**WORKSHOP ON WTO post-ACCESSION of timor-leste**

*"Maximizing benefits from WTO membership and*

*creating greater synergies with regional integration*

*as pathway to achieve Timor-Leste's 2030 development goals**"*

*3-12 February 2025, Dili, Timor-Leste*

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the newest country in Asia which gained independence in 2002, is a strong believer in the multilateral trading system and regional integration that upholds multilateralism, enhances free trade, unimpeded movement of goods and services across the oceans and air, and contributes to a more equitable world.[[1]](#footnote-1) In this regard, the country's leadership prioritised WTO membership as stepping stone for the realization of its "twin" goal of joining the ASEAN, subsequently. With WTO and ASEAN memberships being a strategic priority for Dili, the two processes need to be coordinated, to maximize benefits and ensure that they contribute to Timor-Leste's domestic reform and development goals as an LDC, in line with its Strategic Development Plan (2011-2030) and in the context of its post-conflict recovery.

* At the WTO, Timor-Leste applied for WTO accession in April 2015. The Working Party on its Accession was established in December 2016. The Working Party had seven meetings between October 2020 and January 2024, chaired by Ambassador Amb. Rui Macieira (Portugal). This was one of the fastest moving WTO accessions to date. Formal action on Timor-Leste's accession was taken by the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi, UAE, in February 2024. Following the domestic ratification and acceptance of the terms of WTO membership, Timor-Leste became the 166th WTO Member on 30 August 2024.
  + Timor-Leste has negotiated a substantive and well-balanced WTO Accession Package, which includes 31 commitments on rules (including on Trade Facilitation, participation in ITA/ITA-II and the JI on Services Domestic Regulation, and the ratification of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies). On market access, Timor-Leste has signed agreements with 10 Members: Australia, Cambodia, Canada, EU, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and the US. The simple average of final bound rates stands at 10.7% (15.7% for agricultural products and 10% for non-agricultural products). Services commitments are undertaken in 10 services sectors, including 86 sub-sectors.
  + As part of the WTO Post-Accession Support to LDCs,[[2]](#footnote-2) the WTO Secretariat assisted Timor-Leste on the development of a WTO Post-Accession Implementation Strategy, which was presented by Timor-Leste at the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13) in Abu Dhabi, endorsed by its Council of Ministers in April 2024, and later presented at the 9th Global Review of Aid for Trade in June 2024. This Strategy provided for a roadmap for post-accession implementation of Timor-Leste's undertaken WTO commitments, including included elements on the alignment such implementation with the ongoing ASEAN accession negotiations, aiming to synchronize the two processes.
* At the regional level, Timor-Leste applied for ASEAN membership in March 2011. To become a member of ASEAN, the country needs to fully meet the organization's conditions and obligations, which include the ability to meet the requirements for participation in the three main pillars: political-security (APSC), economic (AEC), and socio-cultural (ASCC).
  + In November 2022, at the 41st ASEAN Summit, ASEAN leaders issued a statement on the Application of Timor-Leste for ASEAN membership, agreeing, in principle, to admit Timor-Leste to be the 11th member of ASEAN, to grant Timor-Leste an observer status and to allow its participation in all ASEAN meetings including the Summit plenaries and to formalize an objective criteria-based Roadmap for Timor-Leste's full membership including based on the milestones identified in the reports of the Fact-Finding Missions conducted by the three ASEAN Community pillars. The 42nd ASEAN Summit in May 2023 adopted the Roadmap for Timor-Leste’s full membership to ASEAN. The current state of play in Timor-Leste's negotiations in the context of the ASEAN Economic pillar in line with the agreed Roadmap includes:
    - Priority One Accession: 66 agreements/commitments to be acceded by Timor-Leste as part of their Accession Protocol to ASEAN;
    - Priority Two Accession: 48 agreements/commitments to be acceded by Timor-Leste within 2 years post-accession; and
    - Priority Three Accession: 106 agreements/commitments to be acceded by Timor-Leste within 5 years post-accession.
  + At the 44th and 45th ASEAN Summits in October 2024, the Chairman's statement stressed the need for Timor-Leste to implement the Roadmap and looked forward to the full and effective fulfilment of all its criteria towards its full membership. Among other things, it also underscored the importance of Timor-Leste’s accession to the ASEAN agreements as part of its accession to ASEAN, as stipulated in the Roadmap, and noted the ongoing process of Timor-Leste accession to the SEANWFZ Treaty and ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA). It welcomed Timor-Leste’s readiness to accede to all ASEAN agreements under the APSC and ASCC pillars and tasked the ACC to monitor the progress of the accession processes. It further encouraged Timor-Leste to accede to all ASEAN legal instruments under the AEC pillar.

The upcoming Workshop on WTO Post-Accession therefore has a two-fold objective: i) to assist Timor-Leste on the effective implementation of its undertaken WTO commitments, including preparation of the initial notifications, and, by doing so, ii) facilitate the process of regional integration, as a complementary pillar, by identifying the existing overlaps and synchronising the two processes. The audience of the workshop is to include government officials responsible for the WTO post-accession and ASEAN accession, including government officials at the highest level. The workshop also aims to facilitate the exchange with the National Parliament on the matters related to the legislative action, incorporate discussions with the broader audience (private sector, civil society, academia, media) and to advance dialogue with the development partners and donors, whose input is critical for supporting this LDC in the critical post-accession phase.

The proposed programme of the workshop is provided below.

***Arrival in Dili: Sunday, 2 February 2025, 13h30 – Rohini Acharya, Anna Varyanik, Usman Ali Khilji***

**Day 1 – MONDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2025**

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| **Time (OTL)** | **Session** | **Resource persons** |
| 10h00-10h20 | Opening of the WTO Post-Accession Workshop | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji  *Timor-Leste - TBC* |
| 10h20-11h20 | Overview of the WTO Accession of Timor-Leste and Timor-Leste's WTO Post-Accession Strategy | *Timor-Leste - TBC* |
| ***11h20-11h40*** | ***Coffee break*** |  |
| 11h40-13h00 | Overview of the WTO Post-Accession Support | WTO: Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji |
| ***13h00-14h00*** | ***Lunch*** |  |
| 14h00-15h20 | Overview of the WTO framework on rules; rules on RTAs | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Usman Ali Khilji |
| ***15h20-15h40*** | ***Coffee break*** |  |
| 15h40-18h00 | Transparency and notification requirements in WTO Agreements: initial notifications | WTO: Usman Ali Khilji  *Timor-Leste - TBC* |

**Day 2 – TUESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2025**

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| **Time (OTL)** | **Session** | **Resource persons** |
| 10h00-11h20 | Overview of the WTO Accession Package of Timor-Leste | WTO: Anna Varyanik |
| ***11h20-11h40*** | ***Coffee break*** |  |
| 11h40-13h00 | Overview of the latest developments on implementation | *Timor-Leste - TBC* |
| ***13h00-14h00*** | ***Lunch*** |  |
| 14h00-15h20 | Market access commitments: Goods – Goods Schedule, implementation of specific commitments, HS transposition | WTO: Rohini Acharya  *ERSD (virtually) - TBC*  *Timor-Leste - TBC* |
| ***15h20-15h40*** | ***Coffee break*** |  |
| 15h40-17h00 | Market access commitments: Services – Services Schedule, GATS, implementation of specific commitments, SDR | WTO: Anna Varyanik  *TSID (virtually) - TBC*  *Timor-Leste - TBC* |

**DAy 3 – wednesday, 5 february 2025**

| **Time (OTL)** | **Session** | **Resource persons** |
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| 10h00-11h20 | Framework and implementation of commitments with transition periods:  Economic policies, fiscal reform and taxation | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji  *Timor-Leste - TBC* |
| ***11h20-11h40*** | ***Coffee break*** |  |
| 11h40-13h00 | Agriculture, SPS/TBT | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji  *Timor-Leste - TBC* |
| 14h00-15h20 | TRIPS | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji  *Timor-Leste - TBC* |
| ***15h20-15h40*** | ***Coffee break*** |  |
| 15h40-17h00 | Government procurement | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik  *IPD (virtually) - TBC*  *Timor-Leste - TBC* |

**Day 4 – Thursday, 6 february 2025**

| **Time (OTL)** | **Session** | **Resource persons** |
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| 10h00-11h20 | Trade facilitation and other customs-related matters | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat - TBC* |
| ***11h20-11h40*** | ***Coffee break*** |  |
| 11h40-13h00 | *Other topics as requested* | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat - TBC* |
| ***13h00-14h00*** | ***Lunch*** |  |
| 14h00-15h20 | *Other topics as requested* | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat - TBC* |
| ***15h20-15h40*** | ***Coffee break*** |  |
| 15h40-17h00 | Investment facilitation | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik  *IPD (virtually) - TBC*  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat - TBC* |

**Day 5 – Friday, 7 february 2025**

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| **Time (OTL)** | **Session** | **Resource persons** |
| 10h00-11h20 | Overview on the best practices on participation in the WTO work, as emerged in post-accession | WTO: Anna Varyanik |
| ***11h20-11h40*** | ***Coffee break*** |  |
| 11h40-13h00 | Participation in the WTO work: negotiations, JIs | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji |
| ***13h00-14h00*** | ***Lunch*** |  |
| 14h00-15h20 | Participation in the WTO work: dispute settlement | WTO: Anna Varyanik |
| ***15h20-15h40*** | ***Coffee break*** |  |
| 15h40-17h00 | Technical session on the Legislative Action Plan: state of play, further roadmap for WTO post-accession | WTO: Anna Varyanik  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat - TBC* |

**Day 6 - saturday, 8 february 2025**

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| **Time (OTL)** | **Session** | **Resource persons** |
| 10h00-13h00 | Technical working session: Review of the draft initial notifications | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji |
| 15h00-17h00 | Bilateral meetings as requested |  |

**Day 7 – sunday, 9 february 2025**

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| **Time (OTL)** | **Session** | **Resource persons** |
| 10h00-13h00 | Technical working session: Review of the draft initial notifications | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji |
| ***13h30*** | ***Arrival of DDG Xiangchen Zhang*** |  |
| 15h00-17h00 | Bilateral meetings as requested |  |

**Day 8 - monday, 10 february 2025**

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| **Time (OTL)** | **Session** | **Resource persons** |
| 10h00-12h00 | High-level opening of the WTO/ASEAN Conference | WTO: DDG Xiangchen Zhang  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat - TBC* |
| ***12h00-14h00*** | ***Lunch*** |  |
| 14h00-15h20 | Creating synergies on WTO post-accession and regional integration: priority areas on market access and rules (trade facilitation, investment, customs, services) | WTO: DDG Xiangchen Zhang/Rohini Acharya  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat - TBC* |
| ***15h20-15h40*** | ***Coffee break*** |  |
| 15h40-17h00 | Experience-sharing on WTO post-accession (incl. Cambodia, Indonesia, etc) | WTO: DDG Xiangchen Zhang/Anna Varyanik  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat - TBC* |

**Day 8 - Tuesday, 11 february 2025**

| **Time (OTL)** | **Session** | **Resource persons** |
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| 10h00-12h00 | Meeting with the National Parliament | WTO: DDG Xiangchen Zhang/Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat - TBC* |
| 15h00-17h00 | Session with the private sector and NGOs | WTO: DDG Xiangchen Zhang/Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat - TBC* |

**Day 9 - wednesday, 12 february 2025**

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| **Time (OTL)** | **Session** | **Resource persons** |
| 10h00-12h00 | g7+ Event: Global and regional integration and peacebuilding | WTO: DDG Xiangchen Zhang/Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat – TBC; g7+ - TBC* |
| 15h00-16h30 | Round Table with Development Partners and Donors on WTO post-accession | WTO: DDG Xiangchen Zhang/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat – TBC* |
| 16h30-17h00 | Closing: way ahead and next steps | WTO: Rohini Acharya/Anna Varyanik/Usman Ali Khilji  *Timor-Leste – TBC*  *ASEAN Secretariat – TBC* |

**Departure from Dili: Thursday, 13 February 2025, 9h00**

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1. See statement by H.E. President José Ramos-Horta of Timor-Leste at the Round Table on Post-Accession of Timor-Leste: "Timor-Leste's WTO Membership: Charting a Diversified, Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy through Global Economic Integration" on the margins of the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference, on 25 February 2024, in Abu Dhabi, UAE: [OMC | Roundtable on Post-Accession of Timor-Leste](https://www.wto.org/french/thewto_f/acc_f/acc_2502202418_f/acc_2502202418_f.htm). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. WTO Post-Accession Framework includes: i) Policy Framework for Domestic Implementation (which includes adoption of a National Post-Accession Implementation Strategy); ii) Institutional & Structural Adjustment; iii) Legislative Framework for Domestic Implementation; iv) Transparency; v) Technical Assistance and Capacity Building; and vi) Outreach. See: [WTO | WTO accessions - Post-accession – what next?](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/post_acc_e.htm) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)