, is outlined in Annex 10.

173. The negotiations on services have proceeded in a similar way to those for the negotiations on tariffs, being based on offers and requests. Some Members have negotiated only on goods or only on services. Initial services offers have tended to be tabled at about the same time as the initial tariff offers, but sometimes this has not been the case.⁹¹ Initial offers on services have followed the same format as all Schedules to the GATS.⁹² The basic reference document that WTO Members and governments in accession have used to draft their commitments is the "Guidelines for the Scheduling of Specific Commitments under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)".⁹³

174. Typically, initial offers have been tabled after the first meeting of the Working Party,⁹⁴ but sometimes as early as with the submission on the MFTR or as part of documentation presented in advance of the first meeting.⁹⁵ The tabling of offers on goods and services at the same time has allowed the negotiations on these two subjects to move forward in parallel. Offers have been made available to all Working Party members through the WT/ACC/SPEC- series WTO documents (see "WTO accession document series" above).

175. Members wishing to engage in negotiations have contacted the applicant, typically directly through the Geneva mission, to arrange bilateral meetings, which have often been held on the

⁸⁷ E.g. see WTO document WT/ACC/SPEC/SDN/1 and its revisions.

⁸⁸ For instance, in the case of the accessions of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, plurilateral meetings were held on TBT, SPS and TRIMs.

⁸⁹ For a recent example, see document WT/ACC/SPEC/COM/1.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ E.g. in the case of Afghanistan the goods offer was submitted five months after the services offer (see WTO documents WT/ACC/SPEC/AFG/1 and 4).

⁹² General Agreement on Trade in Services, Article XX, Schedules of Specific Commitments.

⁹³ Document S/L/92, adopted by the Council for Trade in Services on 23 March 2001. In addition, governments should consult the latest version of the United Nations Central Product Classification (UN CPC 1991).

⁹⁴ WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 21.

⁹⁵ For a recent example of initial offers submitted in advance of the first Working Party meeting, see document WTO/AIR/ACC/8 convening the first meeting of Comoros' accession Working Party.

margins of Working Party meetings, but have also taken place between meetings.⁹⁶ Delegations have either arranged these meetings themselves or have requested the Secretariat to do so. In most cases, bilateral meetings have taken place in Geneva, but sometime these meetings have been held in capitals.

176. While bilateral negotiations on goods and services have been open throughout the accession process, the majority of interested Members have tended to enter negotiations, or indicate their intention to request bilateral negotiations, as soon as offers are tabled before the Working Party.

177. As the negotiations advance, in some cases the acceding government has agreed with interested Members to provide revised offers on a bilateral basis and not through the Secretariat.

178. Once signed, bilateral agreements recording the agreed tariff concessions and/or specific commitments on services have been transmitted to the Secretariat.⁹⁷ Three signed originals⁹⁸ - two original copies for the applicant and the Member and one for the Secretariat - have been necessary. In addition, the Secretariat has requested electronic copies of signed agreements, including the annexes, to be provided by email. The bilateral agreements have had to be concluded in one of the official WTO languages, with each page initialled by both parties to the agreement. The bilateral agreements submitted to the Secretariat have remained confidential. An indicative format for concluded bilateral agreements is at Annex 11.

179. After bilateral agreements have been completed with all interested WTO Members, the Secretariat's role has been to consolidate the results in the draft Schedule of Concessions and Commitments on Goods (Goods Schedule) and the draft Schedule of Specific Commitments on Services (Services Schedule)⁹⁹ in accordance with the most-favoured-nation (MFN) principle.¹⁰⁰ In recent accessions, the final sentence of the Protocol of Accession, as well as the cover pages of the Goods and Services Schedules, have explicitly identified the authentic language(s) of the Schedules (English, French or Spanish).

180. The cover page of each Goods Schedule indicates the Schedule number. Each new Member has been allocated the next available Schedule number, expressed in Latin numerals on the cover page.¹⁰¹

181. When completed, the draft Schedules have been circulated to all signatories for review and verification, enabling Members to confirm that the results of their bilateral negotiations with the acceding government have been reflected in the concessions and specific commitments contained in the draft Schedules. This has also presented an opportunity to ensure that the contents are in accordance with the relevant WTO provisions. The practice has been to convene a technical verification meeting for signatories, chaired by the Secretariat. The verified draft Schedules have then been reviewed multilaterally by the Working Party. At this point, typically no further requests for new bilateral negotiations on market access have been made.

3.6 LDCs accessions

182. The Secretariat and Working Party members have worked together with applicants to streamline some procedural aspects of LDCs accessions, as provided in the General Council

⁹⁶ E.g. in 2018, the delegations of Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Azerbaijan have held bilateral meetings with Members between meetings of their Working Parties.

⁹⁷ Deposited bilateral agreements have been registered in the Register of Bilateral Market Access Agreements, which is accessible to WTO Members only, via a password-protected website: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/xacc_e/register_e.htm.

⁹⁸ The Secretariat recommends the use of blue ink.

⁹⁹ WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 22.

¹⁰⁰ As regards tariffs, the MFN Principle (GATT 1994, Article I.1) provides that any tariff binding granted by any Member to any product originating in any other country shall be accorded immediately and unconditionally to the like product originating in the territories of all other Members. Likewise, in the area of services, if commitments have been made in a given sector to two or more Members, the Secretariat will take the least restrictive of these into the draft Schedule, as a commitment to one Member must be accorded to all Members under the MFN clause.

¹⁰¹ For instance, Liberia, one of the recently acceded WTO Members, has Schedule CLXXIV, the Latin equivalent of 174. There are more Schedule numbers than there are WTO Members because some Members of the GATT 1947 withdrew from that Agreement.

Guidelines on the Accession of LDCs contained in WTO document WT/L/508 and its addendum. The steps taken include drafting a Factual Summary at an early stage of the proceedings; moving to the draft Report of the Working Party as quickly as possible; keeping the number of Working Party meetings at a minimum by ensuring that maximum progress is made between meetings without the acceding governments having to visit Geneva; and organizing bilateral market access negotiations on goods and services through the Secretariat or in the acceding government's capital to the extent possible.

183. Moreover, to facilitate participation of LDC applicants at Working Party meetings, the Secretariat began to use video-conference technology. Recently, three Working Party meetings were broadcast live to capital-based representatives.¹⁰²

4. COMPLETION OF WORKING PARTY MANDATE

184. To conclude their mandates, accession Working Parties during their last formal meeting have adopted *ad referendum*¹⁰³ a draft accession package. The accession package has consisted of (i) the Report of the Working Party; (ii) a draft Decision and a draft Protocol of Accession appended to the Report; and (iii) the Goods and Services Schedules presented in Addenda 1 and 2 to the Report.¹⁰⁴

185. In each specific rules area, where commitments have been negotiated and accepted by the applicant, the Working Party Reports have included specific commitments usually found in the final paragraphs of a section which begin with the words "The representative of [X] confirmed that..." and conclude by stating "The Working Party took note of this/these commitment(s)." To date, each Report has ended with a "Conclusions" section, which lists the paragraph numbers of all specific commitments that have been negotiated and agreed. An appendix to the Report has contained a draft Protocol of Accession and a draft General Council/Ministerial Conference Decision inviting the applicant to accede to the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization on the terms and conditions set out in the draft Protocol.

186. The Protocol of Accession contains the terms of accession negotiated and agreed by the acceding government and members of the Working Party. All accession commitment paragraphs listed in the conclusions of the Reports of the Working Party have been referenced in the Protocols of Accession. The draft Schedules on Goods and Services are reproduced in the annex to the draft Protocol of Accession. Most Protocols of new Members have been similar although the standard text was amended in January 2001 and then again in 2012. The basic provisions have remained the same. The common core provisions state that, upon its entry into force, the applicant accedes to the WTO Agreement pursuant to Article XII and thereby becomes a Member of the WTO. The new Member is bound to observe the rules contained in the Agreement establishing the WTO, as rectified, amended or otherwise modified as of the date that its Protocol enters into force.

187. The texts of the Decisions have been identical.

188. In addition, annexes to the Protocol contain the new Member's Schedule of Concessions and Commitments on Goods and its Schedule of Specific Commitments on Services. The Protocol provides that these shall become Schedules of GATT 1994 and GATS, respectively.

189. All new Members have accepted obligations to abide by rules that have either been spelled out in the Protocol itself or in the Working Party Report's commitment paragraphs, which have been incorporated by reference into the Protocol. As integral parts of the Protocol, these commitments have had the same status and legal effect as the commitments in the Protocol itself.

190. All accession Protocols have stipulated that the obligations of the applicant are an integral part of the WTO Agreement to which the applicant accedes. It has been accepted that the obligations contained in the Protocols of Accession are enforceable through the WTO's Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² The Second and Third meetings of the Working Party on the accession of the Union of the Comoros and the Fourth meeting of the Working Party on the accession of Sudan.

¹⁰³ Subject to final approval by the Ministerial Conference / General Council.

¹⁰⁴ WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 23.

¹⁰⁵ See for instance *China-Rare Earths* WT/DS431,432,433/AB/R.

191. The applicant's terms of entry form a single package agreed by the WTO membership and accepted by the applicant as a whole. After the adoption of the accession package, the Working Party has forwarded the Reports to the General Council or, if this is to meet soon, the Ministerial Conference, for formal action.¹⁰⁶ A reasonable period of time - at least four weeks following the conclusion of the mandate of the accession Working Party - has been set aside before formal action by the General Council or Ministerial Conference. In only one case has an applicant requested that an adopted Working Party Report not be forwarded to the General Council for the time being.¹⁰⁷

5. FINAL ACTIONS BEFORE WTO MEMBERSHIP

192. Before a Working Party Report is brought to the General Council/Ministerial Conference, the Secretariat has checked that the acceding government has paid its contribution to the WTO budget as an observer. The acceding government needs to fully redeem its financial obligations to the WTO. To avoid accumulating financial arrears, acceding governments have been advised to make their annual contributions on a regular basis during the accession process.¹⁰⁸

193. In adopting the Decision, WTO Members have offered terms of accession to the applicant. The representative of the acceding government and the WTO Director-General *ex officio* sign the Protocol of Accession. The Secretariat (Legal Affairs Division) prepares the Decision and the Protocol of Accession for circulation in the WT/L- document series.

194. Depending on the constitutional law of the applicant, acceptance of the Protocol may be effective through signature or through subsequent ratification. The Protocol specifies the date until which it is open for acceptance by the applicant. While a period of three to six months is usual, in practice it is the applicant who proposes the length of time needed to complete its internal procedures and accept the terms.

195. A few acceding governments have requested an extension of the deadline for acceptance, explaining their reasons for doing so.¹⁰⁹ In all of these cases, the General Council/Ministerial Conference has agreed to the extension with very little discussion.

196. As per paragraph 9 of the Protocol, as the depository of the Protocol of Accession, the WTO Director-General *ex officio* has issued a Notification of Acceptance to inform the WTO Membership of the new Membership terms, specifying the date of accession. All Protocols have provided that applicants become WTO Members 30 days after accepting the Protocol of Accession. As the acceding government may accept the Protocol through either signature or subsequent ratification, the 30-day countdown period could start from either (i) the day of signature; or (ii) in the case of ratification, from the date of notifying the WTO of the domestic acceptance of the Protocol through deposit of an "instrument of acceptance". The 30-day period has given WTO Members time to take any action necessary to apply the WTO Agreement to the new Member.

197. A new Member's contribution to the WTO's annual operating budget has been based on its share of the total international trade of all Members (imports plus exports).¹¹⁰ According to the budget for 2018, a Member accounting for 1% of the trade of all Members is assessed about CHF

¹⁰⁶ Eleven accession packages were considered by the WTO Ministerial Conference: China (decision WT/L/432 adopted 10 November 2001); Chinese Taipei (decision WT/L/433 adopted 11 November 2001); Cambodia (decision WT/MIN(03)/18 adopted 11 September 2003); Nepal (decision WT/MIN(03)/19 adopted 11 September 2003); Tonga (decision WT/L/644 adopted 15 December 2005); Russian Federation (decision WT/MIN(11)/24 adopted 16 December 2011); Montenegro (decision WT/MIN(11)/28 adopted 17 December 2011); Samoa (decision WT/MIN(11)/27 adopted 17 December 2011); Yemen (decision WT/MIN/(13)/24 adopted 4 December 2013); Liberia (decision WT/MIN/(15)/38 adopted 16 December 2015); and Afghanistan (decision WT/MIN(15)/39 adopted 17 December 2015).

¹⁰⁷ Vanuatu. The Working Party concluded its mandate in 2001. Subsequently the Vanuatu authorities informed the WTO Secretariat that they would need more time to consider the accession package before it could be forwarded to the General Council. An updated accession package was adopted on 2 May 2011 by the reconvened Working Party and was approved by the General Council on 26 October 2011.

¹⁰⁸ WTO document WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, para 24.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. Cambodia, WTO document WT/L/561 and Tonga, WTO document WT/L/651.

¹¹⁰ The statistics used refer to trade in goods and commercial services, including intellectual property rights payments, derived from the balance of payments statistics of the IMF. See Financial Regulations of the WTO, WTO document WT/L/156/Rev.3, 27 February 2015.

1.9 million (about \$1.9 million, €1.6 million).¹¹¹ New Members have also paid a one-time advance to the Working Capital Fund in accordance with the scale of contributions applicable to the budget for the year of their accession. In 2018, a new Member with 1% of world trade would advance about CHF108,000 (about \$107,600; €90,800).

198. The Secretariat provides technical support to new Members during the post-accession phase (see Part V "Post Accession" of this Report).

¹¹¹ The minimum annual contribution, applicable to the smallest WTO Members, is equivalent to 0.015% of the total WTO budget. This amounted to about CHF29,300 for 2018 (about US\$29,200; €24,700).

ANNEX 1 – ACCESSIONS DIVISION WORK INDICATORS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2018

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
2018	4 Bosnia and Herzegovina (1) Comoros (1) Belarus (1) The Bahamas (1)	0	0	1 The Bahamas (1)	9	23	0	9	1 (WT/ACC/33, WT/GC/196)	4 Sub-Committee on LDCs; ASEAN Group; GRULAC; and Informal Group of Acceding Governments (IGAG)

Source: Accessions Division internal data.

* At the time of writing, the annual outreach with the African Group is scheduled for early 2019.

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/77 & 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	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/432	WT/L/432
16. Chinese Taipei	01/01/2002	WT/MIN(01)/3 WT/ACC/TPKM/18 WT/MIN(01)/4	Add.1 Add.1 Add.1	Add.2 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/CGR/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

* Sorted by date of membership.

ANNEX 3 - WTO ACCESSIONS WORKING PARTY CHAIRPERSONS

No.	Government	Date Working Party established	WP Chairperson*	Geneva-based (Y/N)
1.	Algeria	17 June 1987	H.E. Mr. José Luís CANCELA GÓMEZ (Uruguay)	Y
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 H.E. Mr. Andrew STAINES (United Kingdom)	Y
5.	Belarus	27 October 1993	H.E. Mr Kemal MADENOĞLU (Turkey)	Y
6.	Bhutan	6 October 1999	H.E. Dr Elisabeth TICHY-FISSELBERGER (Austria)	Y
7.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	15 July 1999	H.E. Mr. Atanas PAPARIZOV (Bulgaria)	Y
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	Pending	
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 Tomé and Príncipe	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.	South Sudan	13 December 2017	Pending	
19.	Sudan	25 October 1994	Pending	
20.	Syrian Arab Republic	4 May 2010	Pending	
21.	Timor-Leste	7 December 2016	H.E. Mr Pedro Nuno BÁRTOLO (Portugal)	Y
22.	Uzbekistan	21 December 1994	H.E. Ms Ji-ah PAIK (Korea)	Y

* As of November 2018.

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	41,318.14	178 287	4 116	1 181	28.7	34 925	46 129	2 985	11 082
Andorra	76.97				No data available				
Azerbaijan	9,862.43	40 670	4 441	1 875	42.2	15 800	8 600	4 661	8 004
Bahamas	395.36	11 639	30 925	10 526	34.0	605	2 890	2 835	1 880
Belarus	9,507.88	54 436	5 574	3 486	62.5	29 222	34 218	7 798	4 824
Bhutan	807.61	2 334	2 733	1 201	44.0	590	1 000	158	203
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,507.02	18 058	4 848	2 190	45.2	6 300	10 300	1 848	552
Comoros, Union of the*	813.91	652	769	269 ⁵	31.8	31	238	80 ⁶	82 ⁶
Equatorial Guinea	1,267.69	10 725	13 425	8 661 ⁷	47.4 ⁷	5 200	2 000	281 ⁸	1 415 ⁸
Ethiopia*	104,957.44	80 874	799	140	19.5	3 170	16 289	2 755 ⁸	5 162 ⁸
Iran	81,162.79	431 920	5 021	1 105	22.0	92 000	47 000	9 865	15 876
Iraq	38,274.62	197 699	4 832 ⁷	1 378	26.1	45 525	41 222	4 562 ⁸	9 950 ⁸
Lebanese Republic	6,082.36	51 457	11 232	5 595	49.8 ³	4 026	20 109	16 027	13 823
Libya	6,374.62	31 331	3 501	2 809 ⁷	88.8 ⁷	15 600	11 700	86 ⁸	2 377 ⁸
Sao Tome and Principe*	204.33	379	1 679	656	39.1	14	149	72	59

¹ For the year 2017. Source: World Bank, Population: All Countries and Economies, available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>.

² For 2017 unless otherwise indicated.

³ For 2015–2017 unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ For 2017 unless otherwise indicated.

⁵ For 2013–2015.

⁶ For 2015.

⁷ For 2014–2016.

⁸ For 2016.

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)
Serbia	7,022.27	41 471	5 520	2 991	54.2	16 941	22 128	5 950	4 853
Somalia*	14 318.00	No data available							
South Sudan*	12,575.71	No data available							
Sudan*	40,533.33	58 239	1 514	182	12.0	3 024	6 117	1 491	1 429
Syrian Arab Republic	18,269.87	60 043 ⁹	2 642 ¹⁰	867 ¹⁰	32.8 ¹⁰	1 800	4 500	2 434 ¹¹	2 818 ¹¹
Timor-Leste*	1,296.31	2 610	2 264	451	19.9	35	780	77	316
Uzbekistan	32,387.20	47 883	1 901	397	20.9	10 500	12 000	3 506	978

Table 5-2: Article XII Members

Article XII Member	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)
Afghanistan*	35,530.08	20 889	591	133	22.5	780	7 700	324	1 516
Albania	2,873.46	13 181	4 215	1 563	37.1	2 301	5 294	3 193	1 898
Armenia	2,930.45	11 548	3 642	1 420	39.0	2 243	4 183	1 854	1 929
Bulgaria	7,075.99	56 943	7 523	4 778	63.5	30 024	34 086	8 727	5 207
Cabo Verde	546.39	1 741	3 123	1 650	52.8	65	740	634	362
Cambodia*	16,005.37	22 252	1 279	911	71.2	11 950	13 980	4 487	2 246
China	1,386,395.00	12 014 610	8 309	1 586	19.1	2 263 329	1 841 889	226 389	464 133
Croatia	4,125.70	54 516	12 400	6 058	48.8	16 005	24 731	15 016	4 552
Ecuador	16,624.86	102 311	6 055	1 288	21.3	19 122	20 010	2 177	3 200
Estonia	1,315.48	25 973	18 276	13 943	76.3	14 472	16 638	6 789	4 644
Georgia	3,717.10	15 139	3 910	2 071	53.0	2 728	7 981	3 945	1 893
Jordan	9,702.35	40 487	5 579	2 566	46.0	7 458	20 055	6 371	4 582
Kazakhstan	18,037.65	160 839	8 903	2 587	29.1	48 342	29 305	6 199	10 716
Kyrgyz Republic	6,201.50	7 163	1 107	597	54.0	1 791	4 481	841	863

⁹ For 2010.

¹⁰ For 2008–2010.

¹¹ For 2011.

Article XII Member	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)
Lao PDR*	6,858.16	16 984	2 392	699 ⁷	31.2 ⁷	3 950	5 100	830 ⁸	619 ⁸
Latvia	1,940.74	30 319	14 376	8 684	60.4	13 823	16 800	5 486	2 976
Liberia*	4,731.91	3 285	738	248	45.4	389	1 111	61	290
Lithuania	2,827.72	47 263	15 304	11 740	76.7	29 857	32 493	9 436	5 903
Moldova	3,549.75	8 085	2 005	1 047	52.2	2 425	4 832	1 224	910
Mongolia	3,075.65	11 135	3 751	1 933	51.5	6 201	4 336	1 003	2 177
Montenegro	622.47	4 764	7 064	3 689	52.2	421	2 612	1 569	583
Nepal*	29,305.00	24 472	770	202	26.3	750	10 500	1 383	1 591
Oman	4,636.26	74 274	17 618	10 119 ⁷	53.7 ⁷	29 441	27 157	3 604 ⁸	9 946 ⁸
Panama	4,098.59	61 838	14 366	6 688	46.6	11 450	20 300	13 176	4 603
Russian Federation	144,495.04	1 527 469	9 673	2 320	24.0	353 116	237 788	56 946	87 222
Samoa	196.44	840	4 133	1 647	39.8	44	356	248	89
Saudi Arabia	32,938.21	683 827	20 844	6 420	30.8	218 174	130 825	17 336	53 508
Seychelles	95.84	1 482	15 260	15 641	102.5	568	1 070	982	548
Chinese Taipei	¹²	579 302	23 165	14 516	62.7	317 381	259 499	44 721	52 771
Tajikistan	8,921.34	7 279	851	231	27.2	1 200	2 700	247	533
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2 081.21	11 366	5 175	3 041	58.8	5 671	7 720	1 655	1 183
Tonga	108.02	437	4 032	1 997	49.5	30	200	90	86
Ukraine	44,831.16	109 321	2 305	1 213	52.6	43 199	49 421	13 780	12 408
Vanuatu*	276.24	870	2 960	1 467	49.6	48	390	344	128
Viet Nam	95,540.80	220 408	2 205	2 082	94.4	214 323	211 518	12 986	16 793
Yemen*	28,250.42	16 511	824	343 ⁵	23.9 ⁵	800	7 100	562 ⁶	1 246 ⁶

* LDC

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 Annex 4.

¹² Data unavailable.

ANNEX 6 – DATA ON TRADE PERFORMANCE

Table 6-1: Value of merchandise trade and year-on-year percentage change (1995–2017)

(Billion dollars and percentage)

		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
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
	Year-on-year percentage change		6.2%	7.1%	-7.8%	4.6%	28.4%	-1.1%	13.9%	28.4%	32.1%	23.3%	21.9%	21.6%	21.4%	-21.9%
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
	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%

Source: WTO Statistics Database.

(Billion dollars and percentage)

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Article XII Members	Value	5,279	6,578	6,926	7,277	7,330	6,341	5,923	6,739
	Year-on-year percentage change	32.0%	24.6%	5.3%	5.1%	0.7%	-13.5%	-6.6%	13.8%
World	Value	30,812	36,841	37,201	37,970	38,106	33,232	32,180	35,754
	Year-on-year percentage change	21.6%	19.6%	1.0%	2.1%	0.4%	-12.8%	-3.2%	11.1%

Table 6-2: Value of trade in commercial services* and year-on-year percentage change (1995–2017)

(Billion dollars and percentage)

		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Article XII Members	Value	155	168	189	177	179	200	210	237	274	349	412	490	629	736	639
	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%
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
	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%

* 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.

(Billion dollars and percentage)

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Article XII Members	Value	789	929	1,004	1,105	1,225	1,156	1,154	1,220
	Year-on-year percentage change		23.4%	17.8%	8.1%	10.0%	10.9%	-5.6%	5.7%
World	Value	7,546	8,486	8,773	9,330	10,017	9,432	9,502	10,354
	Year-on-year percentage change		9.4%	12.4%	3.4%	6.3%	7.4%	-5.8%	8.9%

Source: WTO Statistics Database

ANNEX 7 – ACCESSIONS MANAGEMENT**Accession Working Party Management**

Accession Working Party	Code	Secretary	Co-Secretary	Administrative Manager/Support
Maika Oshikawa, Director				
1. Algeria	DZA	Bratanov	Soumaré	Tandara-Stenier
2. Andorra	AND	accessions@wto.org - No Activity		
3. Azerbaijan	AZE	Popescu	<i>Bunyatova</i>	Lazorenko
4. Bahamas	BHS	Lee	Suse <i>Bunyatova (AG)</i>	Tandara-Stenier
5. Belarus	BLR	Bratanov	Varyanik Nabiyeva <i>Bunyatova</i>	Lazorenko
6. Bhutan*	BTN	Lee	<i>Mandela</i>	Tandara-Stenier
7. Bosnia and Herzegovina	BIH	Varyanik	Nabiyeva	Tandara-Stenier
8. Comoros*	COM	Bratanov	Soumaré	Tandara-Stenier
9. Equatorial Guinea	GNQ	Perez-Esteve	Soumaré	Lazorenko
10. Ethiopia*	ETH	Soumaré	<i>Galma</i> <i>Mandela</i>	Lazorenko
11. Iran	IRN	Varyanik	<i>Todić</i>	Tandara-Stenier
12. Iraq	IRQ	Suse	<i>Bunyatova</i>	Lazorenko
13. Lebanese Republic	LBN	Suse	Varyanik	Tandara-Stenier
14. Libya	LBY	Bratanov	Soumaré	Lazorenko
15. Sao Tome et Principe*	STP	Perez-Esteve	Soumaré	Lazorenko
16. Serbia	SRB	Varyanik	<i>Todić</i>	Tandara-Stenier
17. Somalia*	SOM	Perez-Esteve	Soumaré <i>Galma</i>	Lazorenko
18. South Sudan*	SSD	Perez-Esteve	Soumaré <i>Mandela</i>	Lazorenko
19. Sudan*	SDN	Lee	Soumaré	Tandara-Stenier
20. Syrian Arab Republic	SYR	Perez-Esteve	Suse	Lazorenko
21. Timor-Leste*	TLS	Varyanik	<i>Todić</i>	Lazorenko
22. Uzbekistan	UZB	Popescu	Nabiyeva	Lazorenko

Expressions of Interest / Watching Briefs

Country	Code	Focal Point	Co-Focal Point	Administrative Manager/Support
1. Curaçao	CUW	Suse	<i>Bunyatova</i>	Tandara-Stenier
2. Kosovo	KOS	Varyanik	<i>Todić</i>	Tandara-Stenier
3. Palestine	PSE	Perez-Esteve	Suse	Tandara-Stenier
4. Turkmenistan	TKM	Nabiyeva	Popescu	Lazorenko

* Least-developed countries (LDCs)

Non-Working Party Workload Distribution

Responsibility	Focal Point	Co-Focal Point	Administrative Manager/ Support
2018 Director-General's Annual Report	Bratanov		Tandara-Stenier
Informal Group on Accessions (IGA)	Bratanov (Secretary of IGA)	Nabiyeva	Tandara-Stenier
Informal Group of Acceding Governments (IGAG)	Bratanov	Popescu	Tandara-Stenier
Accessions Newsletter	Suse	Soumaré	Tandara-Stenier
Annual Outreach	Perez-Esteve	Soumaré	Tandara-Stenier
TA Focal Point	Lee	Soumaré	Lazorenko
– Regional Dialogue for Greater Horn of Africa, Summer	Lee	Soumaré <i>Galma</i>	Lazorenko
– Training on Accession Rules, Q4, 2018	Bratanov	Suse <i>Bunyatova</i>	Lazorenko
Post-Accession Support	Varyanik	Nabiyeva	Lazorenko
China Programme / Accessions Interns (Pillar I)	Perez-Esteve	Lee	Tandara-Stenier
China Programme / China Round Table (Pillar II)	Varyanik	Bratanov Nabiyeva	Tandara-Stenier
LDC Focal Point	Soumaré	<i>Galma</i> <i>Mandela</i>	Lazorenko
Trade for Peace	Lee	Perez-Esteve <i>Galma</i> <i>Todić</i>	Tandara-Stenier
The g7+ WTO Accessions	Varyanik	<i>Todić</i> <i>Mandela</i>	Lazorenko
Databases:			
– Accessions Commitments Database (ACDB)	Suse	<i>Bunyatova</i>	Lazorenko
– Market Access Register	Suse	<i>Bunyatova</i>	Lazorenko
– Trade performance of Article XII Members	Popescu	<i>Galma</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP) Update	Popescu	<i>Bunyatova</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Knowledge and Information Management	Bratanov	<i>Bunyatova</i>	Lazorenko
Accessions Division Follow-up Tracker	Tandara-Stenier	Lazorenko	Tandara-Stenier
Accessions Annual Output Plan	Popescu	<i>Mandela</i>	Lazorenko
Accessions Retreat	Perez-Esteve	<i>Galma</i>	Tandara-Stenier
Eurasian Book Project	Varyanik	Nabiyeva <i>Bunyatova</i> <i>Todić</i>	Lazorenko
Update of Accessions Handbook	Bratanov	Suse <i>Bunyatova</i>	Lazorenko

ACCESSIONS STAFF DISPOSITION 2018

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

ANNEX 8 - MEMORANDUM AND SUPPLEMENTARY FACTUAL INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM AND ITS ANNEXES		
<i>Type of information</i>	<i>Information required</i>	<i>WTO Document reference</i>
General	Memorandum Statistics and Publications List of Laws and Legal Acts	WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, Annex I WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, Annex II WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, Annex III
Trade in Goods	Import Licensing Procedures Questionnaire	WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, Annex IV
	Customs Valuation Checklist	WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, Annex V
	TBT Questionnaire	WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, Annex VI
	State-Trading Questionnaire	WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, Annex VII
Trade in Services	Services Sectoral Classification List	WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, Annex VIII
Foreign Trade Agreements	List of Foreign Trade Agreements	WT/ACC/22/Rev.1, Annex IX
SUPPLEMENTARY FACTUAL INFORMATION		
<i>Type of information</i>	<i>Information required</i>	<i>WTO Document reference</i>
Trade in Goods	TBT and SPS Checklists	WT/ACC/22/Add.2
	Domestic Support and Export Subsidies in Agriculture	WT/ACC/22/Add.1
	Draft subsidies notification	WT/ACC/22/Add.2
TRIPS	TRIPS Checklist	WT/ACC/22/Add.2

ANNEX 9 - A COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATIVE ACTION PLAN (LAP)

PART I – Pending Bills/Drafts/Regulations

Subject	Legislation/Regulation	Competent Authority	Expected date of adoption/enactment	Status*	Expected date of implementation	Translation/Copy submitted to Working Party
Economic Policies						
Monetary and fiscal policy						WT/ACC/.../...
Policies Affecting Trade in Goods						
Registration requirements						
...						

PART II – Completed Legislation/Regulations

Subject	Legislation/Regulation	Competent Authority	Date of adoption/enactment	Status**	Date of implementation	Translation/Copy submitted to Working Party
Economic Policies						
Monetary and fiscal policy						WT/ACC/.../...

Subject	Legislation/Regulation	Competent Authority	Date of adoption/enactment	Status**	Date of implementation	Translation/Copy submitted to Working Party
Policies Affecting Trade in Goods						
Registration requirements						
...						

* Entry of relevant information on the status of the draft bill/regulation, as of the date of submission of the LAP, such as: (i) in draft procedure; (ii) under review by Government/Cabinet; (iii) under review by Attorney General's Office/Ministry of Justice; (iv) submitted to Parliament/National Assembly; (v) adoption/enactment expected by [date]; and/or (vi) any additional information, as may be provided by the Acceding Government, or requested by Members of the Working Party.

** Entry of relevant information on the implementation status of the legislation, as of the date of submission of the LAP, such as: implementation expected by [date]).

ANNEX 10 - INITIAL TARIFF OFFER

The format for initial offers on tariffs is a simplified version of the Schedule containing the results of the negotiations. It has not been formally standardized but experience shows that at a minimum initial offers should contain the information indicated in the Table below.

As negotiations proceed, implementation periods for the reduction of tariff bindings can be negotiated and additional columns "final bound rate" and "implementation period" can be added (after column 4) as part of revised offer(s).

Format for Tariff Offers

HS (National Nomenclature of Applicant) (1)	Number of the Applicant) (1)	Description of Each Product (2)	Currently Applied Rate* (3)	Proposed Rate Accession (4)	Bound at (5)	Other and (ODC) (5)	Duties Charges
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** While these will not appear in the final Schedule, the currently applied rates of duty need to be supplied, particularly as some WTO Members expect these to provide a reference point for the negotiations. This can be done either in a column in the initial offer as indicated above or in a separate communication.*

Although preferential tariffs and non-tariff measures may also be bound, as a rule, initial offers only contain offers of MFN tariff concessions.

Items in the offer are arranged by the headings of the Harmonized System nomenclature. Initial offers should normally be prepared in the version of the nomenclature applied by the acceding government at the time the document is prepared.

As noted above, rates of other duties and charges also need to be inserted in Column 5 and an offer made on these ('zero' if no ODCs are applied). Members generally expect these to be bound at zero.

ANNEX 11 - BILATERAL MARKET ACCESS AGREEMENTS**Protocol of agreement between [applicant] and [WTO Member]****Concluding bilateral negotiations for the accession of [applicant] to the World Trade Organization**

[Applicant] and [...], a Member of the World Trade Organization (hereinafter referred to as "the WTO"), hereby agree to the conclusion of their bilateral negotiations for market access in the context of the accession of [applicant] to the WTO.

They accordingly attach hereto the list of tariff concessions which [applicant] grants to [...] (Attachment 1).

[The specific commitments on services that [applicant] will grant to [...] will be those contained in Attachment 2 hereto.]

For [applicant]

For [WTO Member]

Name of representative

Name of representative

Done in Geneva, *date*

In 3 exemplars

Attachment 1

HS Number	Description	Bound Rate at Date of Accession	Final Rate of	Bound Rate	Implementation Period	INR	ODCs