

CONCEPT PAPER

Fifth technical workshop on Afghanistan's accession to the WTO

December 1 – 3, 2014, Delhi, India

- WTO NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS
- TRADE INFORMATION TOOLS

BACKGROUND

Afghanistan applied for WTO membership in 2004 and had its first working party meeting the same year. The negotiations for accession resumed in 2012 the country having submitted initial offers for market access negotiations in goods and services.

The fourth working party meeting held in late July 2013 and subsequently Afghanistan underwent intensified market access negotiations and continued government legislative reforms to meet WTO rules and regulations. On the bilateral side, most negotiations have been concluded by the first quarter of 2014. The accession process of Afghanistan is in its final stages. Currently Afghanistan is thus expecting its final working party to finalise the accession process. Throughout the negotiation process, enhanced technical capacity of public and private stakeholders will continue in order to foster communication, develop balanced negotiation positions, and prepare for post-accession implementation of WTO Agreements and commitments.

OBJECTIVE AND AGENDA

The programme offered by ITC and UNESCAP is intended to build capacity of and promote dialogue between the Afghan private sector and officials with a view to support the country's WTO accession process and subsequent implementation of WTO rules and regulations.

The **first day** of the programme will kick-start with a presentation on trade in the global and regional arena relevant to Afghanistan's current setting and future prospects. The programme will then focus on various WTO notification systems as new commitments to Afghanistan. Attention will be given to implementation requirements and the special and differential treatment of LDCs. The session will deliver on the notification systems linked to services trade, TBT, and licensing procedures.

In order to facilitate access to trade information, the focus of the subsequent session will be on trade information tools developed by the ITC and WTO such as *ITC Trade Map*, *ITC Investment Map*, *ITC Market Access Map* and *ITC Standards Map*. These databases include international trade data combined with statistical indicators and information on trading companies.

The **second day** of the programme will include presentations on Trade Remedies, recap on Trade Facilitation and summary of findings on Economic Integration between Afghanistan and South and Central Asia. The Afghan delegation will have an opportunity to have a number of institutional visits. The first visit will take place during the second day at the Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO). The **third day** of the programme is reserved for the visits the Indian Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO).

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