

NEWSLETTER FOR ACCEDING GOVERNMENTS

The first meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions in 2012 took place today, 31 January 2012. At today's meeting, the Secretariat consulted with Members on the evolving calendar of accessions meetings for 2012. Twenty-six delegations attended the meeting, including the Ambassadors of China, Georgia, Panama and Saudi Arabia; and, the ASEAN Coordinator (Thailand).

The Director of the Accessions Division (Mr. Chiedu Osakwe) conveyed to Members the appreciation of the Director-General for the results achieved in 2012 and the hope of the Director-General that "the momentum would be sustained in 2012". He noted, however, that progress and harvest of the four priority areas of focus would also depend on timely and substantive submissions by acceding governments. The DG was working in close coordination with the Working Party Chairpersons on these accessions.

The Chairperson Ambassador Yi (China) of the Working Party on the Accession of Lao PDR, briefed Members on his recent visit to the Acceding Government, where he met with the Prime-Minister and participated in a session of the National Steering Committee on WTO Accession. Members welcomed this transparency exercise. With regard to Lao PDR, Thailand, on behalf of ASEAN, stressed: (i) its continued support to the Working Party Chairperson; and (ii) the need for the early harvest of this 2012 LDC Accession Priority. The EU informed the IGA that it would continue to provide TA to ensure Lao PDR's compliance with WTO rules. With regard to the second LDC Accession Priority, namely, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the Arab Group, and Jordan requested Members to: (i) work in close coordination with the new Reconciliation Government in Yemen to conclude this accession at the Working Party Meeting, and (ii) provide technical assistance and capacity building activities.

Members were also briefed on the implementation status of "China's LDCs and Accessions Programme". The implementation of the programme was well underway with the first two interns already working in the Accessions Division. Mr. Osakwe also noted that a roundtable on accessions best practices, also under the umbrella of "China's LDCs and Accessions Programme", was envisaged in May of this year in China.

Due to the continued heavy accessions programme envisaged for 2012 and the pre-eminence of

ACCESSIONS MEETING SCHEDULE – EVOLVING CALENDAR ³

31 January 2012

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation		Conf Office Advised
					French Spanish English	Own	
[23 February 2012]	Azerbaijan	Agriculture Plurilateral	Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)	CR II	no	tbc	¥
[24 February 2012]		th Working Party Meeting	Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)	CR II	yes	tbc	¥
[8, 9 March 2012 tbc]	Tajikistan	^{7th} Working Party Meeting	Convening Notice Pending	CR I	yes	tbc	¥
		Plurilateral on Agriculture	Convening Notice Pending	CR II	no	tbc	¥
[16 March 2012]	Lao PDR	th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)	CR II	yes	tbc	¥
[19 March 2012]	Belarus	Informal/Formal Meeting	Convening Notice Pending	D	yes	tbc	¥
[26 March 2012]	Yemen	Informal/Formal Meeting	Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)	E	yes	tbc	¥
[29 March 2012]	Serbia	th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (PM Only)	D	yes	tbc	¥
[20 April 2012]	Kazakhstan	Informal/Formal Meeting	Convening Notice Pending	S1	no	tbc	¥
[27 April 2012]	Seychelles	rd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM Only)	S1	yes	no	¥
[second quarter 2012]	Afghanistan	nd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no	
[second quarter 2012]	Algeria	th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	tbc	
[second quarter 2012]	Ethiopia	rd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	tbc	
[second quarter 2012]	The Bahamas	nd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	tbc	

[14-15 February 2012]