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**WTO/AMF/IsDB**

**High-level Regional dialogue on**

**WTO Accessions for THE ARAB REGION**

arab perspectives on wto accessions and THE multilateral trading system

***08-10 November 2020 (CET)***

i. Background

The Arab region comprises eight acceding governments (Algeria, Comoros, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Syria), accounting for more than one third of all twenty-three on-going WTO accessions. Four Arab countries (the Kingdom of Jordan, the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Yemen) have acceded to the WTO since its establishment in 1995.

The Regional Workshop is organized in direct response to the increasing interest from Members and Arab Observers to advance the ongoing accession processes in the region. It will provide a useful platform for experience-sharing, capacity-building as well as awareness-raising on WTO accessions among negotiators and other stakeholders.

ii. Objectives

1. To increase participants’ knowledge of the WTO accession process and accession-related rules; as well as facilitate acceding governments and Article XII members to exchange experience and lessons learned from the accession process;
2. To identify and mobilize technical assistance support to facilitate and accelerate ongoing accessions in collaboration with donor institutions.

iII. Proposed Programme (Draft)

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| ***DAY 1: Sunday, 8 NOVEMBER 2020******High-level Opening Session*** |
|  | ***Opening Ceremony*** |
| **(5 minutes per speaker)** | Moderator: Ms. Maika Oshikawa, Director, Accessions Division, WTO- Remarks by Ambassador Alan Wolff, Deputy Director-General, WTO [TBC]- Remarks by AMF senior official [TBC]- Remarks by IsDB senior official [TBC] |
| ***Session 1: WTO Accession: Fundamentals***  |
| **14:00-15:15 (Abu Dhabi Time)** | **WTO Accession Fundamentals: Overview and Procedures**[Accessions Division, WTO] |
|  | *Objectives: - to increase participants’ knowledge of the WTO accession process and accession-related rules* |
| **15:15-15:30** | *Short Break* |
| ***Session 2: Economic Performance of WTO Arab countries***  |
| **15:30-17:00** | **Economic Performance of WTO Arab countries : Economic Diversification and Structural Reform in Post COVID-19 Pandemic Era***Arab Monetary Fund* *Islamic Development Bank* |
|  | *Objectives: to share with participants recent developments in Arab economies and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.*  |
| ***DAY 2: Monday, 9 NOVEMBER 2020*** |
| ***Session 3: Commemorating Oman’s 20 Years’ anniversary of WTO Accession/ Experience Sharing Article XII Members*** |
| **14:00-15:15** | Moderator: Ms. Mena Hassan, Legal/Economic Affairs Officer, Accessions Division, WTO- Representative from Oman[Two speakers to be added from the Arab Region/Development Partner/other WTO members]

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| followed by Open Discussion  |

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|  | *Objectives: - to commemorate Oman's 20th Anniversary of WTO Membership and share experiences with other Article XII Members and Acceding Governments* |
| **15:15-15:30** | *Short Break* |
| ***Session 4: WTO Accession of the Arab Region: State of Play*** |
| **15:30-17:00** | **Accession State of Play — Overview** - Moderator: Ms. Maika Oshikawa, Director, Accessions Division, WTO- Representatives from Arab Acceding Governments  |
|  | *Objectives: Acceding Governments to update Members and WTO on the State-of-Play of Accessions. It will provide for an exchange of views on the accession roadmaps, negotiating achievements and specific challenges, as well as possible ways to facilitate and expedite conclusion.* |
| ***DAY 3: Tuesday, 10 NOVEMBER 2020*** |
| **Session 5: Accession-specific Technical Assistance**  |
| **14:00-15:30** | **Identification of Technical Assistance and Support for Arab Acceding Governments**- Moderator: Mr. Samer Seif el Yazal, Head of the Arab and CEECAC Regional Desk, ITTC,WTO - Representatives from the AMF – IsDB- ITC- UNDP |
|  | *Objectives: to help identify technical assistance and support needs for Arab Acceding Governments with the relevant stakeholders and development partners* |
| **15:30-15:45** | *Short Break* |
| **Session 6: Trade for Peace** |
| **15:45-17:00** | **Trade for Peace**- World Bank [TBC] |
|  | *Objectives: several Arab acceding governments are fragile and conflict affected. This session will exhibit how trade can be an important vehicle for peace.* |
| **17:00-17:15** | **Closing Session**Accessions Division, WTO/ ITTC, WTOAMF |

1. **Invited Participants**

**Acceding Governments**

1. Algeria
2. Comoros
3. Iraq
4. Lebanese Republic
5. Libya
6. Somalia
7. Sudan
8. Syrian Arab Republic

**Article XII Members**

1. Oman
2. Jordan
3. Saudi Arabia
4. Yemen

**Members**

 [Members can all be invited considering no cost implication for virtual event]

**Working Party Chairpersons**

 1. (TBD)

 2.

**International Organizations and partners**

1. Arab Monetary Fund (AMF);
2. Islamic Development Bank Centre (IDB)(TBD);
3. (To be added, partners specializing in the Arab Region).
4. **virtual workshop FOCAL POINTS**

**Training and Capacity Building Institute (TCBI), Arab Monetary Fund**

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**ITTC, WTO**

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