

SECOND GLOBAL SEMINAR ON WTO ACCESSIONS
SAUDI ARABIA 10-YEAR WTO ACCESSION SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY SESSION
ACCESSIONS BOOK LAUNCH BY WTO DIRECTOR-GENERAL ROBERTO AZEVEDO

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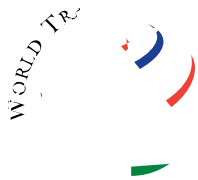
1. On behalf of our WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo, thank you all for accepting our invitation and coming to participate in this programme of activities to commemorate 20 years of WTO Accessions.

2. This Programme starts today with the Second Global Seminar on WTO Accessions. It continues tomorrow with a dedicated Special Anniversary Session to celebrate 10 years of the WTO Accession of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We shall conclude on 30 September at mid-day with the launch of the Accessions Book by WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo.

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5. The activities in the Programme provide a systemic opportunity to review the results of 20 years of WTO accession negotiations and discuss their impact on the rules-based Multilateral Trading System, on Article XII Members and, on international cooperation for trade.



6. There is a longstanding and pervasive radical angst, frequently re-cycled, in the Multilateral Trading System. It takes several forms: for instance, that the Multilateral Trading System is not working, not working satisfactorily, deadlocked, not "delivering", etc. Coupled to this, is the thesis being peddled, particularly by the so called analysts and pundits, about the relevance, credibility and existential crisis of the WTO. This ruing and hand-wringing about the WTO - a sackcloth and ashes approach - is not useful and a major distraction to the work of the Organization.

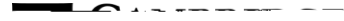
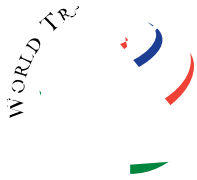
7. Last week, at the Peterson Institute in Washington DC, the Director-General robustly addressed these questions. , the Director-General said: the record shows that we can deliver multilaterally, although we need to deliver more, and to deliver it more quickly.

8. This is how the Director-General concluded: "Indeed, I am positive about the future of the Organization".

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9. So, we will show how the WTO has "delivered" on accessions with major effects:

- provided Acceding Governments with an instrument for domestic reforms, transformation and modernization;
- improved market access, significantly;
- updated systemic trade rules, not only by clarifying, but by deepening the rules;
- innovating and upgrading existing multilateral instruments, such as the architecture of schedules;
- contributed to wider global acceptance of



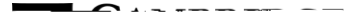
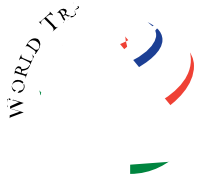
12. Let us apply this question to the work of the WTO on accessions and review what the WTO has achieved in 20 years, if we go back in time.

13. In the first twenty years, between 1995 and 2015, the Organization has been engaged with 55 accession negotiations. Thirty-four (34) have been completed. Twenty-one (21) remain. What if time would flow backwards, are there things we should have done differently? Well, let us think about this in terms of what the Organization has accomplished.

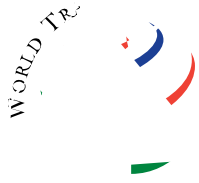
14. Here is the big picture of what has resulted from 20 years of work so far and its effects.

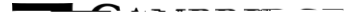
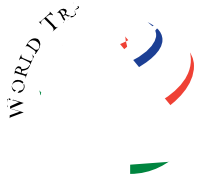
First, construction of an integrated, inter-dependent global market economy. Accession negotiations have been the principal multilateral mechanism for the of the authoritarian states and centrally planned economies (that emerged from the 1980s unravelling of the Former Yugoslavia and the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union), and their to the WTO core values of an integrated market economy, rule of law, transparency and good governance; and, membership of an Organization based on a balance of rights and obligations; this remains work in progress.

Second, WTO Enlargement: The Article XII mandate is the means by which the Organization implements its strategic objective of universality of membership.



16. There have been WTO – pluses. However, these have been good for the system.
17. Let us consider a few specifics.
18. On market access, the integration of Article XII members to the rules-based Multilateral Trading System has significantly lowered trade barriers and expanded trade opportunities over the past 20 years.
19. On tariffs,
 - On binding coverage, Article XII members have set tariff ceilings for virtually 100% of all their agricultural and non-agricultural products, while WTO original members have, on average, "bound" only 75% of their product tariffs;
 - the average FBR for original members on "All Products", is 45.5% compared to 13.8% for Article XII Members;
 - 65.4% on average FBR on agriculture for original members, compared to 20.1% for Article XII Member; and,
 - 34.0% on NAMA for original members, compared to 12.9% for Article XII Members.
20. In other words, the tariff concessions and specific commitments undertaken by Article XII members provide for a greater degree of predictability and transparency for business operators.
21. The results are similarly positive and substantive in the area of services. Article XII members have undertaken, on average, specific commitments in more than 100 services sub-sectors, while the average for original WTO members is only 50 sub-sectors.
22. The scope and depth of accession-specific commitments have broadened significantly, clarifying, deepening and updating the rules across several areas such as Trading Rights, SPS, TBT, Intellectual Property, State Trading, State Invested and State-Owned Enterprises, Framework for Making and Enforcing Policies, Transit Obligations.
23. Accession negotiations have contributed to innovating on instruments of the rules-based MTS. For instance, the Russian Federation Accession contributed to improvements on the GATT '47 architecture by creating Part V to stabilize and provide transparency on Export Duties.
24. Accession obligations have been used to leverage and expand the membership of specific WTO Agreements such as the GPA. The data shows that two-thirds (or 71%) of all Article XII





44. . / Thank you, Uri.

45. We will now take a break and then come back for the first Panel Session at 11.00.