**WTO-PIFS Regional Workshop on LDC Graduation**

**22-24 October 2019, Port Vila, Vanuatu**

**Objectives**

Graduation from the LDC category is one of the overarching goals of the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs for the Decade 2011-2020. Four LDCs in the Pacific – Kiribati, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – are currently in the graduation process. A former LDC in the region – Samoa - graduated from LDC status in 2014. Assisting graduating LDCs has been a shared objective of the international community. The WTO, with the support of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), is implementing a project to support graduating LDCs, including the four LDCs in the Pacific, in better preparing to address the trade‑related implications of graduation.

This regional Workshop constitutes a key activity of the EIF-WTO project on LDC Graduation, and aims to improve the knowledge and understanding of the participants of the impact of graduation on trade, as well as the implications for other international support measures, and identity ways to address the challenges that would arise from graduation. It will provide an opportunity for the participants to examine the likely impact on their participation in the WTO. It also intends to identify options and strategies for the graduating LDCs to smoothly integrate into global economy following graduation.

**Tentative Programme**

**DAY ONE: TUESDAY, 22 October 2019**

**09:30 - 10:00 Opening Session**

Welcome remarks

- Mr. Tim Yeend, Chef de Cabinet and Principal Advisor to the WTO Director‑General

- Representative from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

- Representative from the host Government

**10:00 – 11:30 Session 1: Introduction to LDC Graduation process**

This session will discuss LDC criteria, the UN resolutions relating to graduation, the role of the Committee for Development Policy, the procedures followed for graduation and the mechanism to both monitor progress and assist LDCs in the post-graduation phase.

- United Nations Committee for Development Policy (UNCDP)

**11:30 – 11:45 *Coffee Break***

**11:45 – 13:00 Session 2: LDC Graduation and matters related to WTO Agreements**

This session will review the likely impact of graduation on the participation of graduating LDCs in the WTO, and implications for special and differential treatment under WTO Agreements. It will also examine the proposals made by the LDC Group in the WTO in the area of graduation.

- Development Division, WTO

***13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break***

**14:00 – 15:30 Session 3: LDC Graduation and market access**

This session will assess the expected impact of graduation on preferential market access. It will provide a review of non-reciprocal LDC preference schemes by major developed and developing country trading partners of LDCs, and the likely loss of preferences under those schemes.

- Development Division, WTO

***15:30 – 15:45 Coffee Break***

**15:45 – 17:00 Session 4: International Support Measures in areas other than trade**

This session will discuss the expected impact of graduation on financial and technical assistance for graduating LDCs. It will examine the types of development assistance received by graduating LDCs and trends in aid for trade. It will also highlight the implications with regard to other support measures including in the context of the UN.

- UNCDP/Commonwealth Secretariat

**DAY TWO: WEDNESDAY, 23 October 2019**

**09:30 – 10:30 Session 6: WTO and LDC Graduation**

This session will discuss the issues that the graduating LDCs could examine in the context of preparations for MC12 as well as the ongoing discussion on reforms. It will also identify potential areas of interest to graduating LDCs in the ongoing negotiations and possible strategies to pursue theses interests.

- Mr. Tim Yeend, Chef de Cabinet and Principal Advisor to the WTO Director‑General

**10:00 – 11:30 Session 7: Findings from country studies - I**

This session will discuss the findings of country-specific analysis undertaken for Solomon Islands and Vanuatu as part of the EIF-WTO LDC graduation project. It will discuss the challenges and possible options in areas of regional trade, use of trade instruments and flexibilities related to WTO rules, development cooperation as well as in the context of overall economic landscape.

- Mr. Lennox Vuti, Consultant/Pacific Island Forum Secretariat

- Development Division, WTO

***11:30 – 11:45 Coffee Break***

**11:45 – 13:00 Session 8: Findings from country studies - II**

This session will discuss the findings of country-specific analysis undertaken for Kiribati and Tuvalu as part of the EIF-WTO LDC graduation project. It will discuss the challenges and possible options in areas of regional trade, development cooperation as well as in the context of overall economic landscape.

- Mr. Lennox Vuti, Consultant/Pacific Island Forum Secretariat

- Development Division, WTO

***13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break***

**14:00 – 15:30 Session 9: Preparations by governments for graduation - I**

This session will discuss how governments are preparing to address the likely challenges that could arise from graduation. Participating governments will be invited to present their strategies and steps that they are taking to integrate smoothly into global economy following graduation.

- Solomon Islands

- Vanuatu

***15:30 – 15:45 Coffee Break***

**15:45 – 17:00 Session 10: Preparations by governments for graduation - II**

This session will continue to discuss the preparations being undertaken by governments to address the likely challenges that could arise from graduation. Participating governments will be invited to present their strategies and steps that they are taking to integrate smoothly into global economy following graduation.

- Kiribati

- Tuvalu

**DAY THREE: THURSDAY, 23 October 2019**

**09:30 – 11:30 Session 11: Experience from recently graduated countries**

This session will discuss the graduation experience of the Maldives and Samoa, which graduated from LDC status in 2011 and 2014, respectively. Participants from the Maldives and Samoa will be invited to share their experience with the graduation process, and lessons learned from their discussion with development partners.

- Maldives

- Samoa

- Development Division, WTO

- ITTC, WTO

***11:30 – 11:45 Coffee Break***

**11:45 – 13:00 Session 12: Graduation support from international agencies**

This session will discuss the technical assistance and capacity building support provided/available by international agencies to ensure smooth transition for graduating LDCs.

- EIF/UNESCAP/Commonwealth Secretariat

- ITTC, WTO

***13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break***

**14:00 – 15:15 Session 13: Options for graduating LDCs – looking ahead**

This session will discuss the main elements of a national strategy for the pre- and post‑graduation phase, including the importance of inter-Ministerial coordination and political buy-in during the run up to graduation, and identify the needs of the graduating LDCs in the medium to long term.

- Development Division, WTO

- ITTC, WTO

**15:15 – 16:00**  **Concluding Session**

This session will make an overall assessment of the Workshop, and gather the views of the participants on future work.

- ITTC, WTO

- Representative of the host Government

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