Accession to the WTO

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WTO Accessions - Overview

- GATT/WTO membership has increased
  - 23 in 1947/8
  - Around 125 Members in 1995
  - 148 Members today

- Currently 26 Countries acceding
  (incl.)
  - LDCs
  - Developing Countries
  - Transition Economies
WHY ACCEDE TO THE WTO?

- Globalization – Increased Trade/Investment Flows
  - Enhancing and Diversifying Commercial Relations
- WTO – “Rules & Disciplines” on International Trade
  - Membership = Seat in Negotiating Table/WTO Bodies
- Membership entails “rights” and “obligations”
  - Non-Discrimination
  - Predictability
  - Transparency
  - Progressive Improvements in Market Access
- Dispute Settlement Mechanism
Who can accede? On what terms?

AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE
WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

Article XII

Accession

1. 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. Such accession shall apply to this Agreement and the Multilateral Trade Agreements annexed thereto.

2. Decisions on accession shall be taken by the Ministerial Conference. The Ministerial Conference shall approve the agreement on the terms of accession by a two-thirds majority of the Members of the WTO.

3. Accession to a Plurilateral Trade Agreement shall be governed by the provisions of that Agreement.

- Any State or separate customs territory
- On “terms to be agreed”...
Accession Negotiations

- **Multilateral Track**
  - WTO Rules and Disciplines
  - Working Party Report
  - Accession Protocol

- **Bilateral Track**
  - Market Access Negotiations
    - Goods Schedule
    - Services Schedule
Average tariff bindings of new WTO Members: Agriculture

New Members (by date of membership)
Average tariff bindings of new WTO Members: Non-AG products

NEW MEMBERS
(by date of membership)
Other Issues...

- **Length and Complexity of WTO Accession**
  - A “political” and “technical” process
  - Reforms at the national level
  - Members’ requests (market access, “WTO+”?)
  - Technical Assistance

- **Doha Negotiations and Accessions**
  - Doha Declaration: Paragraphs 9 and 42
  - LDC Accession Guidelines
MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Adopted on 14 November 2001

9. We note with particular satisfaction that this Conference has completed the WTO accession procedures for China and Chinese Taipei. We also welcome the accession as new Members, since our last Session, of Albania, Croatia, Georgia, Jordan, Lithuania, Moldova and Oman, and note the extensive market-access commitments already made by these countries on accession. These accessions will greatly strengthen the multilateral trading system, as will those of the 28 countries now negotiating their accession. We therefore attach great importance to concluding accession proceedings as quickly as possible. In particular, we are committed to accelerating the accession of least-developed countries.

LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

42. Accession of LDCs remains a priority for the Membership. We agree to work to facilitate and accelerate negotiations with acceding LDCs. We instruct the Secretariat to reflect the priority we attach to LDCs’ accessions in the annual plans for technical assistance.
LDC Accessions

- DDA Mandate to “facilitate and accelerate”
- WTO Work Programme for LDCs
- Guidelines for LDCs’ Accessions (WT/L/508)
  - Market Access
  - WTO Rules
  - Process
  - Technical Assistance
- Cancún: Accession of Cambodia and Nepal
References & Documents (1)

- WT/ACC/1: Procedures for Negotiations under Article XII
- WT/ACC/4: Information to be Provided on Domestic Support and Export Subsidies in Agriculture
- WT/ACC/5: Information to be Provided on Policy Measures Affecting Trade in Services
- WT/ACC/8: Information to be Provided on Policy Measures with respect to SPS and TBT issues
- WT/ACC/9 and Corr.1: Information to be Provided on the Implementation of the TRIPS Agreement
References & Documents (2)

- WT/ACC/10/Rev: Technical Note on the Accession Process
- WT/ACC/11/Rev: Information on Current Accessions
- WT/ACC/12: State of Play of LDCs’ Accessions
- WT/L/508: General Council’s Decision on LDCs’ Accession