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**Working Party on the
Accession of the Russian Federation**

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ACCESSION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Communication from Georgia

Letter from Ambassador H.E. Zurab TCHIABERASHVILI

The following communication, dated 11 October 2011, addressed to the Director of the Accessions Division, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Georgia.

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter from Ms. Tamara Kovziridze, Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister of Georgia, and Chief Negotiator of Georgia in the negotiations on the Accession of the Russian Federation to the World Trade Organization, addressed to Ambassador Stefán Jóhanesson, Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of the Russian Federation to the WTO.

On behalf of the Government of Georgia, I would like to hereby request that you kindly circulate the enclosed letter to the distinguished membership of the World Trade Organization at your very earliest convenience.

The present communication is the reaction of the Georgian side to the convening fax to the Working Party on the accession of the Russian Federation to the WTO circulated on 11 October 2011 by the WTO Secretariat.

As you are aware, Georgia is constructively engaged in bilateral negotiations with the Russian Federation on the latter's accession to the WTO, mediated by the Swiss side. Seven rounds of negotiations took place between March and October 2011. Despite Georgia's continued effort to reach a bilaterally acceptable solution, the Russian Federation has thus far failed to show any flexibility in the negotiation process.

The most recent round of negotiations of 7-8 October 2011 revealed once again that Russia's rigid negotiating position forecloses the possibility of finding a solution to Georgia's outstanding request, pushing negotiations into a deadlock. Unless Russia changes its intractable negotiating position on key elements of Georgia's request, further progress appears unlikely, and leaves Georgia in a position where it cannot support Russia's WTO Membership.

Georgia does not wish to inhibit and cannot prevent Members of the Working Party from exchanging views and discussing issues associated with Russia's WTO accession. Nevertheless, the

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communication of 11 October 2011, anticipating the organization of a Formal Meeting of the Working Party on 10-11 November, is not consistent with WTO practice and Georgia's expectations.

We are not in a position to agree to holding of a Formal Meeting of the Working Party on 10-11 November, unless our bilateral negotiations with the Russian Federation are concluded at that time and a bilaterally acceptable solution is found. This solution should be appropriately reflected in the Working Party Report before its final approval at the Formal Meeting of the Working Party.

As a WTO Member, Georgia is deeply concerned about reference in the convening fax of the Secretariat to "unanimous support" of the Membership for the finalization of work on Russia's WTO accession over the next few weeks and the submission of the WP recommendation on the terms of the Accession of the Russian Federation for decision to the Eighth WTO Ministerial Conference. Georgia has not been consulted about this specific measure and has not provided its consent to it.

I look forward to maintaining contact with you on this matter, and will inform you as soon as Russia has agreed to fulfil its obligations as requested by Georgia and we have been able to reflect such agreement in a negotiated bilateral document, allowing us to support the resumption of formal multilateral consultations in Russia's WTO accession negotiations. In the meantime, our negotiating team and Georgia's Ambassador to the WTO remain available to meet and discuss any further details if necessary.
