



WTO ACCESSIONS

2015 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL *

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

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I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1. This is the Seventh Annual Report on WTO Accessions and my Third as Director-General. This year the Organization registered historic and strong progress on accessions. The accession of Kazakhstan and, the two LDCs' accessions of Liberia and Afghanistan, were concluded. We increased our membership by two, from 160 in 2014 to 162 in 2015, with the accessions of Seychelles and Kazakhstan¹. Progress in 2015 was made possible by the robust engagement of WTO members, their determination to achieve concrete results and, demonstrate that the Organization also delivers in its regular work. Although there is still work to be done, I am pleased to report to Members that, the results from accessions in 2015 strengthened the WTO and advanced the strategic objective of "universality of membership". The Secretariat continued to upgrade its tool box and electronic platforms so as to better serve the membership. Before the end of the year, we will launch the upgraded Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP), which is a follow-up on the system-wide merger of the website for members and the Secretariat.

2. This year, we successfully implemented the programme to commemorate twenty years of WTO accessions, from 28 to 30 September during which the Second Global Seminar on Accessions was held; the Tenth Anniversary of the Accession of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was celebrated; and, we launched the book: WTO Accessions and Trade Multilateralism: Case Studies and Lessons for the WTO at Twenty. A wide range of participants, reflecting different constituencies, participated in the Twenty Year Accessions Anniversary Programme. The exchange of views made evident a shared consensus that WTO accession was a success story of the organization. In the exchange of experiences and review of challenges attendant on the process, the consensus was that the benefits of accession far outweighed any costs of adjustment. The varied contributions confirmed that WTO accession is being used as an instrument for domestic economic, legal, institutional and structural reforms.

3. The conclusion of the Accessions of Kazakhstan, Liberia and Afghanistan were unique and enriching experiences for the entire membership. They conveyed distinct and original messages about the ability of the WTO to focus, solve problems and deliver. The Accession Negotiations of Kazakhstan rank among the toughest and most complex undertaken by the WTO. It is a high quality package that has made far-reaching systemic contributions. It elaborated, *inter alia*, the principles and formula for the actual practice of tariff adjustment, compensation and associated regulatory adjustments. Pragmatic outcomes were defined on several aspects of the relationship between the functioning of customs unions and the rules-based Multilateral Trading System. The Accessions of Liberia and Afghanistan responded to the needs of post-conflict economies to build a solid foundation for their economic development. It was critical that the Organization demonstrated a keen sensitivity to deliver for the most vulnerable in the global economy and those most in need to draw on the benefits of an integrated global market and international cooperation, including in their post-accession phase.

4. From these three accessions, the fundamental lesson was reaffirmed about the indispensable importance of strong leadership at the top. These negotiations were concluded because of the direct engagement of Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan; Madame Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia; and, Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of Afghanistan. These leaders took conscious decisions on domestic reforms to set their countries on the path of sustained growth and development. They set examples about the necessity of leadership in domestic reforms for growth. Trade negotiations in general and accession negotiations in particular have never been a bureaucratic exercise.

5. Every year, this Annual Report on Accessions has a thematic focus. The focus this year was on the 20-year landscape of WTO accessions. The longstanding conclusion is reaffirmed that the process of accession *per se* and its results, are uniquely WTO in supporting domestic priorities for economic diversification and modernization, updating the rules of trade and promoting broader international cooperation for trade. Accession process and results have been used to consolidate and promote WTO core values of an integrated global market economy, trade openness, transparency, good governance and the rule of law. This is a confirmation of what the WTO represents and reflects an aspect of its core role in global economic governance.

¹ Kazakhstan ratified its Protocol of Accession to the WTO and deposited its "Instrument of Acceptance" on 31 October 2015. It shall become a Member of the WTO on 30 November 2015.

6. This year I have deepened my emphasis on the necessity of a "WTO Post-Accession Support Strategy". The objective of this strategy is to assist new member's transition, smoothly and rapidly, to support functional behaviour in ways that strengthen the rules-based Multilateral Trading System and supports their efforts to maximize the gains of integration to the global economy. The rules-based multilateral trading system is strengthened, if new Members are able to demonstrate the gains from trade that accrue from their disciplined implementation of accession-based domestic reforms. I believe that these gains include assistance from the multilateral and bilateral development communities to provide soft and hard infrastructure support for improved competitiveness and expansion of supply elasticity. While the leadership for Post-Accession priorities will be the responsibility of Article XII Members and Acceding Governments, the Secretariat is preparing a "WTO Post-Accession Support Strategy Note" that, will provide the platform for "networking" and accessing this support. This Implementation Strategy Note, as indicated in this Annual Report also describes "best practices" based on returns from questionnaires completed by Members. This is work in progress and I will be reporting on this in greater detail next year.

7. I am grateful for the support that the WTO has received in the area of technical assistance and capacity-building from Australia, China, the European Union, India, New Zealand, Oman and the United States. I pay particular tribute to Cuba, the European Union (including several of its individual Member States such as Sweden) and the United States for assistance on the Accession of Liberia at a challenging moment in 2014 and 2015. I am grateful to the support from sister agencies in particular the Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Trade Center (ITC), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Bank (WB) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Multilateral and Bilateral action shall be critical in the coordinated delivery of WTO Post-Accession Support for new members, including within the framework of our common endeavours on Aid for Trade and the Enhanced Integrated Framework.

8. The "China Least Developed Countries' and Accessions Programme" ("China Programme") continues to make a distinct and valuable contribution to support Acceding Governments and Article XII Least Developed and Developing Country Members. Exceptionally, this year two Round Tables would have been held by December. The Third Round Table was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in June. The thematic focus was on "Post-Accession: Maximizing the Benefits of WTO Membership and Global Economic Integration". The Dushanbe Round Table contributed to drawing the attention of the WTO to the opportunities and challenges in Central Asia. Central Asia merits greater attention in more intensive WTO engagement. The Fourth China Round Table has been convened from 13 to 14 December, in Nairobi, back-to-back with the Tenth Ministerial Conference.

9. As Director-General, I know that the remarkable progress that we achieved this year reflects the combined efforts of all Members, the purposeful leadership of Working Party Chairpersons, supported by dedicated Secretariat staff, led by the Accessions Division. I am grateful to all Members for making the Informal Group of Accessions (IGA) a unique forum that demonstrates the mutual trust and confidence between Members and the WTO Secretariat.

II. 2015 DEVELOPMENTS

1. ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES: AN OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

10. Twenty two (22) acceding governments were in the process of WTO accession, at the start of the year. 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:

- Six (6) formal Working Party meetings were held. These were on the - accessions of: Afghanistan (one (1)² meeting); Azerbaijan (one (1)³ meeting); Kazakhstan (one (1)⁴ meeting); and Liberia (three (3)⁵ meetings).
- Three (3) final formal Working Party meetings were convened on Kazakhstan, Liberia and Afghanistan. The final formal WP Meeting on the Accession of Kazakhstan was convened on 10 June and suspended, resumed and concluded on 22 June. The final formal meeting on the Accession of Liberia was convened and concluded on 6 October. The final formal meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan was convened and concluded on 11 November 2015. At these formal meetings, the Draft Accession Packages of Kazakhstan, Liberia and Afghanistan were adopted, *ad referendum*, by their Accession Working Parties;
- One (1) informal Working Party meeting took place in the context of the 20th Working Party on the accession of Kazakhstan⁶;
- At two (2) Technical Verification meetings, the Consolidated Draft Schedule on Goods of Kazakhstan⁷ and the Consolidated Draft Schedules on Goods and Services of Liberia⁸ were verified; and,
- Three (3) plurilateral meetings addressed specific technical issues in the areas of agriculture⁹, and SPS¹⁰ on the accessions of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and, Liberia. The plurilateral meetings were chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division in accordance with practice.

11. In 2015, progress, specifically, at Accession Working Parties, was documented as follows:

- Draft Reports were revised and updated by the Secretariat for four Working Parties – Afghanistan (one (1) revision), Azerbaijan (one (1) revision), Kazakhstan (two (2) revisions), and Liberia (three (3) revisions).
- The Draft Accession Packages for Kazakhstan, Liberia and Afghanistan¹¹ were prepared and circulated by the Secretariat. These three Draft Accession Packages, of Kazakhstan, Liberia and Afghanistan, were adopted by their respective Working Parties, *ad referendum*, and re-issued in the WT/ACC- and General Council / Ministerial Conference¹² series.
- Formal action on the Accession Package of Kazakhstan was taken at the 27 July General Council.

² 11 November 2015.

³ 6 March 2015.

⁴ 10 and 22 June 2015.

⁵ 7 May, 23 July, and 6 October 2015.

⁶ 9 June 2015.

⁷ 8 April 2015.

⁸ 28 July 2015.

⁹ 5 March 2015, in the context of the accession of Azerbaijan; and 7 May 2015, in the context of the accession of Liberia.

¹⁰ 9 June 2015, in the context of the accession of Kazakhstan.

¹¹ The Draft Accession Package of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, initially circulated on 3 March 2014, was updated and re-circulated to all Members of the Working Party on 19 October 2015.

¹² WT/MIN(15)/2 (Liberia); WT/MIN(15)/6 (Afghanistan).

- Formal action on the Accession Packages of Liberia and Afghanistan, which were adopted *ad referendum* at the final meetings of their respective Working Parties on 6 October and 11 November, will be taken at the 10th Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, 15 to 18 December 2015.

2. WORKING PARTY CHAIRPERSONS

12. There were several changes in the status of Accession Working Party Chairpersons:

- Ms Hilda Al-Hinai (Oman), Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Seychelles, successfully accomplished her task as Chairperson for the Working Party on the Accession of Seychelles. The Seychelles became the 161st WTO Member on 26 April 2015;
- H.E. Ambassador Vesa Himanen (Finland), Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Kazakhstan, successfully accomplished his task as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan became the 162nd Member of the WTO on 30 November 2015;
- H.E. Ambassador Joakim Reiter (Sweden), Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Liberia, successfully accomplished his task as the Chairperson of the Working Party. In the period of his role as Chairperson of the Working Party, on 1 April, Ambassador Reiter was appointed as Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD;
- H.E. Ambassador Roderick van Schreven (Netherlands), Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, successfully accomplished his task as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan;
- The position of Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Lebanese Republic became vacant due to the unexpected loss of Mrs Laurence Dubois-Destrizais (France). Following consultations, H.E. Mr. Jean-Paul Thuillier, Permanent Representative of France to the WTO was designated as the Chairperson of the Working Party;
- The position of Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina also became vacant due to the retirement of H.E. Ambassador István Major (Hungary). Consultations with Members are ongoing on the designation of the new Chairperson of the Working Party.

13. At present, nine (9) of the Chairpersons are Geneva-based. There are seven (7) vacancies for the position of Chairpersons of Accession Working Parties (see Annex 3). These include vacancies on accessions at their initial stages, where in most cases no documentary basis for work exists, at this time.

14. In 2015, Working Party Chairpersons remained actively engaged. They consulted with Members and gave leadership with concrete results. They met with representatives of Members and Acceding Governments in various formats and configurations. They facilitated the resolution of complex questions. They engaged in outreach to improve technical and policy understanding. The active engagement of Chairpersons advanced the process, including through country missions.

15. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Seychelles, Ms Hilda Al-Hinai (Oman), led a post-accession/ratification activity, accompanied by the Secretariat, to Mahé from 23 to 26 March, at the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Seychelles. A presentation was made to Parliamentarians to explain the terms and conditions of membership; discuss benefits and challenges; answer questions from stakeholders; and, review the relationship between Seychelles' WTO membership and its role in the global economy. Seychelles' National Assembly ratified the Accession Protocol of Seychelles, unanimously. On 25 March, H.E. President James Michel of Seychelles signed the Instrument of Acceptance of the Accession Protocol at a Plenary Meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers; and handed the Instrument to Director Accessions, who received it on behalf of WTO Director-General Azevêdo. Following domestic ratification of the Protocol on the Accession of Seychelles, Seychelles became the 161st WTO Member on 26 April 2015.

16. With the emergence of the Draft Accession Package, the Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Liberia, H.E. Ambassador Joakim Reiter (Sweden/Deputy-Secretary General UNCTAD) led a mission, accompanied by the Director Accessions, to Monrovia, from 19 to 21 August, to meet with the Executive and Legislative Branches of Government. The purpose of the mission was to present the Draft Accession Package of Liberia to the Executive and Legislative branches of Government and stakeholders, and answer questions. The WTO delegation met with H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and the Vice President and, made presentations to: (i) the Cabinet of Ministers, and, (ii) to the Senate and the House of Representatives. Through these engagements with the two branches of the Government of Liberia, following Members' guidance given at the July Working Party Meeting, the Government of Liberia agreed to the circulation of the Draft Accession Package of Liberia to all Members of the Working Party to consider for adoption, *ad referendum*.

17. Before the Fifth and final meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan, the Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan, H.E. Roderick van Schreven (Netherlands), and the Director of the Accessions Division undertook a mission to Kabul from 6 to 8 November 2015. The purpose of the mission was to present the Draft Accession Package of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the Government and stakeholders; explain the balance between commitments and flexibilities in the Package; identify the opportunities in the Package for the integration of Afghanistan to the global market economy and the platform it provides for the rapid trade development of Afghanistan; and, to answer questions on the Package. The WTO delegation met with H.E. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan and his Senior Advisors; H.E. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer of the National Unity Government; H.E. Commerce and Industries Minister Humayoon Rasaw; and, the Chairman of the "Economic Committee" of Parliament and Members of the Economic Committee. They also consulted with the private sector and the Chambers of Commerce. Across all stakeholders, at every level, support for the WTO Accession of Afghanistan was confirmed.

18. In keeping with systemic transparency obligations, the Chairpersons of the Working Party reported to WTO Members on the results of their visit at the Informal Group on Accessions.¹³

3. TRANSPARENCY IN THE ACCESSION PROCESS

19. Ensuring transparency and predictability in the accession process remain key priorities for the WTO Director-General and the Membership. During 2015, the transparency measures that were introduced since 2010, continued to be implemented and reinforced.

i. Informal Group on Accessions (IGA)

20. The Informal Group on Accessions held 10 meetings in 2015. Consultations in the Informal Group were focused, as traditionally, on: (i) information exchange on accessions; (ii) Secretariat reports to Members on technical developments in accession processes; (iii) reports to Members by Chairpersons of Working Parties on the results of their visits to Capitals of Acceding Governments; (iv) planning accession meetings and related activities, based on the Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings (ECAM) proposed by the Secretariat; and, (v) addressing specific concerns raised by Members and Acceding Governments.

ii. WTO Accessions Newsletter

21. This year, the Secretariat prepared 12 WTO Accessions Newsletters. Special editions of the Accessions Newsletter are issued to mark significant accessions events. In 2015, three special editions of the Accessions Newsletter were issued in June, October and November: (i) when the accession of Kazakhstan was completed at the level of the Working Party; (ii) to report on the conclusion of the implementation of the Programme of Activities to commemorate Twenty Years of WTO Accessions and to report on the final meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Liberia at which the "Working Party Report" (Draft Package) on the Accession of Liberia was

¹³ The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Seychelles, Ms Hilda Al-Hinai (Oman), reported on her mission to the 4th IGA, on 23 April 2015. The Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Liberia, H.E. Ambassador Joakim Reiter (Sweden/Deputy-Secretary General UNCTAD), reported on his mission to the 8th IGA, on 15 September 2015. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan reported to the IGA on 28 October 2015.

adopted *ad referendum* on 6 October; and, (iii) to report on the final meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan at which the "Working Party Report" (Draft Package) on the Accession of Afghanistan was adopted *ad referendum* on 11 November.

22. Overall, the WTO Accessions Newsletter is serving its purpose to ensure transparency on accession matters, report on monthly meetings of the Informal Group on Accessions and, enhance communication with Acceding Governments, Chairpersons, Members and the broader global trade policy community.

iii. 2015 Annual Outreach Dialogue with WTO Regional Groups

23. As part of its 2015 annual outreach dialogue with WTO regional groups, the African Group and the LDC Consultative Group were provided with customised briefings on 1 May. A follow-up briefing for LDCs was provided at the Seventy-Fifth session of the Sub-Committee on LDCs held on 18 September. Annual outreach dialogue on accessions was provided with the GRULAC, on 28 October 2015; the WTO Asian Group of Developing Members, on 5 November 2015; and, the WTO Arab Group, on 16 November 2015. Traditional annual outreach dialogue has been also scheduled with other regional groups and the core constituency groupings.¹⁴ The objective of the Annual Outreach Dialogue is to strengthen communication channels with Members and Acceding Governments alike, through the Regional Groups. The briefings provide a platform to exchange region-specific information on WTO accessions; and respond to accession-specific concerns by Members and Acceding Governments. They strengthen the collaboration between Members, Acceding Governments and the Secretariat.

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OUTREACH

24. As described in last year's Annual Report,¹⁵ the WTO Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan for 2014-2015 (hereinafter: Plan) establishes support for Acceding Governments as one of its four overarching objectives.¹⁶ The Plan grants priority attention to acceding Least-developed countries (LDCs).

25. 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.

26. In the period under review, technical assistance and capacity-building activities included: (i) national seminars; (ii) sessions on accessions in advanced trade policy courses, regional courses and introductory courses for LDCs; (iii) workshops; (iv) technical missions; (v) establishment/upgrade of WTO Reference Centres; (vi) e-Learning; (vii) outreach dialogue with WTO groupings; and, (viii) participation in conferences. Customized briefings on accessions for delegations (including non-residents) were also provided on the margins of the Fifth Global Review of Aid for Trade, held between 30 June and 2 July.

27. This year, the Secretariat pioneered the first-ever E-lecture on Accessions titled: "The Power and Relevance of the WTO", on 7 October 2015, as part of the WTO 20th Anniversary Accessions Events. The E-lecture was delivered by the Director of the Accessions Division. 54 participants accessed the lecture from across the world, including from Bhutan, China, India, Kenya, Mongolia, Myanmar and Switzerland. The recording of the session was made available on the WTO Accessions Gateway: <http://wto2.adobeconnect.com/p5dyofi94nj>.

28. In 2015, 22 Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building activities were held by the Accessions Division, including two China WTO Accessions Round Table Meetings: in Dushanbe, Tajikistan (from 2 to 4 June) and, Nairobi, Kenya (from 13 to 14 December). The beneficiary countries included all acceding governments and, several Members. Specifically, tailor-made technical assistance was provided to Seychelles, Iran, Liberia and Belarus.

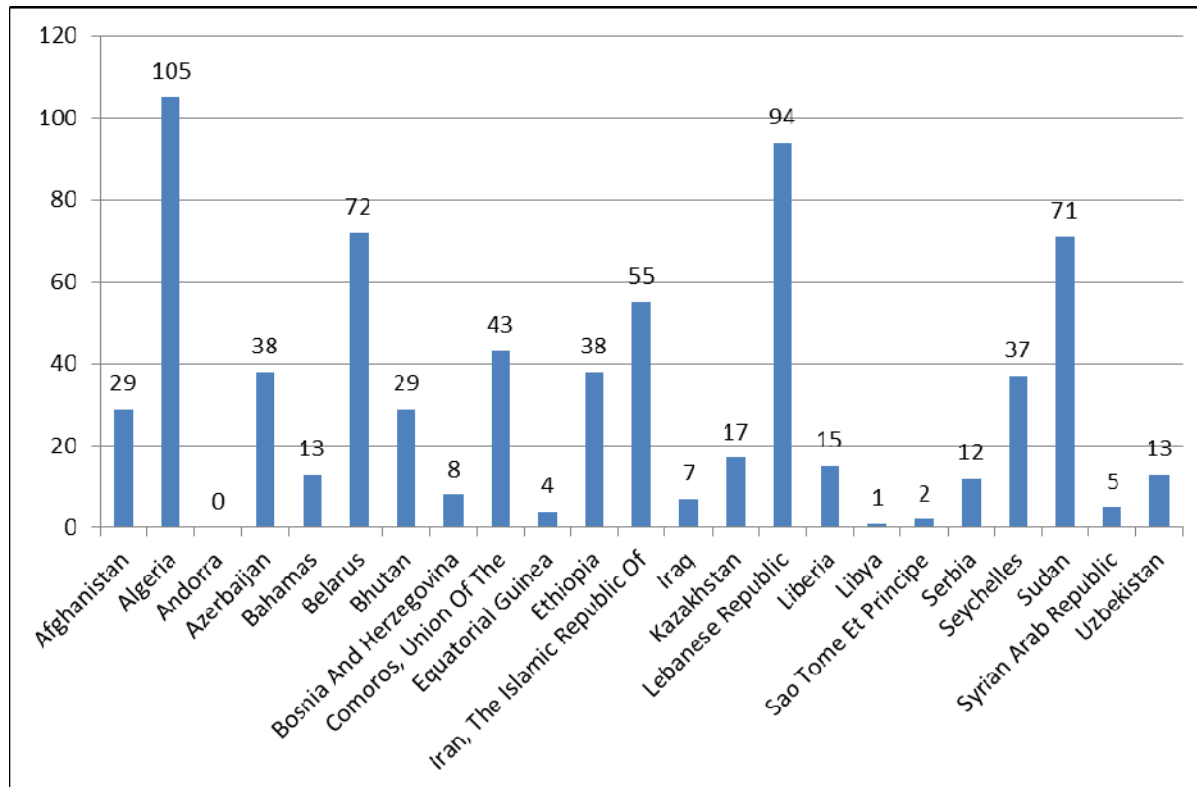
¹⁴ Secretariat annual outreach dialogue on accessions has been envisaged with other groups as follows: (i) the WTO LDC Group, on 23 November 2015; (ii) the WTO Informal Group of Developing Countries (IGDC), on 25 November 2015; and, (iii) the WTO African Group, as soon as scheduled, before the end of 2015.

¹⁵ WT/ACC/23.

¹⁶ WT/COMTD/W/200.

29. In general technical assistance and capacity-building, in 2015, Acceding Governments were invited to participate in over 40 WTO TA activities. Six Acceding Governments acted as hosts for some of these activities. Chart 1, below, shows the number of participants from Acceding Governments that completed TA activities during 2015¹⁷.

Chart 1 - Participants from Acceding Governments in WTO TA Activities – 2015



30. Accession-related TA and capacity-building were also provided by other institutions, and often in partnership with WTO Members. The Secretariat continues to work in a strong and effective partnership with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the World Bank. Activities have been coordinated with positive results.

31. In 2015, the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) provided significant technical and capacity-building support in selected Acceding Governments and completed accessions. WTO accessions are currently in progress in the following EIF Countries: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Comoros, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sao Tomé and Príncipe¹⁸ and Sudan. Vanuatu and Yemen acceded to the WTO in 2012 and 2014, respectively. The EIF is supporting the accession process in accordance with countries' demands. The Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS, EIF flagship country reports highlighting trade opportunities and constraints to trade integration) for Sao Tomé and Príncipe and Sudan which were completed in 2014, address WTO accession issues. Accession to the WTO is an important aspect of DTIS Updates for Comoros and Ethiopia which were launched in 2014. The EIF provides concrete support in Vanuatu and Yemen following their accession. In Yemen, the DTIS Update under way since 2013 includes the formulation of a "post-Accession" capacity development plan. In Vanuatu, the EIF helped to enhance the country's capacity to manage the "post-Accession" process. Beyond the DTIS and DTIS Updates, a number of countries use EIF funded projects to support accession. In Liberia, support for WTO accession is part of an EIF funded institutional capacity building project which for accession issues are closely coordinated with the Swedish National Board of Trade project. In the Comoros and Ethiopia, EIF funded institutional support projects are instrumental for capacity building for trade negotiations, outreach and awareness-raising on accession issues.

¹⁷ Data source: WTO TRTA Database (16 November 2015).

¹⁸ The Working Party on the Accession of Sao Tomé and Príncipe is in suspension due to non-payment of assessed contributions.

i. WTO/ITC Joint Programme for Trade Capacity for Acceding LDCs

32. The Joint Programme for Trade Capacity for Acceding LDCs was launched by the WTO and the International Trade Centre (ITC) on 1 December 2009. This Joint Programme provides accession-specific technical assistance for the private sector, parliamentarians and government officials. The purpose is to enhance their understanding of the accession process and WTO Membership. During 2015, Comoros benefited from this Joint Programme. The International Trade Centre remains pro-active in accession-tailored support. It was instrumental in securing increased national awareness for WTO accession and high level political engagement. The coordinated partnership between ITC and the WTO Secretariat is vital in the delivery of technical assistance and capacity building. The two Secretariats will continue to improve on this coordinated partnership in the year to come.

ii. China LDCs' and Accessions Programme

33. The China "Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Accessions Programme" (hereafter: the China Programme) was established by the Government of China and the WTO on 14 July 2011. China undertook the fourth renewal and extension in July 2015, with a contribution of US\$500,000.

34. The China Programme is aimed at strengthening LDCs' participation in the WTO and assisting LDCs acceding to the WTO. It is an accession-specific focused programme that takes account of the concerns and priorities of LDCs. The China Programme comprises five pillars: (a) the WTO Accessions Internship Programme; (b) WTO Accessions Round Table Meeting process; (c) LDCs' participation in WTO meetings; (d) South-South dialogue on LDCs and development; and (e) LDCs' Trade Policy Review follow-up workshops.

35. With respect to the WTO Accessions Internship Programme, in the year under review, five interns benefited from this Programme, including four interns from Members, (two from Article XII Members), and an intern from an Acceding LDC Government.¹⁹ So far, a total of 16 participants have benefitted from the China Internship Programme.

36. In 2015, two China WTO Accessions Round Table Meetings were held. The Third China Round Table was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 2 to 4 June. The thematic focus was on "Post-Accession: Maximizing the Benefits of WTO Membership and Global Economic Integration". The outcome document from the Fourth China Round Table was issued as the "Dushanbe Statement."²⁰ The Fourth China Round Table on WTO Accessions and the Multilateral Trading System is scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya from 13 to 14 December, back-to-back with the Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference. The theme of the Fourth China Round Table is: Domestic Reforms for Competitiveness and Deeper Trade Integration in the Global Economy, with the focus on Africa.

iii. Other Outreach Activities

37. A three-part activity was organized from 28 to 30 September 2015 as part of the system-wide series of activities to commemorate the Twentieth Anniversary of the WTO: "Accessions Twentieth Anniversary Programme". The 3-part activities were: (i) the Second Global Seminar on Accessions; (ii) the Special Session on Ten Years of the WTO Accession of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and, (iii) the launch by the WTO Director-General of the book: "WTO Accessions and Trade Multilateralism: Case Studies and Lessons for the WTO at Twenty".

¹⁹ The five interns are from Afghanistan (LDC acceding Government), Brazil/Colombia (Member), China (Article XII Member), Montenegro (Article XII Member) and Uganda (LDC Member).

²⁰ The Dushanbe Statement was issued in document WT/ACC/24. The programme and other information on the Third China Round Table is available at: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/beijingroundtable2015_e.htm

5. ACCESSIONS TRANSPARENCY TOOLS BOX (ATTB)

i. Accession Commitments Database (ACDB)

38. The Accessions Commitments Database (ACDB) provides access to all accession-specific commitments and related information contained in Accession Working Party Reports and the Accession Protocols of 33 Article XII Members. The ACDB is available in the three official languages of the WTO at: <http://acdb.wto.org>.

39. In 2015, the ACDB was updated to include the accession-specific commitments as contained in the Report of the Working Party on the Accession of Seychelles, which became a WTO Member on 26 April 2015. The ACDB shall be updated in real time to reflect the commitments of all new Members.

ii. Secretariat Register of Bilateral Market Access Agreements

40. 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 information includes: the sector of the agreement (goods; services; or both, as applicable); and, the dates of signature and deposit. Reports generated by this Register are available to WTO members only via a secure/password-protected access.

41. In accordance with long-standing practice, the substantive content of Bilateral Market Access Agreements remains absolutely confidential to the parties that signed the Agreement, as well as the Secretariat with whom the Agreements are deposited.

iii. WTO Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP)

42. In the past two years (2014 and 2015), the Secretariat (Accessions Division and the Information and External Relations Division) have developed the prototype of an "Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP)". The aim is to upgrade the current 'Accessions Gateway' on the WTO website (https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/acc_e.htm).

43. The AIP, when fully functional, will provide easier access to all accession-related negotiating inputs, circulated as part of the WTO accession processes, internal documents, such as speaking notes of accession Working Party Chairpersons; delegation lists; statements by heads of delegations of acceding governments. A link will exist to essential background to all accessions.

44. The AIP will also integrate the 'E-legislation link' system. Access will be provided to draft laws (bills), legislation and consultation documents, by both – acceding governments and Article XII members.²¹

45. While the AIP will provide greater transparency, it will also ensure and safeguard the existing, agreed restriction levels of different types of negotiating inputs, documents and information. Data integrity shall be preserved and documentation shall remain restricted and only available to parties with right of access, through a secure (i.e. password-protected) access. The "Accession Intelligence Portal (AIP)" will be launched before the end of 2015.

III. STATE-OF-PLAY IN ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES

46. WTO accessions advance on the basis of interdependent tracks of multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral negotiations. Separately, are domestic negotiations to establish national negotiating positions and to decide on inputs.

²¹ The E-legislation link is a comprehensive record/database of all submitted pieces of legislation and consultation documents for all completed WTO accessions - is a novelty. It provides for the *first time ever* an easily accessible record of all projects of legislation that have been notified as part of the WTO accession process over the past 20 years.

47. In the period under review, 3 accession negotiations were concluded. First, the negotiations on the accession of Kazakhstan were completed. The Draft Accession Package was adopted *ad referendum* at the resumed session of the Working Party on 22 June 2015. The General Council formally approved Kazakhstan's Accession Package at its session on 27 July 2015. Second, the Draft Accession Package of Liberia was approved *ad referendum* at the Working Party level on 6 October 2015. Formal action is expected to be taken at the 10th Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, 15 to 18 December 2015. Third, the Draft Accession Package of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was adopted *ad referendum* at the Working Party Level on 11 November 2015. Formal action is expected to be taken at the Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, 15 to 18 December 2015.

48. On other accessions, there was mixed progress. 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, for example, re-ordered priorities, and/or immediate post-conflict situations.

49. Afghanistan: Afghanistan applied for WTO accession in November 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan was established in December 2004. The fourth meeting of the Working Party was held in July 2013. The Draft Accession Package of Afghanistan was initially circulated in March 2014. In October 2015, Kabul re-engaged with Members and the Secretariat, to conclude the accession. The Draft Accession Package of Afghanistan was re-circulated on 19 October. The Draft Accession Package consisted of three (3) components: (i) the Draft Report of the Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan; (ii) the Draft Schedule of Concessions and Commitments on Goods of Afghanistan; and, (iii) the Draft Schedule of the Specific Commitments on Services of Afghanistan. The Fifth and final meeting of the Working Party took place on 11 November. At the meeting, Members of the Working Party adopted the Draft Accession Package, *ad referendum*, and transmitted it for formal action to the Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15 to 18 December.

50. Algeria: Algeria applied for WTO 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. Bilateral market access negotiations are on-going with interested Members on the basis of revised market access offers on goods, circulated in November 2013; and services, circulated in October 2013. Six bilateral market access agreements have been concluded (Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Switzerland, Uruguay and Venezuela). The next meeting of the Working Party will be convened after replies to Members' questions and a complete set of updated technical inputs have been submitted by the Acceding Government.

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

52. Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan applied for WTO accession in June 1997. The Working Party on the Accession of Azerbaijan was established in July 1997. The 12th meeting of the Working Party was held in February 2015. Multilateral negotiations are under way on the basis of a Draft Working Party Report, circulated in January 2015. Bilateral market access negotiations with interested Members are ongoing on the basis of revised market access offers on goods, circulated in November 2014, and on services, circulated on in February 2015.

53. The Bahamas: The Bahamas applied for WTO accession in May 2001. The Working Party on the Accession of The Bahamas was established in July 2001. The Second Working Party meeting was held in June 2012. A Factual Summary was sent to Nassau for factual updates in August 2013. In July 2015, Nassau submitted Negotiating Inputs, comprising its feedback on the Factual Summary of 2013, an updated Legislative Action Plan and three projects of legislation. The timing of the next meeting of the Working Party will be subject to the finalization of the Draft Factual Summary, and submission by Nassau of required updated Negotiating Inputs, including market access offers. Required Negotiating Inputs from Nassau include an updated Factual Summary, the Legislative Action Plan (LAP); and revised Market Access Offers on Goods and Services.

54. Belarus: Belarus applied for WTO accession in September 1993. The Working Party on the Accession of Belarus was established in October 1993. The seventh meeting of the Working Party was held in May 2005. Informal Consultations by the Chairperson took place in 2010, 2012 and 2013. The latest version of the Factual Summary of Points Raised was circulated in November 2012. The Secretariat continues to review with Minsk a number of bilateral market access agreements brought to the attention of the Secretariat. Following the conclusion of the Accession of Kazakhstan, the Secretariat visited Minsk in September 2015, at the request of the Government of Belarus, to review the state-of-play with a view to re-starting and expediting the accession negotiations. Required negotiating inputs and next steps were identified for re-activating the Accession of Belarus with the objective of an expedited conclusion. These included: (i) inputs to a first version of the Draft Working Party Report; (ii) an updated Legislative Action Plan; (iii) a revised market access offer on goods that would take account of commitments of its EAEU partners, and (iv) a revised market offer on services. When the negotiating inputs are submitted, the Working Party will convene its next meeting.

55. 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 most recent market access offers on goods and services were circulated in November 2007. The latest version of the Draft Working Party Report was circulated in December 2007. The Secretariat prepared a revision of the draft Report in 2008, but Bhutan is yet to submit its comments on the revised draft. Bhutan is periodically in touch with the Secretariat on domestic consultations under way.

56. Bosnia and Herzegovina: Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for WTO accession in May 1999. The Working Party on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina was established in July 1999. The 12th meeting of the Working Party was held in June 2013. The latest version of the Draft Working Party Report was circulated in May 2013. Bilateral market access negotiations with interested Members are ongoing. Working Party meetings and/or informal consultations would be convened, as appropriate, to address: (i) outstanding domestic legislative action; (ii) drafting questions prior to finalization of the Draft Working Party Report; and, (iii) remaining bilateral market access negotiations.

57. 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 Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime was circulated in October 2013. Inputs were received from Moroni on 18 September 2015 and are being processed by the Secretariat. These include replies to Members' questions on the MFTR, initial market access offers on goods and services, a draft LAP, filled questionnaires on import licensing, customs valuation, TBT, STEs, SPS and TRIPS. Technical exchanges between Moroni and the Secretariat are ongoing to update the documentation so far received. The first meeting of the Working Party will be convened after the set of negotiating inputs submitted by the Acceding Government is complete, processed by the Secretariat and Members have had, at the minimum, four weeks to review the updated inputs.

58. Equatorial Guinea: Equatorial Guinea applied for WTO accession in March 2007. The Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea was established in February 2008. Equatorial Guinea has not submitted any negotiating inputs to initiate the process of its accession negotiations.

59. Ethiopia: Ethiopia applied for WTO accession in January 2003. The Working Party on the Accession of Ethiopia was established in February 2003. The most third, and most recent, meeting of the Working Party was held in March 2012. At that meeting, the Working Party mandated the Secretariat to upgrade the Factual Summary of Points Raised to the Elements of a Draft Working Party Report. The next Working Party meeting would be convened once Ethiopia submits the inputs required for the preparation of the Elements of the Draft Working Party Report, and the Initial Market Access Offer on Services. At this stage, there is no multilateral activity in the Working Party on the Accession of Ethiopia. The Secretariat has been made aware that there is domestic preparatory activity to provide a platform for the re-engagement of Ethiopia when ready. Periodically, the delegation of Ethiopia briefs Secretariat officials on domestic activity underway.

60. 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 Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) was circulated in November 2009. In February 2010, questions from Members on the MFTR were forwarded to the Government of Iran. Technical inputs submitted by Iran, including the replies to Members' questions, were circulated in 2011. To convene the first meeting of the Working Party, consultations with Members would need to be undertaken by the Chairman of the General Council for the designation of a Chairperson of the Working Party. There is domestic preparatory activity to provide a platform for the re-engagement of the Islamic Republic of Iran when a Chairperson is designated. Prior to that moment, the Secretariat continues to provide technical assistance and capacity-building support, either upon request, or as part of WTO Regional Activities.

61. Iraq: Iraq applied for WTO accession in September 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Iraq was established in December 2004. The second meeting of the Working Party was held in April 2008. Iraq has provided a number of negotiating inputs requested by the Working Party. Iraq has yet to submit its initial market access offers on goods and services. The next Working Party meeting would be scheduled as soon as Iraq submits its initial market access offers.

62. Kazakhstan: Kazakhstan applied for WTO accession in January 1996. The Working Party on the Accession of Kazakhstan was established in February 1996. The Twentieth and Final Meeting of the Working Party was held on 10 and 22 June 2015. At this meeting, the Draft Accession Package was adopted, *ad referendum*. The Working Party concluded its mandate and transmitted the Report of the Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the General Council for formal action. The General Council on 27 July formally approved the Report. WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and H.E. President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan signed the Protocol on the Accession of Kazakhstan, subject to domestic ratification by 31 October 2015. Kazakhstan will become a WTO Member on 30 November 2015.

63. Lebanese Republic: The Lebanese Republic applied for WTO accession in January 1999. The Working Party on the Accession of the Lebanese Republic was established in April 1999. The seventh meeting of the Working Party was held in October 2009. The first revision of the Draft Working Party Report was circulated in October 2009. The latest revision of the market access offer on goods and services was circulated in June 2004. The next meeting of the Working Party will be convened after the vacant Chairmanship of the Working Party is filled, the Lebanese Republic agrees to a roadmap to restart and advance its accession negotiations, and submits updated inputs. Beirut submitted, on 16 October, updated replies to Members' questions from 2010 and three pieces of legislation. Outstanding inputs include factual updates to the draft Report of the Working Party to reflect developments since 2009, an updated Legislative Action Plan (LAP) to indicate the enactment of laws and associated implementing regulations and updated initial market access offers.

64. Liberia: Liberia applied for WTO accession in June 2007. The Working Party on the Accession of Liberia was established in December 2007. In 2014, there was strong re-engagement by Monrovia. In 2015, Liberia concluded bilateral market access negotiations with six (6) Signatory Members. The draft Report of the Working Party on the accession of Liberia was prepared and updated to reflect negotiating progress. The Second and Third Meetings of the Working Party were held in May and July, respectively. In May 2015, Members and the Acceding Government of Liberia finalized Liberia's Agriculture Supporting Tables. The verification of the Draft Goods and Services Schedules of Liberia was completed with six (6) Signatory Members in July, following the deposit of all signed bilateral agreements with the Director-General. With the emergence of the Draft Accession Package, the Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Liberia, H.E. Ambassador Joakim Reiter (Sweden/Deputy-Secretary General UNCTAD) and the Director of the WTO Accessions Division undertook a high-level country visit to Monrovia, from 19 to 21 August. In the course of the mission, Director Accessions hand-delivered a letter from WTO Director-General Azevêdo to H.E. President Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia. Following consultations with the Executive and Legislative Branches of Government in Liberia, as follow-up to the Mission to Monrovia, the Draft Accession Package of Liberia was circulated to all Members of the Working Party on 4 September. The Draft Accession Package consisted of three (3) components: (i) the Draft Report of the Working Party on the Accession of Liberia; (ii) the Draft Schedule of Concessions and Commitments on Goods of Liberia; and, (iii) the Draft Schedule of the Specific Commitments on Services of Liberia. The Fourth and final meeting of the Working

Party took place on 6 October, at which Members adopted the Draft Accession Package of Liberia, *ad referendum*, and transmitted it for formal action to the Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15 to 18 December.

65. Libya: Libya applied for WTO accession in June 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Libya was established in September 2004. The Working Party has never met. Libya has neither submitted a Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) nor initial market access offers, to initiate the process of accession negotiations.

66. Sao Tomé and Príncipe: Sao Tomé and Príncipe applied for WTO accession in February 2005. The Working Party on the Accession of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Príncipe was established in June 2005. Sao Tomé and Príncipe has neither submitted a Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) nor initial market access offers to initiate the process of accession negotiations. Sao Tomé and Príncipe is subject to Category III²² administrative measures and therefore its Accession Working Party is in suspension until its debts are redeemed.

67. Serbia: Serbia applied for WTO accession in December 2004. The Working Party on the Accession of Serbia was established in February 2005. The thirteenth (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. Bilateral market access negotiations with interested Members are outstanding. The next meeting of the Working Party would be convened when: (i) outstanding domestic legislative action has been completed by Belgrade; (ii) work on the latest Draft Working Party Report has been finalized; and, (iii) substantial progress on the remaining bilateral market access negotiations has been registered. In 2015, the Negotiating Team in Belgrade sustained its routine technical contact with the Secretariat to provide updates on domestic state-of-play.

68. 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. Two signed bilateral market access agreements were deposited with the Secretariat (Brazil and China). Updated technical Negotiating inputs are still pending, including a description of Constitutional changes after the independence of South Sudan in 2012. The Secretariat has been in technical contacts with Sudan to identify areas where updated materials and information are required. However, there is no substantive technical engagement by Sudan.

69. The Syrian Arab Republic: The Syrian Arab Republic applied for WTO accession in October 2001. It renewed its application in 2004, 2005, and 2010. The Working Party on the Accession of the Syrian Arab Republic was established in May 2010. No Working Party meeting has been held to date. The Syrian Arab Republic has neither submitted a Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR), nor initial market access offers to initiate the process of accession negotiations.

70. Uzbekistan: Uzbekistan applied for WTO accession in December 1994. The Working Party on the Accession of Uzbekistan was also established in December 1994. The Third Meeting of the Working Party took place in October 2005. This accession is dormant.

IV. LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES' ACCESSIONS

71. The year 2015 has been active for a number of LDCs. In the year under review, Liberia concluded its accession negotiations at the level of the Working Party in October 2015, when its Draft Accession Package was adopted *ad referendum*. Formal action shall be taken at the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2015.

72. Afghanistan re-engaged robustly in its accession process. It submitted negotiating inputs which allowed the update and re-circulation of its Draft Accession Package on 19 October 2015. Afghanistan concluded its accession negotiations at the level of the Working Party in November 2015, when its Draft Accession Package was adopted *ad referendum*. Formal action shall be taken at the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2015.

²² As of November 2014.

73. Bhutan, Comoros, Ethiopia and Sudan sustained technical non-negotiating contacts with the Secretariat, but with no substantive technical engagement at the multilateral level of the Working Parties on these dossiers.

74. Equatorial Guinea remained dormant. Sao Tomé and Príncipe is still subject to Category III of Administrative Measures.

75. In response to the human capital and resource constraints of LDCs, the Secretariat continues to provide a combination of generalized start-up technical assistance activities with tailored accession-specific activities to acceding LDCs at all stages of their WTO accession process. This year, as in previous years, technical assistance to acceding LDCs delegations in Geneva was combined with assistance to capital-based officials. This customized assistance is being improved and refined in several ways. For instance, accession-specific training sessions have been developed to train entire LDC Negotiating Teams. These are timed to coincide with their scheduled Working Party Cycles.

76. In addition to in-house Secretariat support, Members have continued to provide technical support for LDC Accessions. This includes, amongst others, capacity-building on the platform of the China "Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) and Accessions Programme". So far, sixteen (16) China Accession interns have been trained.

77. Several other WTO Members continue to sustain and upgrade their capacity-building and technical support for Acceding LDCs. Some do, nationally, others on the platform of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF). Steady support has been extended from Australia, Brazil, Canada, European Union (including dedicated programmes from its individual Member States), India, New Zealand and the United States.

78. In 2012, the General Council adopted the Addendum to WT/L/508 to strengthen, streamline and operationalize the Guidelines on LDCs' Accessions.²³ Members are mindful of these Guidelines in on-going active LDCs' accessions. The Director-General has underscored the vital importance of Members to be cognizant of these Guidelines in facilitating negotiations with LDCs. Members were sensitive to these Guidelines in the conclusion of the accession negotiations of Liberia and Afghanistan.

V. 'WTO AT TWENTY' - ACCESSION EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

79. On 1 January 2015, in his message to the international community, the Director-General launched a series of activities to mark the Twentieth Anniversary of the WTO. The Accessions Division developed a Programme of activities and an exhibition to commemorate Twenty Years of WTO Accessions.

i. WTO at Twenty exhibition: The WTO: a rules-based system - The 'accessions corner'

80. The exhibition "The WTO: a rules-based system" was developed (as a joint initiative of the Legal Affairs Division and the Accessions Division). The 'accessions corner', as part of this exhibition, contains an 'information stand', displaying Accession Protocols and an interactive WTO accession map. The exhibition will show until December 2015. It can be viewed on the ground floor of the new building.

ii. WTO at Twenty Photo Exhibition – Twenty years of WTO accession signing ceremonies

81. As part of the exhibition of Accession Protocols is the "Photographic Exhibition" of the twenty-year history of the Organization, which includes 20 years of WTO accession protocol signing ceremonies. The exhibition will also stay in place until December 2015. It can be viewed at the Atrium of the Centre William Rappard at Rue de Lausanne 154, Geneva, Switzerland.

²³ WT/L/508/Add.1, 30 July 2012.

iii. Accessions Book Launch and the WTO 20th Anniversary Accessions Programme

82. A 3-day, 3-part Accessions Twentieth Anniversary Programme was implemented from 28 to 30 September 2015. This programme was composed of the Second Global Seminar on Accessions; the Tenth Anniversary of the WTO Accession of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and, the launch by WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo of the book: 'WTO Accessions and Trade Multilateralism: Case Studies and Lessons for the WTO at Twenty' (<http://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/law/international-trade-law/wto-accessions-and-trade-multilateralism-case-studies-and-lessons-wto-twenty?format=HB>); a co-publication of the WTO and Cambridge University Press.

VI. 20-YEAR LANDSCAPE OF WTO ACCESSIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

83. Increasing WTO membership has been a constant priority for the Organization. Membership is considered as the means to extend the coverage of the rules-based multilateral trading system and foster international cooperation. WTO accessions have expanded the trading system, both geographically and conceptually. Accession results have exercised significant effects in the four areas of: domestic reforms, market access, updating the rules and international cooperation. In this the 20th anniversary of the WTO, the thematic focus in this year's Annual Report on Accessions, identifies and assesses these results, juxtaposed to GATT era accessions.

84. Specifically, this year's thematic focus: provides an overview of WTO accession results on rules and market access; describes the evolution in accession procedures over the 20-year landscape; and, suggests lessons for accessions management, from the perspective of the Secretariat, with the objective of assisting current acceding governments in their WTO accession engagement.

2. ACCESSION RESULTS

85. In 1995, WTO rules extended to approximately 80% of world trade amongst 128 WTO Members. To date, at 162 Members²⁴, the coverage of WTO rules has been extended to 97.7% of world trade. Of this, the 34 Members, including Kazakhstan, that have acceded to the WTO pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (hereinafter: Article XII Members) account for 17.6% of the extension and coverage of the rules-based Multilateral Trading System. Of these 34, as listed in Annex 4 to this Report, 33 are sovereign countries and one is a separate customs territory. Article XII Members now account for 21% of WTO membership. With the imminent membership of Kazakhstan and the conclusion of the Accession Negotiations of Liberia and Afghanistan, nineteen (19) more countries are at different stages of accession.

86. Article XII Membership reflects the rich diversity of the WTO as a multilateral organization. Of the 34 Article XII Members, seven²⁵ (7) were classified least-developed countries (LDCs), in accordance with the UN List of Least-developed Countries; the other 27 – acceded on terms and conditions that took account of their development status and particular needs. Twenty had previously been centrally planned economies. A major accomplishment of WTO accession is the integration of economies, which emerged from the collapse of the USSR and had, initially, opposed the ITO/GATT formation.

87. The successful conclusion of 34 accession negotiations required the multilateral consensus of WTO membership. An important lesson from these accessions is that there are contexts and modalities which lead multilateral trade negotiations to successful outcomes, even in the complex and multi-polar 21st Century global economy.

²⁴ Kazakhstan will become the 162nd Member on 30 November 2015.

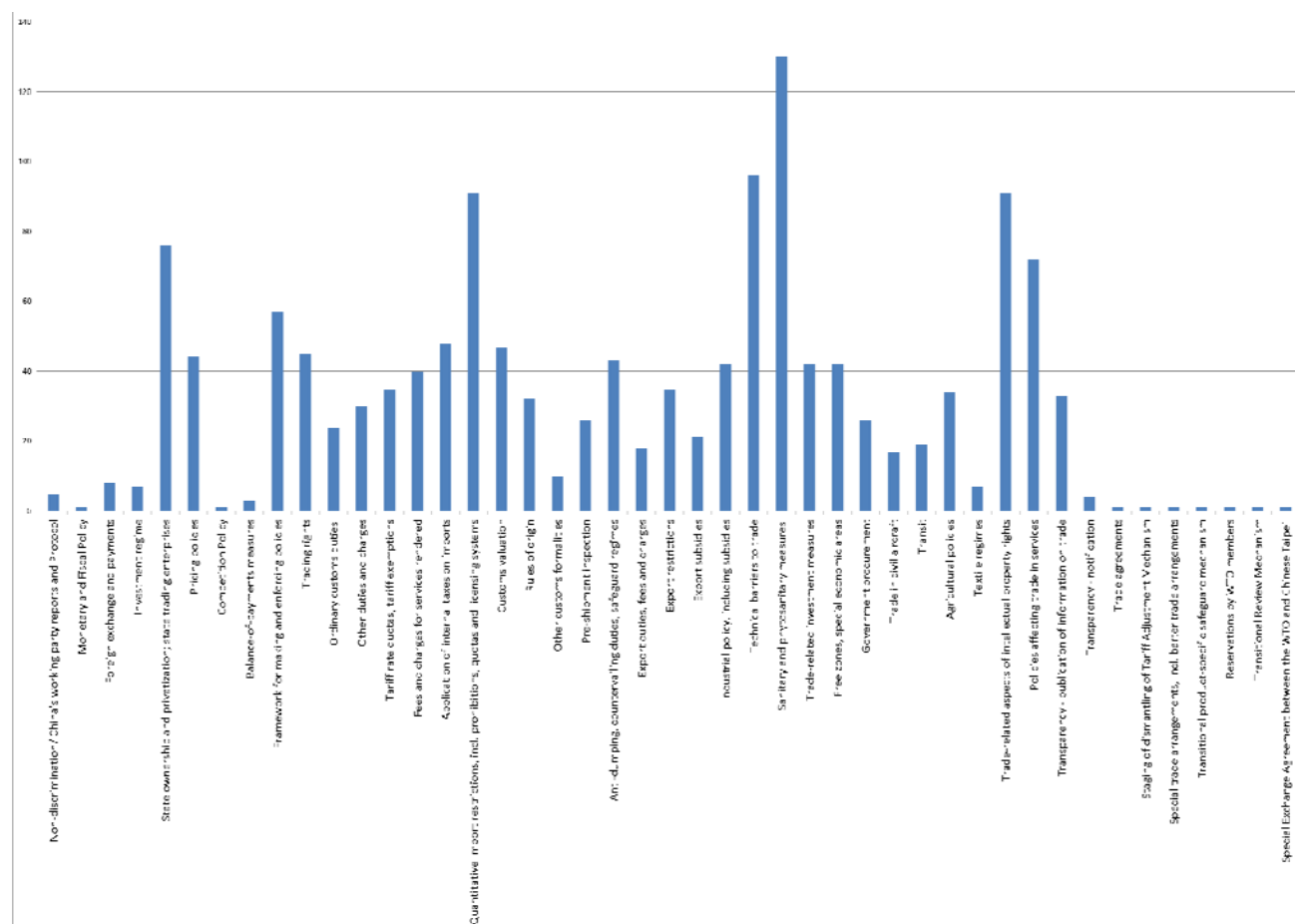
²⁵ Cambodia, Cabo Verde, Lao PDR, Nepal, Samoa, Vanuatu, Yemen. After accession, Vanuatu and Samoa graduated from their LDC status. UN General Assembly Resolution 68/L.20 adopted on 4 December 2013, decided that Vanuatu will graduate four years after the adoption of the resolution.

3. ACCESSION COMMITMENTS

88. WTO accession is a process of negotiating enforceable WTO commitments for WTO-consistent domestic reforms. Article XII Members are bound by WTO rules and disciplines that existed at the establishment of the WTO in 1995 and, the negotiated specific terms of accession on rules and market access on goods and services, as embodied in their Accession Protocols, which vary for individual membership. Pursuant to Article 2 of the standard WTO Accession Protocol, these accession-specific obligations when they enter into force become integral to the "WTO Agreement" (i.e., the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization).

89. On multilateral rules, during the twenty years of the WTO, Article XII Members undertook 1,479²⁶ accession-specific commitments (both in their Accession Protocols and Working Party Reports), of which 175 commitments were undertaken by Article XII LDCs. The range of these commitments span the 36 chapters/sections contained in their accession Working Party Reports and WTO Accession Protocols. For the total number of accession-specific commitments of these 34 Article XII Members, across these chapters/sections, see Chart 2 below.

Chart 2 - Total number of commitments of Article XII Members by chapters/sections, as contained in accession Working Party Reports and WTO Accession Protocols



²⁶ This number includes the accession-specific obligations of Kazakhstan (118) which will become a Member on 30 November. It does not include the accession-specific obligations of Liberia (32); and, Afghanistan (37), which are yet to come into force.

90. Within each rules area, the accession-specific commitments establish direct relationships with WTO rules, either to clarify, reinforce, deepen and/or extend, depending on the uniqueness for each particular accession. In Box 1, attached to this Report, as an example, 57 commitments undertaken by 29 Article XII Members on "Framework for Making and Enforcing Policies" are summarised.²⁷

91. On market access, after twenty years of negotiations, in 34 completed accessions, 534 bilateral market access agreements on goods and 259 bilateral market access agreements on services²⁸ have been negotiated, signed and deposited with the WTO Director-General *ex officio*.²⁹ These agreements were consolidated into Schedules of Tariff Concessions and Commitments on Goods and Specific Commitments on Trade in Services, annexed to the accession protocols of the acceding governments and applied on an MFN basis. The sum and effects of these bilateral market access agreements stand as significant accomplishments not only for the expansion of market access opportunities for all WTO Members on an MFN basis, unheralded progress of multilateral negotiations in the regular work of the WTO and, of the technical capacity and policy capacity of WTO Members to get things done, in appropriate formats and configurations. The expansion of market access opportunities by Article XII Members is best demonstrated by comparing original and Article XII Members with regard to their goods tariff concessions and specific commitments on services, as summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Market access results from 34 Article XII accessions

	Goods: Final Bound Rates				Services
	Binding coverage	All products	Agricultural products	Non-Agricultural products	Number of services sub-sectors
Original Members	74%	45.5%	65.4%	34.0%	48
Article XII Members	99.98%	13.49%	19.68%	12.56%	102

4. ACCESSION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES – EVOLUTION

92. Accession to the GATT, pursuant to Articles XXXIII and XXVI:5(c) of the GATT 1947, was a technical, sponsored, and semi-automatic process. In 1994, to become an original WTO Member on 1 January 1995, an acceding government was required to sign up to the results of the Uruguay Round, and submit draft goods and services schedules, for technical verification.

93. Post-1995, however acceding governments have negotiated the terms of their WTO membership, pursuant to Article XII of the WTO Agreement which provides that: *'Any State or separate customs territory possessing full autonomy in the conduct of its external commercial relations and of the other matters provided for in this Agreement and the Multilateral Trade Agreements may accede to this Agreement on terms to be agreed between it and the WTO.'* The value of the Article XII process is that it has provided acceding governments with an indispensable platform for domestic reforms for improved competitiveness and sustained growth for development. The WTO accession process is a more structured, disciplined process that has enabled acceding governments to integrate trade into their overall policy priorities for diversification and modernization.

94. Unlike the GATT, Article XII WTO accession is a hard and long process and is challenging because it is a process of domestic reform combined with fostering broader international cooperation on the basis of WTO core values. On average, accession negotiations last ten years; and require far-reaching binding commitments. For the length of completed and on-going Article XII accessions, see Chart 3.

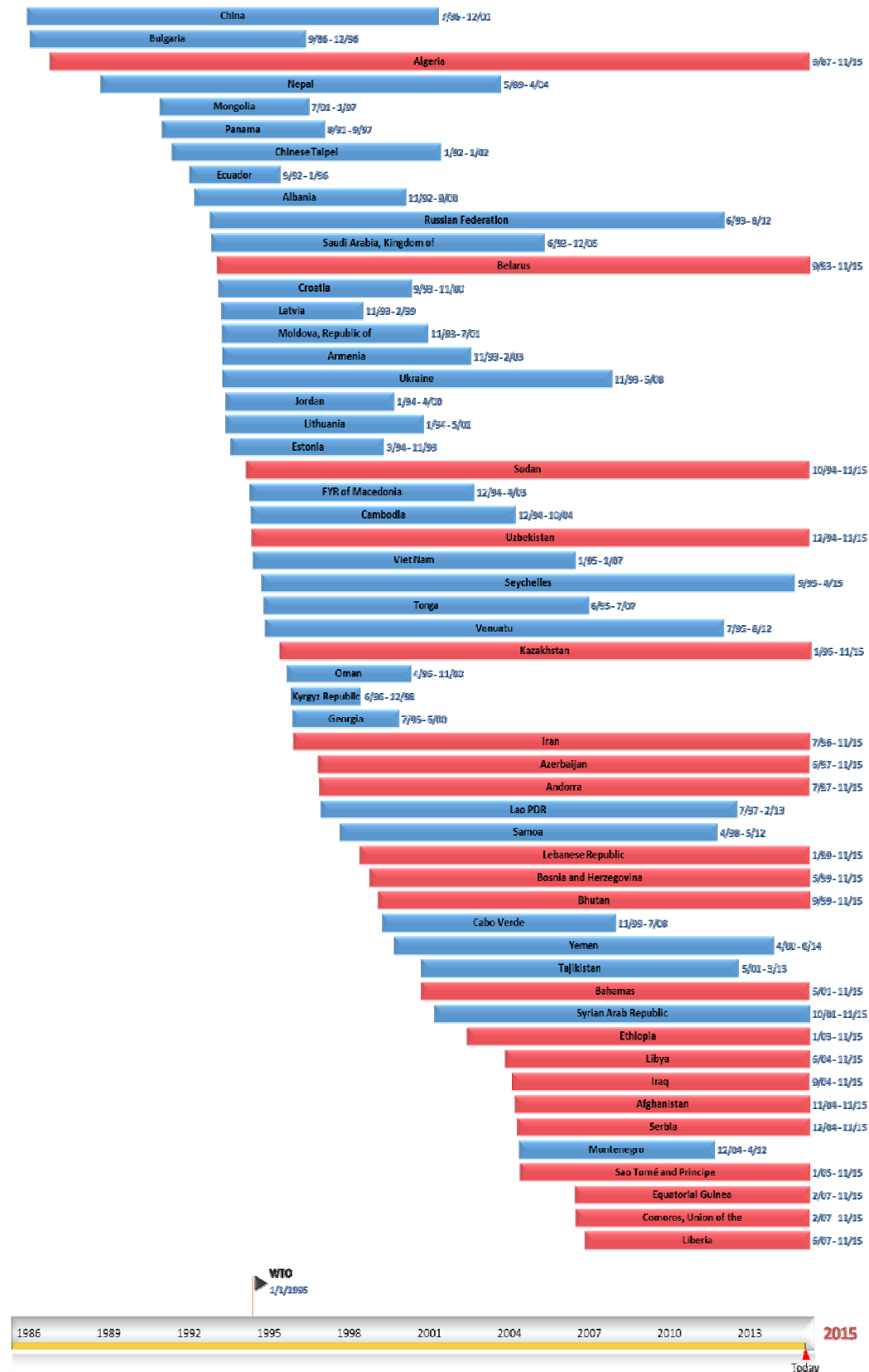
²⁷ This number includes the accession-specific obligations on "Framework for Making and Enforcing Policies" of Kazakhstan (3); and, excludes the accession-specific obligations on "Framework for Making and Enforcing Policies" of Liberia (3); and, Afghanistan (3), which are yet to come into force.

²⁸ These include Kazakhstan (30 bilateral agreements on goods and 15 bilateral agreements on services); and, exclude Liberia (6 bilateral agreements on goods and 3 on services) and Afghanistan (9 bilateral agreements on goods and 7 on services). In sum, of the bilateral agreements for these countries are added, the aggregate of bilateral market access agreements across these accessions would total 549 on goods and 269 on services.

²⁹ Register for Bilateral Market Access Agreements (WTO Secretariat).

Chart 3 – Length of completed and ongoing Article XII accessions

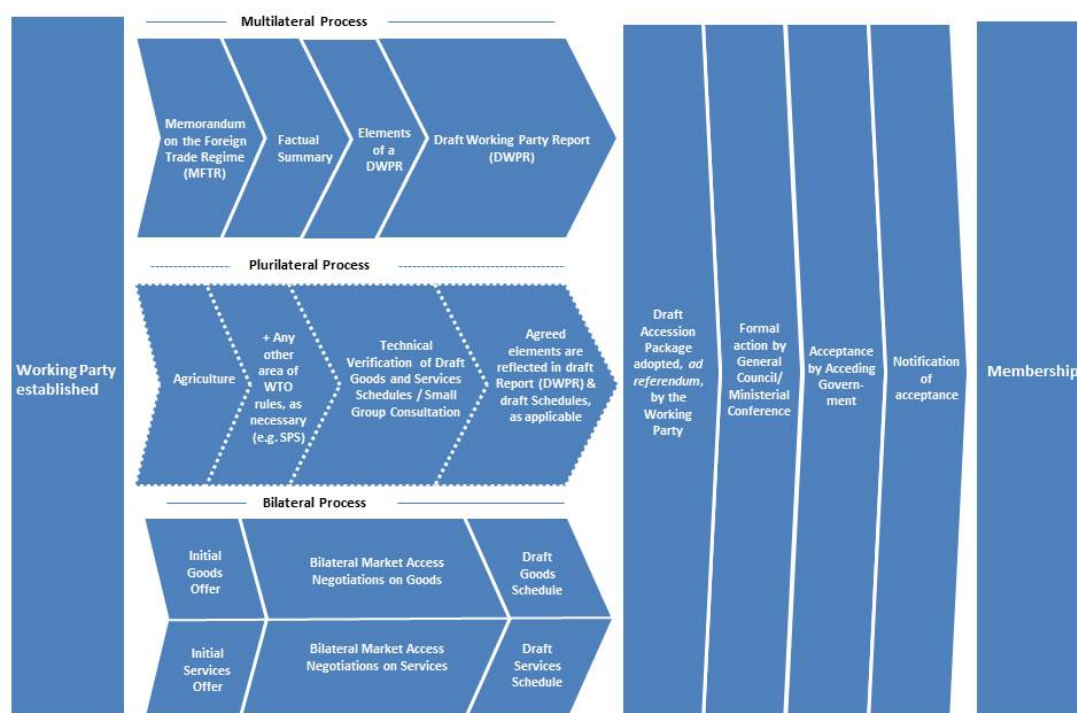
BLUE: completed accessions;
RED: ongoing accessions.



95. Article XII accession proceeds and have been managed on the basis of longstanding GATT/WTO accession best practices. Start-up procedures are broadly and illustratively indicated in WTO document WT/ACC/22, circulated on 1 August 2014. A useful compendium of accession procedures and longstanding best practices are reflected in the recent book on WTO Accessions.³⁰ What is self-evident is that procedures and practice have evolved to keep pace with dynamic and rapid transformation in an integrated global economy and reflect the uniqueness of Acceding Governments. To facilitate LDC accessions and address the challenges they face, negotiating guidelines for LDCs were agreed in 2002 (WTO document WT/L/508 of 10 December 2002) and reinforced on 25 July 2012.

96. Accession negotiations (excluding internal domestic negotiations) are managed on three tracks: (i) multilateral track; (ii) plurilateral track; and, (iii) bilateral track, see Chart 4 below.

Chart 4 – Stages of Article XII accession process



97. Regardless of adjustments made over time to longstanding accession procedures and processes, the basic principles of "accessions negotiations management" have been largely constant, as they were set in November 1994, just prior to the entry into force of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO. These principles, as listed in the Box below, *mutatis mutandis*, continue being followed.

10 POINTS ON MANAGEMENT OF ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS (C/COM/4)³¹

1. the management of accession negotiations in the GATT should ensure the wider acceptance and effective application of rules and disciplines under the GATT, thus contributing towards the reform processes in the applicant countries or territories, and towards the objective of further strengthening the multilateral trading system;

³⁰ WTO Accessions and Trade Multilateralism: Case Studies and Lessons from the WTO at Twenty, Edited by Uri Dadush and Chiedu Osakwe, Cambridge University Press and the World Trade Organization, 2015.

³¹ As circulated in GATT document C/COM/4 of 16 November 1994.

2. there shall be no lowering of present standards for terms of accession to GATT;
3. accession negotiations should be limited to issues related to GATT rights and obligations including market access to the applicant country or territory;
4. accession negotiations should be approached on a case-by-case basis, while respecting the established procedures for negotiations with all applicants;
5. adequate lead-time should be allowed in the preparatory stage of accession negotiations before meetings of the respective working parties are convened, in order to allow both the applicant government and members of the working party to better prepare themselves;
6. in line with 5 above, more than one round of questions and answers may be organized if necessary; subsequent rounds will be designed to select and clarify issues before an initial meeting of the working party;
7. adequate lead-time should be allowed for governments to examine documentation;³² the conformity of such documentation with established procedures should be checked in advance by the Secretariat, which would inform contracting parties and the applicant government of its views;
8. the Secretariat may be invited to examine the technical assistance requirements of the applicant government so as to elaborate its own plans for assistance and further coordinate them with those of individual governments;
9. the applicant government should be encouraged to undertake the necessary in-depth preparation for the accession negotiations before the working party meetings, *inter alia*, through informal consultations with contracting parties and the Secretariat;
10. applicant governments should also avail themselves, to the extent possible, of the training activities of GATT as part of their preparation for negotiations and to fully use their GATT observer status, in particular, to attend meetings of other accession working parties and of various committees."

5. LESSONS FROM WTO ACCESSIONS MANAGEMENT

98. WTO accession is a process of domestic reform and commitment to WTO core values and compliance. The four modalities of a successful accession include: (i) strong political commitment to WTO accession of the acceding government at the level of the Head of State/Government, on the foundation of legislation and implementing regulation; (ii) effective national coordination; (iii) continuity of the negotiating team; and, (iv) domestic outreach on WTO issues. These are supported by the technical assistance from the Secretariat, which includes, but is not limited to, preparation of roadmaps for acceding governments, tailor-made demand-driven capacity building and outreach with Parliamentarians and the private sector.

SUCCESSFUL ACCESSION: THE FOUR PILLARS

No.1 - High Level Political Commitment (Head of State/Government):

- Set capacity building priorities
- Set a clear roadmap for the accession
- Reassure Working Party of sustained high level political commitment

No.2 - Effective National Coordination:

- Design and operationalize a sound domestic coordinating structure
- Negotiating Authority for Coordinating Body
- Appointment of Chief Negotiator with technical ability and Policy Gravitas
- Parliamentary Engagement
- Engagement of sub-central (regional) governments

No.3 - Continuity of Negotiation Team:

- Build-up and invest in WTO accession team
- WTO accession is a training and capacity-building process

No.4 - Domestic Outreach on WTO Issues:

- Establish an effective dialogue with the private sector
- Understand transaction costs in the re-allocation of resources to dynamic sectors of growth
- Engage Civil Society (NGOs)
- Create critical pro-accession constituency
- Debate pros and cons and do not evade the dialogue and debate

³² In practice, three to four weeks.

- Explain that economies that do not reform, transform and modernize, fall behind other economies
- Network

99. To date, the process of Liberia's accession negotiations stands as an example of efficiency to expedite accession negotiations. Several elements were central: i) strong political engagement by the President of Liberia, in lock-step engagement with the Legislature, to use the process as an instrument of domestic reforms; ii) an engaged Chief Negotiator; iii) an established, technically able, mobile negotiating team that took up residency in Geneva to resolve negotiating questions and break logjams; iv) unanimous support by the WTO Membership with strong individual members championing this accession; and, v) engagement by the Director-General to ensure that systemic resources were directed to serve the needs of an acceding government most in need of integration in the global market economy and good trade governance, laws and regulations.

Main Lessons for successful technical work from Liberia's accession:

- Focus on Technical Substance;
- Provide Full Information;
- Work in Real Time;
- Engage actively with Members and the Secretariat.

100. Any process can be improved, including the process of WTO accessions. The scope for improvement revolves around three aspects: (i) transparency, (ii) acceleration, and, (iii) better explanations to improve understanding of the significance of accession-based domestic reforms and the lessons to be drawn. Transparency has been improved since 2010, through such tools as this Director-General's Annual Report on Accessions, which forms the basis for the debate by Members on the dedicated accession item at the end of year General Council session; Accessions Commitments Database; IGA meetings; the Accessions Newsletter; the Accessions Global Seminar process; the Outreach Dialogue with Regional Groups; and, the accessions-based China Round Table process. Yet more can be done to improve transparency, particularly in in-country activities.

6. CONCLUSION

101. Accession negotiations have been used by the acceding governments as an instrument for wide-ranging domestic policy, legal and institutional reforms, to improve the investment climate, diversify, modernize achieve faster growth rates and, also, attempt the facilitation of geopolitical relationships. The accession negotiating process *per se* continues adapting to new challenges at the technical level. Remaining accessions are more complex, in many ways, than those already completed.

VII. WTO POST-ACCESSION SUPPORT: CONCEPT, STRATEGY AND APPLICATION

102. In response to a range of requests from Article XII Members, the Director-General has initiated an integrated initiative for a "WTO Post-Accession Strategy" for Article XII Members, in particular the newest amongst them. The objective of the strategy is assist new Members' transition, smoothly, from long negotiating periods, to operational behavior as WTO members so as to maximize the benefits of trade integration into the rules-based system on the foundation of their domestic reforms. The strategy entails 4 integrated steps:

- a. Secretariat coordination with relevant multilateral and bilateral donors to develop post-accession support for soft and hard infrastructure to sustain domestic reforms and implementation of WTO obligations, for improved competitiveness, increased productivity and supply elasticity;
- b. Secretariat gathering of experiences and best practices on post-accession from Article XII Members, through a questionnaire methodology, to be shared with all Article XII Members;

- c. Improved internal Secretariat coordination to better support new members from day 1 of membership until their first trade policy review; and,
- d. Sustained thematic focus on Post-Accession in the China Accession Round Table process.

103. Several steps have been taken to implement this initiative by the Director-General. First, the Secretariat developed a questionnaire and sent it to all Article XII Members requesting their experience and best practices, post-accession. Second, on 2-4 June 2015, the Third China Round Table was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, with the thematic focus on "Post-Accession: Maximising the Benefits of WTO Membership and Global Economic Integration." Third, at the Dushanbe Round Table participants reviewed the preliminary results from the Secretariat's survey on post-accession, welcomed these initial results and, requested that it be deepened and extended (paragraph 29 of The Dushanbe Statement). The Dushanbe Round Table provided a platform, for the first time, for Article XII Members and Acceding Governments to discuss and share their post-accession experiences, practices and lessons learned. Since the Dushanbe China Round Table, based on 13 replies received to the questionnaire, the Secretariat has updated the best practices on post-accession. These are structured around seven areas: (i) Policy Framework for Implementation; (ii) Institutional Structural Adjustment; (iii) Legislative Framework for Implementation; (iv) Transparency; (v) Technical Assistance and Capacity Building; (vi) Outreach; and (viii) Participation in the work of the WTO. This updated work would be issued in a Secretariat Note on the "Best Practices on Post-Accession", as document WT/ACC/26.

104. Fourth, the initial application of "WTO Post-Accession Support Strategy" is being developed for Liberia and Afghanistan. Based on the continued rationale of demand-driven support, including for efficiency reasons and effectiveness, Article XII Members would have to lead the process. The role of the WTO would be establish and suggest the platform for operational action for WTO Post-Accession Support Strategy, as reflected in three documents:

- a. WT/ACC/26: "Best Practices on Post-Accession";
- b. WT/ACC-series, to be circulated: "WTO Secretariat Post-Accession Strategy Support Note"; and,
- c. "Internal Secretariat Post-Accession Implementation and Monitoring Note".

VIII. TRADE AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF ARTICLE XII MEMBERS³³

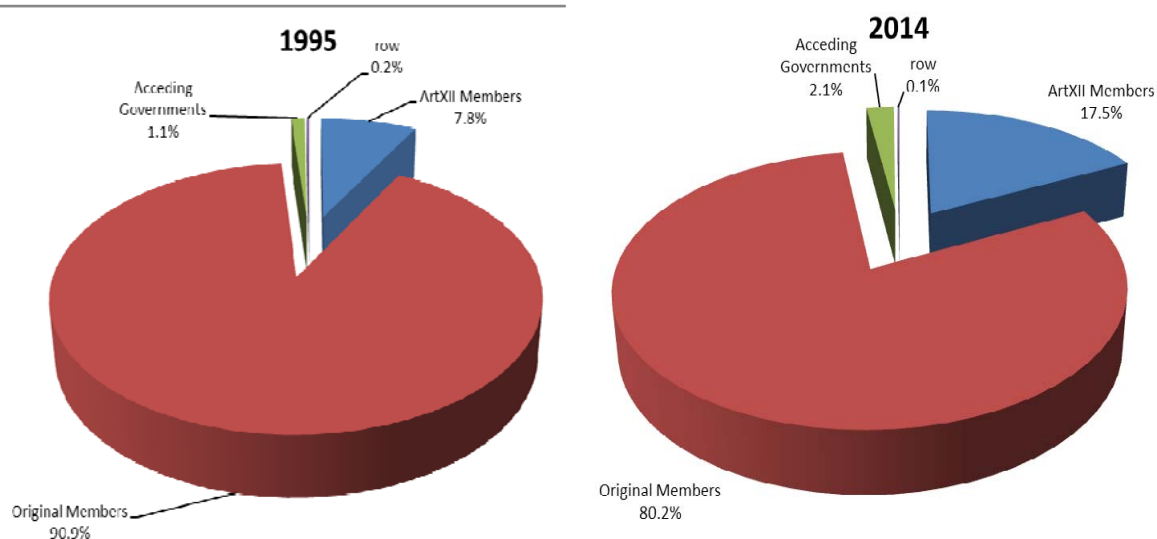
105. In 2014, the nominal value of world trade in goods and services increased modestly by 1.2% compared to the previous year. Structural and cyclical factors have been suggested to explain the global slowdown of trade growth. These include the lack of coordination between monetary policies, geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, falling demand in emerging economies and the sharp decline in commodity prices. Against this background, individual situations reflect diversity.

106. The trends identified, as identified, in the statistical analysis of the trade performance of Article XII Members in last year's version of this report continued, in spite of the global trade growth slowdown.³⁴ Overall, Article XII Members' trade growth, led by China, outperformed that of the rest of the world by 62% in 2014, down from 159% in 2013.

107. Figure 1 provides two snapshots which illustrate the evolution of market shares. On the one hand, original Members' share of world trade decreased from 90% in 1995 to 80% in 2014. On the other hand, the share of world trade of Article XII Members' increased from 7.8% in 1995 and 17.5% in 2014, thus expanding the reach of the MTS to cover approximately 98% of world trade.

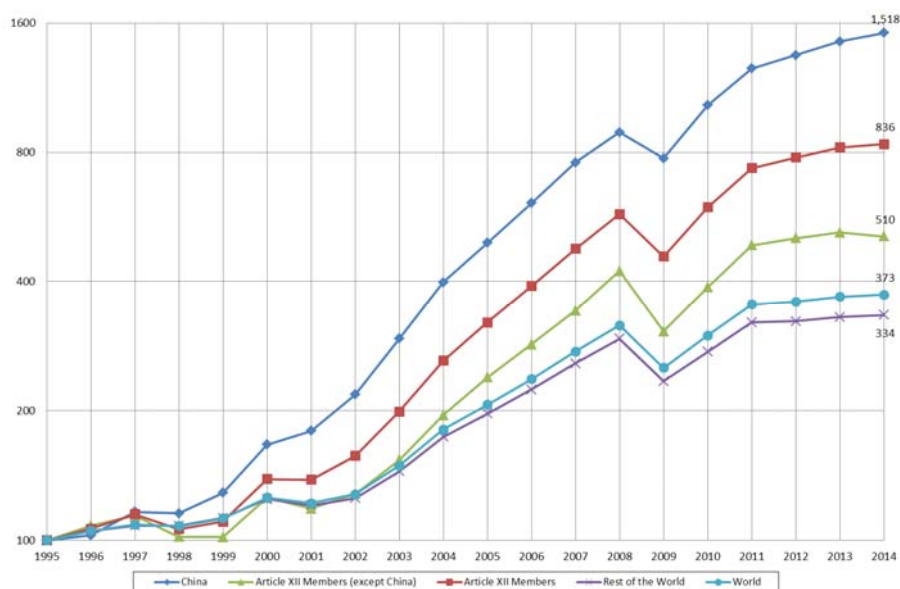
³³ See Annex 6 of this Report.

³⁴ See Section VI of the 2014 Director-General's Annual Report on Accessions in WT/ACC/23.

Figure 1 - Share of World Trade by Membership Status

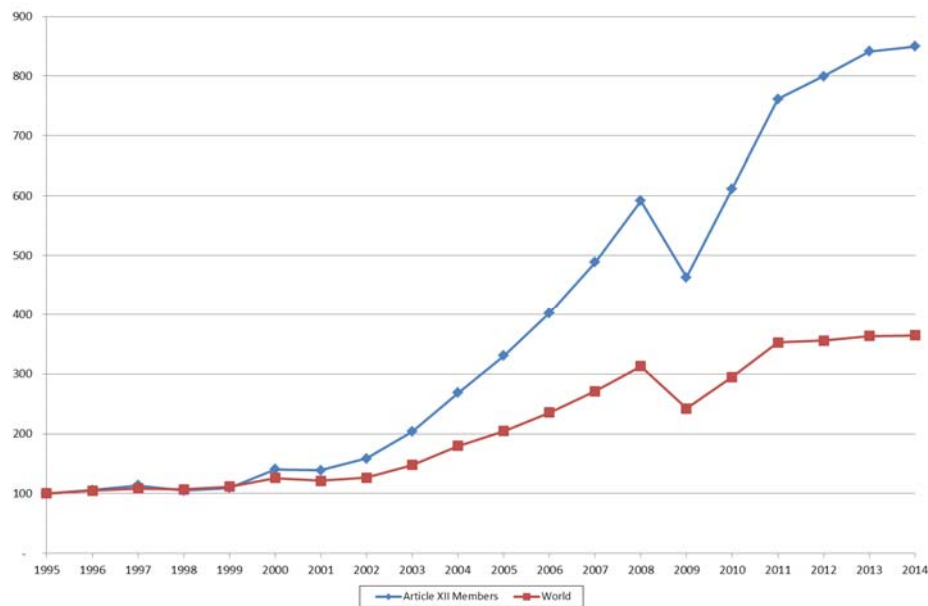
Source: WTO Statistics Database.

108. Figure 2 shows that in the twenty years since the establishment of the WTO in 1995, the nominal value of world trade in goods and commercial services grew by 273% at an average annual growth rate of 7.2%. Over the same period, that of Article XII Members increased by 736% at an average annual growth rate of 11.8%. And, even excluding the largest Article XII Member by trade value (China), the other Article XII Members' nominal value of trade increased, over the same period, by 410% at an average annual growth rate of 9% i.e. approximately 50% faster than global trade growth rate.

Figure 2 – Evolution of World Trade in nominal value by membership status

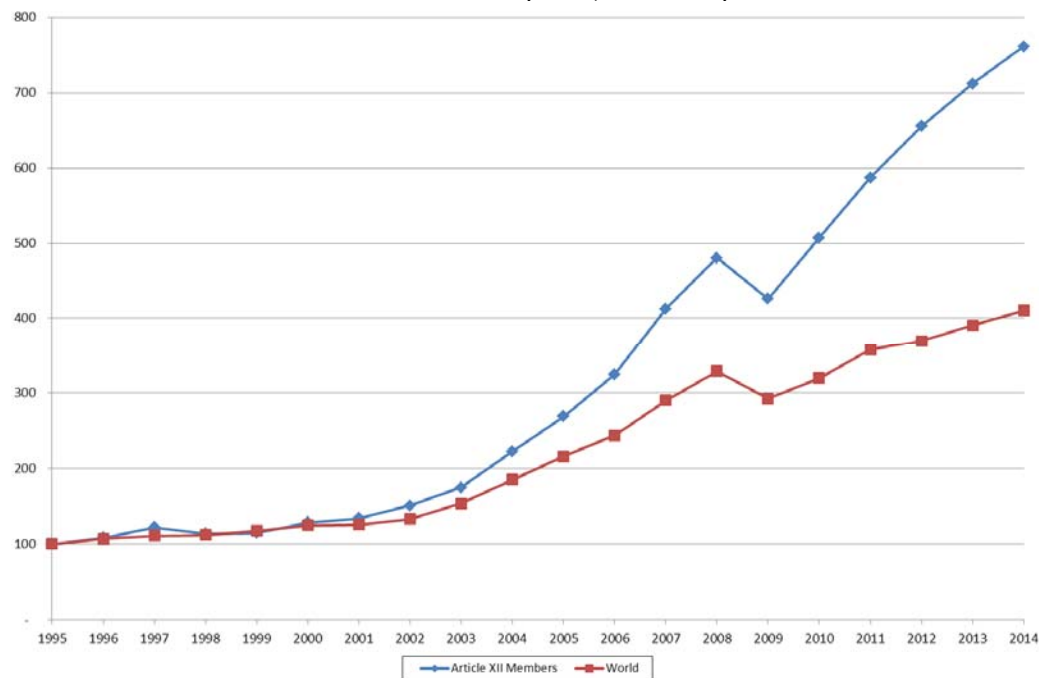
109. Overall, Article XII Members have recorded rapid trade growth. Figures 3 and 4 show that, in the period 1995 to 2014, the nominal value of trade in goods and services of Article XII Members increased by 750% and 661%, respectively. This was faster than the increase of the nominal value of global trade in goods and services, which increased respectively, by 264% and 310%. Even if China, a major trader, is excluded from the calculations, the trend remains. In other words, the trade growth of Article XII Members is faster than that of the rest of the world.

Figure 3 - Value of merchandise trade of Article XII Members: 1995-2014
(Index, 1995=100)



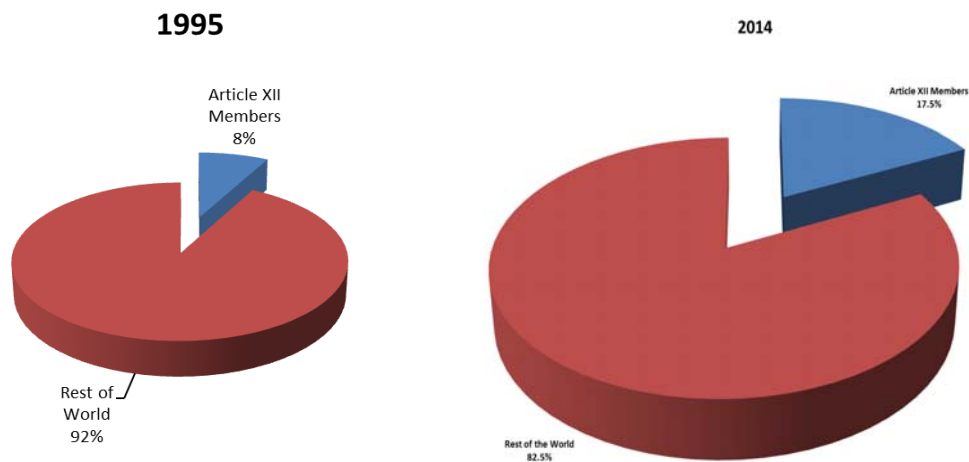
Source: WTO Statistics Database.

Figure 4 - Value of trade in commercial services of Article XII Members: 1995-2014
(Index, 1995=100)



Source: WTO Statistics Database.

110. Article XII Members have also registered strong trade performance in terms of their expanded share of world merchandise trade. As shown in Figure 5, from 1995 to 2014, the share of world merchandise trade of Article XII Members increased significantly from 7.8% to 17.5%.

Figure 5 - Share of World Merchandise Trade of Article XII Members

Source: *WTO Statistics Database*

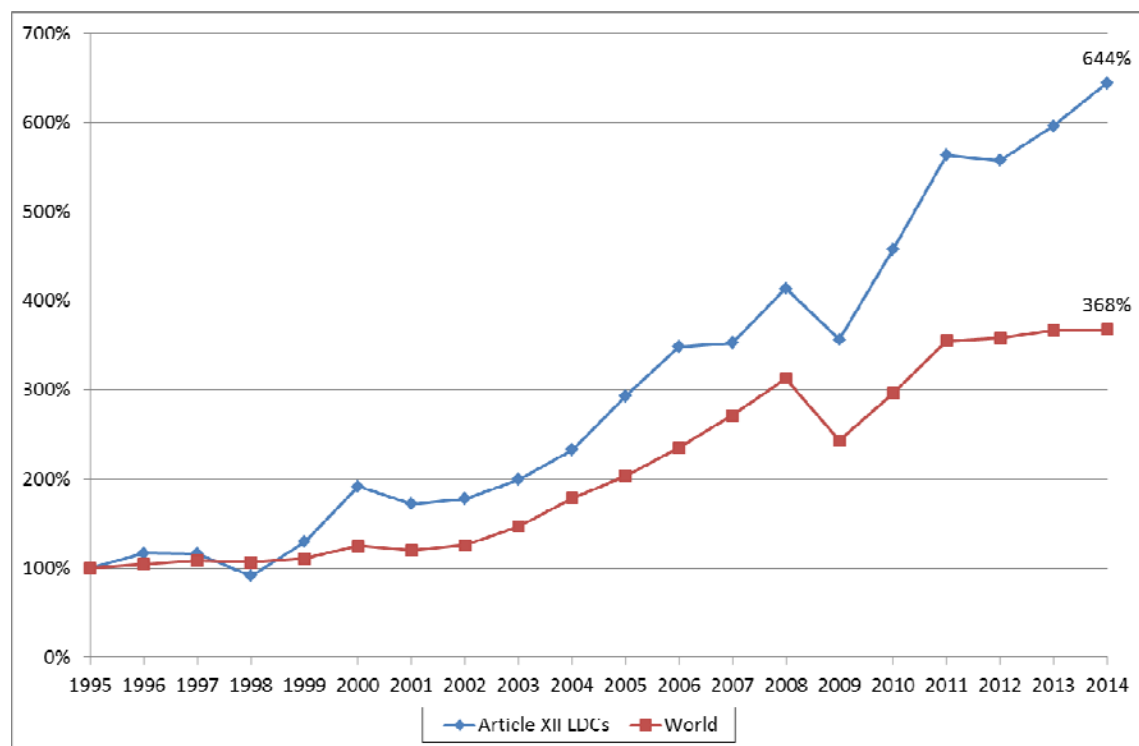
Trade and Economic Performance of Article XII LDC Members

111. Since the establishment of the WTO in 1995, the value of world merchandise exports grew by 268% at an average annual growth rate of 7.1%. Against this background and given the established stronger performance of Article XII Members when considered as a group, individual cases are also worth mentioning. Seven of the Members which joined the Organization under Article XII acceded as LDCs³⁵. The disaggregated data show that the value of merchandise exports Article XII Members which acceded as LDCs registered, grew twice as fast when compared to global merchandise trade value.

112. The value of LDCs which are Article XII merchandise exports grew, in the period 1995 to 2014 by 544% at an average annual growth rate of 10.3%. With the exception of Nepal and Vanuatu, other Article XII Members which acceded as LDCs merchandise exports grew faster than the world average, hence gaining market shares. Individual performances in the period 1995 to 2014 worth noting include Cambodia whose value of merchandise exports grew by 1163% at an average annual growth rate of 14.3% and Cabo Verde whose value of merchandise export expanded by 907% at an average annual growth rate of 12.9%.

³⁵ Cabo Verde and Samoa acceded to the WTO as Least-developed countries (LDCs). Cabo Verde graduated from LDC status in December 2007; and Samoa graduated in January 2014. The other Article XII Members which acceded as LDCs were Cambodia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Vanuatu and Yemen.

Figure 6 - Value of merchandise exports of Article XII Members: 1995-2014
(Index, 1995=100)



IX. CONCLUSIONS - OUTLOOK 2016

113. My report to Members this year indicates strong and remarkable progress on accessions. Membership has been increased. The process *per se* and the results have advanced the objectives and core values of the WTO. We are closer to the strategic goal of universality of membership. WTO rules extend to cover 98% of the global economy. The WTO has used the accession process to reconfirm and extend acceptance of the core values of an integrated global market economy, trade openness, good governance and a system based on the rule of law.

114. In the past twenty years, 33 accessions have been completed; 36 with the addition of Kazakhstan³⁶, Liberia³⁷ and Afghanistan³⁸ in 2015. Overall, this is a strong record that has kept the WTO relevant, contemporary and credible.

115. Yet there is work to be done and, we should now turn our attention to the remaining 2%. Nineteen (19) established Working Parties represent work at various levels of activity and progress. Several are active. Others are in a domestic preparatory stage. Some are inactive and dormant. Every accession negotiation provides opportunities for conclusion. I am confident that Members stand ready, with Secretariat support, to support those Acceding Governments, who are ready to take the domestic reform decisions that are required to complete their accession negotiations. Regardless of development status, there are no short-cuts in accession negotiations because WTO membership is a "contract", based on a rules-defined balance of rights and obligations.

116. In 2016, the LDCs shall retain the priority focus of the WTO in time, resource and effort. The accessions of Ethiopia and Comoros reflect technical activity. Actual progress, however, will depend on submission of substantive negotiating inputs. Ample Secretariat resources are in place to provide support when the negotiating substance is in place.

117. Regionally, the results from the Third China Round Table in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, make self-evident the necessity for the WTO to increase its engagement with Central Asia. I carefully reviewed "The Dushanbe Statement"³⁹ addressed to me, as Director-General, from the Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan Mr. Nematullo Hikmatullozoda, on behalf of Round Table participants. Attention was drawn to the significant challenges facing the region and scope for WTO engagement to support the region in particular on questions of trade facilitation and WTO-assisted accession reforms. Central Asia merits the increased attention and focus of the Organization. We aim for deeper engagement with the region. In 2016 we will be exploring and engaging deeper with the region to ascertain how the WTO can more effectively support their efforts for improved connectivity and integration to regional and global markets. Central Asia is a growth frontier in the global economy.

118. Focus will be sustained on the accessions of Algeria, Belarus, Comoros, Ethiopia and The Bahamas, based on substance. The pace of these accessions will depend on the integrated submission of negotiating inputs for comprehensive review and for dynamic engagement members. The authorities in Minsk have been in direct contact with me. Belarus has underlined that its WTO accession is "a national goal" and priority. The WTO is ready and set to assist an expedited accession process for Belarus on the basis of substance, sustained engagement and required decisions.

119. Beyond work underway, in active Working Parties, there are existing applications to be considered and signalled expressions of interest. In April this year, Timor Leste applied for membership. The application will be circulated when Timor Leste submits the requirement of its

³⁶ Protocol of Accession has been ratified although Instrument of Accession is yet to be deposited with the Director-General.

³⁷ Formal decision shall be taken at the Tenth Ministerial Conference on the Accession Package adopted *ad referendum* at the final meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Liberia on 6 October 2015.

³⁸ Formal decision should be taken at the Tenth Ministerial Conference on the Draft Accession Package scheduled for adoption *ad referendum* at the final meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on 11 November 2015.

³⁹ WT/ACC/24; WT/MIN(15)/1; WT/GC/170; WT/COMTD/LDC/23: "The Dushanbe Statement", 8 June 2015.

"Statement of Foreign Trade Regime". In April 2012, South Sudan – the newest state in the international community – applied for Observer Status, preparatory to initiating accession negotiations.⁴⁰ This application will be considered at the appropriate moment. Somalia and Turkmenistan have signalled expressions of interest.

120. Better designed, focused and tailored technical and capacity-building to support WTO accession negotiations will remain critical. Equally, critical will be improved coordination of multilateral and bilateral effort. We will follow-up and revert to Members on the pressing necessity for WTO Post-Accession technical assistance to ensure that new Members operate to strengthen the rules-based MTS and that the multilateral and bilateral development communities operate in a coordinated network to also ensure the gains from trade.

121. Notwithstanding the obvious challenges of hard decisions on domestic reforms that are integral to successful accession negotiations, we are confident of the year ahead. Members stand ready and are set to support, as soon as the substantive rules-based conditions are met. As Director-General, I reconfirm that the Secretariat remains at your service. The year ahead holds promise and opportunities for those countries that show the political determination and technical engagement that are fundamental to the success of any process of accession. I look forward to the work in the year ahead with Members and Acceding Governments.

⁴⁰ WT/L/852: Republic of South Sudan – Request for Observer Status, 20 April 2012.

ANNEX 1 - ACCESSIONS DIVISION WORK INDICATORS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2015

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
2015	6 Afghanistan (1), Azerbaijan (1), Liberia (3), Kazakhstan (1)	3 Kazakhstan (1), Liberia (2)	2 Kazakhstan (1), Liberia (1)	3 Azerbaijan (1), Kazakhstan (1), Liberia (1)	9	22 including, <i>inter alia</i> : - Dushanbe Third China Round Table - Nairobi Fourth China Round Table	1 Kazakhstan, formal action by the General Council ¹	12	1 (WT/ACC/25, WT/GC/174, WT/MIN(15)/7)	3 African Group and LDCs' Consultative Group; Sub-Committee on LDCs; GRULAC

Source: Accessions Division internal data.

¹ 27 July 2015.

ANNEX 2 - ACCESSIONS NEGOTIATED PURSUANT TO ARTICLE XII

Government*	Membership Date	Working Party Report	Goods Schedule	Services Schedule	Protocol of Accession	Ministerial Conference / 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
		WT/MIN(01)/3	Add.1	Add.2		
16. Chinese Taipei	01/01/2002	WT/ACC/TPKM/18	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/433	WT/L/433
		WT/MIN(01)/4	Add.1	Add.2		
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	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/644	WT/L/644
		WT/MIN(05)/4				
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	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/841	WT/MIN(11)/28
		WT/MIN(11)/7				WT/L/841
27. Samoa	10/05/2012	WT/ACC/SAM/30	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/840	WT/MIN(11)/27
		WT/MIN(11)/1				WT/L/840
28. Russian Federation	22/08/2012	WT/ACC/RUS/70	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/839	WT/MIN(11)/24
		WT/MIN(11)/2				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/MIN(13)/24
					WT/L/905	WT/L/905
33. Seychelles	26/04/2015	WT/ACC/SYC/64	Add.1	Add.2	WT/L/944	WT/L/944

* Sorted by date of Membership.

ANNEX 3 - WTO ACCESSIONS WORKING PARTY (WP) CHAIRPERSONS

No.	Government	Date WP established	WP Chairperson*	Geneva-based (Y/N)
1.	Afghanistan	13 December 2004	H.E. Mr. Roderick <u>van Schreven</u> (Netherlands)	Y
2.	Algeria	17 June 1987	H.E. Mr. Alberto Pedro <u>D'Alotto</u> (Argentina)	Y
3.	Andorra	22 October 1997	Vacant	
4.	Azerbaijan	16 July 1997	H.E. Mr. Walter <u>Lewalter</u> (Germany)	N
5.	The Bahamas	18 July 2001	H.E. Mr. Wayne <u>McCook</u> (Jamaica)	Y
6.	Belarus	27 October 1993	H.E. Mr. Haluk <u>Ilicak</u> (Turkey)	Y
7.	Bhutan	6 October 1999	H.E. Dr. Thomas <u>Hajnoczi</u> (Austria)	Y
8.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	15 July 1999	Vacant	
9.	Comoros, Union of the	9 October 2007	H.E. Mr. Luis Enrique <u>Chávez Basagoitia</u> (Peru)	Y
10.	Equatorial Guinea	5 February 2008	Vacant	
11.	Ethiopia	10 February 2002	H.E. Dr. Steffen <u>Smidt</u> (Denmark)	Y
12.	Iran	26 May 2005	Vacant	
13.	Iraq	13 December 2004	H.E. Mr. Omar <u>Hilale</u> (Morocco)	N
14.	Lebanese Republic	14 April 1999	H.E. Mr. Jean-Paul <u>Thuillier</u> (France)	Y
15.	Liberia	18 December 2007	H.E. Mr. Joakim <u>Reiter</u> (Sweden/Deputy-Secretary General UNCTAD)	Y
16.	Libya	27 July 2004	Mr. Victor <u>Echevarría Ugarte</u> (Spain)	N
17.	Sao Tomé and Príncipe	26 May 2005	Vacant	
18.	Serbia	15 February 2005	H.E. Mrs. Marie-Claire <u>Swärd Capra</u> (Sweden)	N
19.	Sudan	25 October 1994	Vacant	
20.	Syrian Arab Republic	4 May 2010	Vacant	
21.	Uzbekistan	21 December 1994	H.E. Mr. Seokyoung <u>Choi</u> (Korea)	N

* As of November 2015.

ANNEX 4 – LENGTH OF TIME OF COMPLETED ACCESSIONS

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

Overall Average	10 years 3 months
LDCs Accessions	13 years 5 months
Non-LDCs Accessions	9 years 9 months

* Least-developed country (LDC). Cabo Verde and Samoa acceded to the WTO as LDCs. They graduated from LDC status in 2007 and in 2014, respectively.

ANNEX 5 - SECTION VI-DATA ON SELECTED OBLIGATIONS IN WORKING PARTY REPORTS

FRAMEWORK FOR MAKING AND ENFORCING POLICIES

To date, twenty-nine¹ Article XII Members undertook fifty-seven commitments in the section on "Framework for Making and Enforcing Policies" in the Reports of their Accession Working Parties. These are commitments to:²

- confirm the international status of the WTO Agreement and its precedence over national legislation;³
- respect WTO commitments at the RTA level;⁴
- apply WTO provisions uniformly throughout the entire customs territory and other territories under Members' control, including in regions engaging in border trade or frontier traffic, special economic zones, and other areas where special regimes for tariffs, taxes and regulations are established;⁵
- confirm that sub-central authorities shall have no jurisdiction or autonomous authority over issues covered by WTO provisions;⁶
- confirm also that all laws, regulations and other measures of sub-central authorities comply with the WTO provisions⁷ and are administered in a uniform, impartial and reasonable manner,⁸ and all measures taken by sub-central authorities that are inconsistent with the WTO Agreement are eliminated or nullified;⁹
- establish the obligation that when apprised of a situation where WTO provisions are not being applied or are applied in a non-uniform manner, central authorities shall act to enforce WTO provisions without requiring affected parties to petition through courts;¹⁰
- confirm and elaborate the right of traders to appeal administrative rulings on matters subject to the WTO Agreement to an independent tribunal (i.e., the provision of the right to an independent review) in conformity with the WTO commitments, including but not limited to Article X:3(b) of the GATT 1994, and the relevant provisions of the SCM Agreement, the Agreement on Customs Valuation, the TRIPS Agreement and the GATS;¹¹

¹ These are: Albania, Armenia, Cambodia, Cape Verde, China, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Nepal, Oman, Russian Federation, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Chinese Taipei, Tajikistan, Tonga, Ukraine, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and, Yemen.

² Note: in footnotes 3-20, unless otherwise specified, a reference to a Member means a reference to the Report of the respective accession Working Party.

³ Estonia, paragraph 30; Jordan, paragraph 43; Croatia, paragraph 41; Armenia, paragraphs 36 and 37; Viet Nam, paragraph 119; Vanuatu, paragraph 31.

⁴ Kazakhstan, paragraphs 208 and 250; Russian Federation, paragraphs 183 and 214.

⁵ Albania, paragraph 38; Armenia, paragraph 36; Cape Verde, paragraph 60; China, paragraph 73 and WTO document WT/L/432: Protocol on the Accession of the Peoples Republic of China, paragraph. 2(A)1; Croatia, paragraph 41; Estonia, paragraph 30; Georgia, paragraph 40; Jordan, paragraph 43; Kazakhstan, paragraph 208; Lao PDR, paragraph 55; Lithuania, paragraph 29; Moldova, paragraph 48; Montenegro, paragraph 59; Russian Federation, paragraph 214; Samoa, paragraph 58; Saudi Arabia, paragraph 88; Seychelles, paragraph 96; Tajikistan, paragraph 76; Tonga, paragraph 48; Ukraine, paragraph 84; Vanuatu, paragraph 31; Viet Nam, paragraph 134; and Yemen, paragraph 59.

⁶ Albania, paragraph 38; Armenia, paragraph 36; China, paragraph 70; Croatia, paragraph 41; Estonia, paragraph 30; Jordan, paragraph 43; Latvia, paragraph 30; Lithuania, paragraph 29; Moldova, paragraph 48; Montenegro, paragraphs 56 and 59; Samoa, paragraph 58; Seychelles, paragraph 96; Tajikistan, paragraph 76; Tonga, paragraph 48; Ukraine, paragraph 84; and, Vanuatu, paragraph 31.

⁷ China, paragraph 70; Estonia, paragraph 30; Georgia, paragraph 40; Kyrgyz Republic, paragraph 26; and, Moldova, paragraph 48.

⁸ WTO document WT/L/432: Protocol on the Accession of the Peoples Republic of China, paragraph 2(A)2.

⁹ Kyrgyz Republic, paragraph 28; Latvia, paragraph 30; Albania, paragraph 38; Chinese Taipei, paragraph 15; and Armenia, paragraph 36.

¹⁰ Albania, paragraph 38; Armenia, paragraph 36; Cabo Verde, paragraph 60; Estonia, paragraph 30; Georgia, paragraph 40; Jordan, paragraph 43; Lao PDR, paragraph 55; Lithuania, paragraph 29; Moldova, paragraph 48; Montenegro, paragraph 59; Samoa, paragraph 58; Saudi Arabia, paragraph 88; Tajikistan, paragraph 76; Tonga, paragraph 36; Ukraine, paragraph 84; Vanuatu, paragraph 31; Viet Nam, paragraph 134; and, Yemen, paragraph 59.

¹¹ Armenia, paragraph 34; Cabo Verde, paragraph 66; Cambodia, paragraph 36; Croatia, paragraph 37; Georgia, paragraph 35; Kazakhstan, paragraph 209; Kyrgyz Republic, paragraph 26; Lao PDR, paragraph 52; Montenegro, paragraph 56; Oman, paragraph 32; Russian Federation, paragraph 215; Samoa, paragraph 54;

- establish the definition of a special mechanism¹² or a tribunal responsible for prompt review of all administrative actions relating to the implementation of laws, regulations, judicial decisions and administrative rulings of general application,¹³ to be established/designated and operated, and the government authorities shall act promptly to address the situation, and inform the individual or entity of the decision or action taken in writing,¹⁴ with an opportunity to appeal;¹⁵
- establish the obligation that such tribunals shall be impartial and independent of the agency entrusted with administrative enforcement and shall have no substantial interest in the outcome of the matter;¹⁶
- confirm the adoption of all laws and legislative instruments necessary for the application of WTO commitments prior to accession.¹⁷ Should a transition period be granted, provide that all measures inconsistent with WTO provisions shall be revised or annulled,¹⁸ and all central government measures be fully implemented in a timely manner, or the accession commitments shall be otherwise honoured;¹⁹
- confirm the obligation to have the WTO Agreement as the legal basis of trade with other members and to ensure consistency with WTO rules.²⁰

Saudi Arabia, paragraph 85; Seychelles, paragraph 94; Tajikistan, paragraph 71; Ukraine, paragraph 92; Viet Nam, paragraph 135; and, Yemen, paragraph 57.

¹² China, paragraph 75 and WTO document WT/L/432: Protocol on the Accession of the Peoples Republic of China, paragraphs 2(D)1 and 2(D)2; and, Russian Federation, paragraph 214.

¹³ Nepal, paragraph 31; and Tonga, paragraph 43.

¹⁴ China, paragraph 75 and WTO document WT/L/432: Protocol on the Accession of the Peoples Republic of China, paragraphs 2(D)1 and 2(D)2; and, Russian Federation, paragraph 214.

¹⁵ Nepal, paragraph 31; and Tonga, paragraph 43.

¹⁶ Cabo Verde, paragraph 66; China, paragraph 78; Nepal, paragraph 31; Viet Nam, paragraph 60; and, Yemen, paragraph 57.

¹⁷ Armenia, paragraph 37.

¹⁸ China, paragraphs 68, 70 and 78.

¹⁹ China, paragraph 68.

²⁰ Russian Federation, paragraph 209.

ANNEX 6 - SECTION VIII-DATA ON ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Table 1 - Value of Merchandise Trade and Year-on-Year Percentage Change: 1995-2014

(Billion dollars and percentage)

		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Article XII Members	Value	846	899	963	888	929	1,191	1,177	1,341	1,722	2,271	2,797	3,404	4,132	5,008	3,922	5,180	6,448	6,770	7,121	7,193
	Year-on-year percentage change		6.2%	7.1%	-7.8%	4.6%	28.3%	-1.2%	13.9%	28.5%	31.9%	23.1%	21.7%	21.4%	21.2%	-21.7%	32.1%	24.5%	5.0%	5.2%	1.0%
World	Value	10,453	10,953	11,331	11,186	11,645	13,183	12,679	13,242	15,459	18,797	21,379	24,592	28,353	32,732	25,337	30,812	36,841	37,209	37,980	38,093
	Year-on-year percentage change		4.8%	3.5%	-1.3%	4.1%	13.2%	-3.8%	4.4%	16.7%	21.6%	13.7%	15.0%	15.3%	15.4%	-22.6%	21.6%	19.6%	1.0%	2.1%	0.3%

Source: WTO Statistics Database.

Table 2 - Value of Trade in Commercial Services* and Year-on-Year Percentage Change: 1995-2014

(Billion dollars and percentage)

		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Article XII Members	Value	154	167	187	175	177	198	206	232	269	342	413	499	634	739	654	780	902	1,007	1,094	1,170
	Year-on-year percentage change		8.5%	12.4%	-6.4%	0.8%	11.9%	4.3%	12.6%	16.0%	27.1%	20.8%	20.7%	27.2%	16.5%	-11.4%	19.1%	15.7%	11.6%	8.6%	6.9%
World	Value	2,369	2,536	2,629	2,653	2,784	2,955	2,975	3,159	3,644	4,396	5,121	5,772	6,876	7,782	6,928	7,569	8,465	8,756	9,254	9,722
	Year-on-year percentage change		7.1%	3.7%	0.9%	4.9%	6.1%	0.7%	6.2%	15.4%	20.6%	16.5%	12.7%	19.1%	13.2%	-11.0%	9.3%	11.8%	3.4%	5.7%	5.1%

* 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.

Source: WTO Statistics Database.

ANNEX 7 - ACCESSIONS MANAGEMENT

Table 1 - Accession Working Party Management

Accession Working Party	Code	Secretary	Co-Secretary	Administrative Manager/Support
Chiedu Osakwe, Director, Accessions Division				
1. Afghanistan* ¹	AFG	Varyanik	Mohammady	Evans
2. Algeria	DZA	Sekkate	Zheng	Tandara-Stenier
3. Andorra	AND	accessions@wto.org	No Activity	
4. Azerbaijan	AZE	Pardo de León	Varyanik	Evans
5. Bahamas	BHS	Lee	Varyanik	Tandara-Stenier
6. Belarus	BLR	Oshikawa	Sekkate Varyanik	Tandara-Stenier Evans
7. Bhutan*	BTN	Oshikawa	Mohammady	Tandara-Stenier
8. Bosnia and Herzegovina	BIH	Beslać	Lekić	Tandara-Stenier
9. Comoros, Union of the*	COM	Sekkate	Zheng	Tandara-Stenier
10. Equatorial Guinea*	GNQ	Pardo de León	Anaedu	Evans
11. Ethiopia*	ETH	Pardo de León	Anaedu Chemutai	Evans
12. Iran, the Islamic Republic of	IRN	Varyanik	Sekkate	Evans
13. Iraq	IRQ	Varyanik	Lee	Evans
14. Lebanese Republic	LBN	Sekkate	Pardo de León	Evans
15. Liberia* ²	LBR	Lee	Varyanik	Evans
16. Libya	LBY	Pardo de León	Sekkate	Evans
17. Sao Tome et Principe*	STP	Pardo de León	Zheng	Evans
18. Serbia	SRB	Beslać	Varyanik	Tandara-Stenier
19. Sudan*	SDN	Sekkate	Lee Chemutai	Evans
20. Syrian Arab Republic	SYR	Beslać	Lekić	Evans
21. Uzbekistan	UZB	Lee	Varyanik Mohammady	Tandara-Stenier

Expression of Interest

Country	Code	Focal Point	Co-Focal Point	Administrative Manager/Support
1. Kosovo	XKX	Beslać	Lekić	Tandara-Stenier
2. Somalia*	SOM	Sekkate	Chemutai	Tandara-Stenier
3. South Sudan* ³	SSD	Varyanik	Chemutai	Evans
4. Timor-Leste* ⁴	TLS	Varyanik	Anaedu	Evans
5. Turkmenistan	TKM	Oshikawa	Lee	Evans

* Least-developed countries (LDCs)

¹ 5th and Final Working Party Meeting took place on 11 November 2015 at which the Draft Accession Package of Afghanistan was adopted *ad referendum*. Formal Approval of the Package will take place at the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, scheduled for 15-18 December 2015.

² 4th and Final Working Party Meeting took place on 6 October 2015 at which the Draft Accession Package of Liberia was adopted *ad referendum*. Formal Approval of the Package will take place at the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, scheduled for 15-18 December 2015.

³ Application circulated (WT/L/852), but not yet considered by the General Council.

⁴ Application received on 9 April 2015, waiting for a statement on the foreign trade regime.

Table 2 - Non-Working Party Workload Distribution

Responsibility	Professional/Focal Point	Administrative Manager/ Support
Director-General's Annual Accession Reports	Director & Professional (rotating) (2015: Varyanik)	Evans
Assisting the Director / Acting in the absence of the Director	Oshikawa	Tandara-Stenier
Informal Group on Accessions	Pardo de León Co-Secretary: Mohammady	Tandara-Stenier
WTO Accessions Newsletter (monthly)	Director & Varyanik	Tandara-Stenier
China Programme / Accessions Interns Pillar I	Oshikawa / Tandara-Stenier	
China Programme / Round Tables Pillar II	Oshikawa / Anaedu / Chemutai	Tandara-Stenier
TA Focal Point / Annual Outreach	Pardo de León / Interns	Tandara-Stenier
LDC Focal Point	Oshikawa / Chemutai	Evans
Post-Accession Support Databases:	Oshikawa / WP Secretaries	Tandara-Stenier / Evans
– Accessions Commitments Database (ACDB)	Sekkate (Maintenance)	Zheng (Data transfer)
– Market Access Register	Varyanik / Sekkate	Evans
– Accessions Intelligence Portal (AIP)	Beslać / Evans	Lekić
– Trade performance of Article XII Members	Sekkate / Chemutai (Maintenance / Market Intelligence Section)	Evans
Accessions Website Update	Working Party Secretaries	Tandara-Stenier / Evans
Accessions Annual Output Plan	Sekkate	Evans
Accessions Book Project	Beslać	Evans (Divisional Editor)
WTO @20 Focal Point	Oshikawa / Beslać/ Anaedu	Tandara-Stenier

ACCESSIONS STAFF DISPOSITION:

- Director;
- 6 Professionals;
- 2 Administrative Managers; and,
- 4 rotating China's LDCs and Accessions Programme interns.