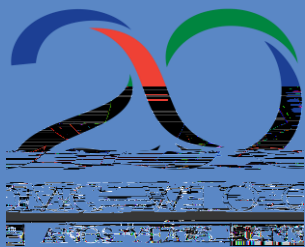


# WTO ACCESSIONS NEWSLETTER



« V D I H J X D U e l a r g i n g and strengthening the rules -based multilateral trading system

WTO ACCESSION DEVELOPMENTS ± SECRETARIAT REPORT TO MEMBERS

Seventh Session of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) <sup>2</sup> 23 July 2015

## Agenda:

- ± Progress Report on Accessions in 2015 Focus Liberia and Kazakhstan
- ± Accession Working Parties under Maintenance Belarus and Bahamas
- ± Accession developments <sup>2</sup> Expeast

### -Developed countries (LDCs)

**Liberia:** This LDC 2015 accession priority is rapidly maturing. The Liberian Negotiating Team led by Minister Axel Addy, the Chief Negotiator in Geneva for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle of WP Meetings **Bilateral track** All bilateral market access agreements between Liberia and 6 Signatory Members have been concluded. The signing ceremonies of the bilateral agreements with Canada, the European Union, Thailand and the United States have taken place. WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo has paid tribute to these Members who continued to support, strongly, acceding governments, particularly the LDCs with limited negotiating capacity. The Draft Consolidated Schedules on Goods and Services had been circulated to Signatory Members on 17 July. The Technical Verification Meeting has been scheduled for 28 July. **Multilateral track** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Working Party Meeting is scheduled for today, 23 July. In advance of the meeting the revised Draft Working Party (DWPR) had been circulated, with its corrigendum. The revised DWPR, circulated to Members of WP on 30 June, is in its close final form. Monrovia has made high level policy decisions on domestic reforms associated with its accession. Recent work included, the rationalization of the structure of fees and charges for services rendered and excise tax removal of internal discriminatory measures and barriers to trade and regulatory projects associated with raising domestic standards to global levels and best practices. Members acknowledged that Liberian President H.E. Ms Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was a strong reformer dedicated to accelerating the growth of her country and enhancing its welfare.

Members were informed that at the recently concluded Third UN International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo met with Ambassador Joakim Reiter, Chairman of the Working Party, to take stock of Liberia's WTO accession negotiations. President Johnson Sirleaf reaffirmed Liberia's commitment to WTO-consistent reforms and the 2015 WTO Accession of Liberia, as a priority for her government.

## 2015 Accessions "Deliverable"

### Kazakhstan

On Monday, 27 July 2015, the WTO General Council would consider for formal adoption the Report of the Working Party on the Accession of the Republic of Kazakhstan document WT/ACC/KAZ/93, together with the two addenda containing the Goods and Services Schedule. This would be the first agenda item of the upcoming General Council.

## 2015 Accessions Maintenance

**Belarus:** The Delegation of Belarus is in contact with the Secretariat on a technical basis for the resumption of its Accession Working Party, following the conclusion of the Working Party on the Accession of Kazakhstan in June.

**Bahamas:** The Bahamas had signalled its intent to start its Accession negotiations. Recently, Nassau had submitted 1 Negotiating Inputs, which included: (i) its Factual Summary; (ii) an updated Legislative Action Plan, and, (iii) three pieces of legislation (the Value Added Tax Act 2014; Value Added Tax Regulations 2014; and Protection of Revenue Order). The Secretariat was processing the inputs and would provide Nassau with a feedback on the substance of the submission with the overall purpose of facilitating the Accession. The submitted inputs would be circulated as soon as the processing had been completed in accordance with WTO standards. At this stage, the next meeting of the Working Party meeting could be envisaged in the second half of November.





ACCESSIONS TOOLBOX