



TRADE POLICY REVIEW MECHANISM

REPORT OF THE TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY FOR 2015

Chairperson: H.E. Ambassador Atanas Atanassov PAPANIZOV (Bulgaria)

1. This Report by the Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB) provides a brief assessment of its activities in 2015. The annexed tables provide information on Members that are to be reviewed up to the end of 2015, the geographical coverage of the reviews conducted to date, the proposed programme of reviews for 2016, and candidates for review in 2017.

Activities of the TPRB

2. According to Annex 3 of the Marrakesh Agreement, the trade policies and practices of all WTO Members are periodically reviewed by the TPRB. By the end of 2015, the TPRB will have conducted 429 reviews since its inception in 1989 (up from 405 in 2014), at 322 review meetings (Annex I). The reviews have covered 151 out of 161 Members.¹ The trade policies and practices of two Members were reviewed for the first time in 2015.² The TPRB will have conducted reviews of 24 Members (counting the EU as one) in 2015 (Annex II). The Secretariat continues to group the reviews of several Members into one TPRB meeting where Members agree to be grouped and such a grouping is justified. Thus, in 2015, a joint review of SACU Members (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland) took place.

3. The review process, from the preparatory stage to the meeting, has run relatively smoothly in 2015. The Secretariat's reports continue to be prepared in close consultation with the authorities of the Member under review. Responses to requests for data, documentation and information have generally been provided within the suggested deadlines. In preparing its reports, the Secretariat has continued its efforts to reduce the burden on the Members under review by using, to the extent possible, other sources of documentation, including Members' official web-sites or other authentic web-sites. This has not been possible for all Members under review, and requests for documentation continue to be followed up with a questionnaire when sufficient information is not available from alternative sources. The comments by the authorities on the draft reports and visits to capitals by teams from the Secretariat remain essential to the TPR process.

4. Efforts continue to be made to space meetings of the TPRB as evenly as possible throughout the year and to avoid clashes with other meetings at the WTO so as to reduce pressure on Members. However, while a success for the multilateral trading system, the increasing number of WTO Members is also adding to the burden on chairpersons, delegations and the Secretariat through the increasing number of reviews necessary to comply with paragraph C (ii) of Annex 3 of the Marrakesh Agreement.

5. Changes introduced following the Fourth Appraisal of the Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM) continue to work satisfactorily.³ In 2015, nine Members volunteered to use the alternative

¹ Members not yet reviewed by end-2015 are: Cuba; Lao People's Dem. Rep.; Montenegro; Russian Federation; Samoa; Seychelles; Tajikistan; Ukraine; Vanuatu; and Yemen.

² Cabo Verde and Republic of Moldova.

³ These included: the introduction on a voluntary basis of an alternative timeline for the submission of questions and responses; a seven-minute rule for statements during the first day of a TPRB meeting; and the podcasting of TPRB meetings on a pilot-basis. With regards to the seven-minute rule for statements, while deviations have been rare, some Members noted during the Fifth Appraisal that flexibility may be required in

timelines (compared to four Members in 2014). The seven-minute rule for the interventions continued to be applied with very rare exceptions, contributing to making the meetings more efficient and focused. So far in 2015, digital audio files (podcasting) have been used at all TPR meetings.

6. The TPR programme for 2016 comprises 24 review meetings covering 24 Members (Annex III). It includes the postponed review of Sierra Leone. Annex IV provides the list of Members that can be considered as candidates for review in 2017.

Coverage of LDCs and follow-up to TPRB meetings

7. Trade policy reviews of LDCs have helped them enhance their understanding of the WTO Agreements, and enabling better compliance with and integration into the multilateral trading system. Of the 34 least-developed Members of the WTO, 31 will have been reviewed by the end of 2015.⁴

8. When requested by the Member concerned, the Secretariat organizes follow-up workshops to discuss the outcome of its Trade Policy Review with domestic stakeholders. So far in 2015, one follow-up workshop has been conducted for Myanmar. Other follow-up workshops are expected in 2015 for: the Dominican Republic; Madagascar; Pakistan; and jointly for six WTO Members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines). In the case of Myanmar, the workshop has, *inter alia*, provided the opportunity to identify priority areas for reforms requiring technical cooperation and capacity-building assistance, and to synchronize these priorities with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) work and donor programming. Several donors made pledges during the workshop to provide specific assistance in some of these identified areas. Myanmar's experience with the follow-up workshop has clearly illustrated the additional benefits of the TPR process for LDCs.

Monitoring of trade and trade-related measures

9. The TPRM requires Members, in between their reviews, to provide information on significant trade policy changes. The WTO Secretariat uses this and other information to prepare, on a regular basis, reports on the trade and trade-related developments of Members and Observer Governments. The information is consolidated and presented in the Director-General's Annual Report on Developments in the International Trading Environment, as called for by paragraph G of Annex 3 of the Marrakesh Agreement. The WTO Secretariat continues to receive good cooperation from Members in collecting this information.

10. The latest trade monitoring report covered measures taken over the period from mid-October 2014 to mid-May 2015.⁵ The report provided information on the trends in the number of trade-restrictive measures as well as those facilitating trade. The report noted that Members overall continue to refrain from introducing new trade-restrictive measures. The total stock of measures nevertheless continues to rise due to the slow pace of removal of previous restrictions. The report underscored the need for continued vigilance from WTO Members in monitoring the evolution of trade restrictions. On an encouraging note, the report noted that Members continued to adopt trade-liberalizing measures at a faster pace than trade-restrictive measures.

11. The Director-General's 2015 Annual Report on Developments in the International Trading Environment will be discussed by the TPRB in December 2015.

the application of the seven-minute time limit in the case of group reviews so as to allow deeper consideration of each member of the group.

⁴ First reviews are due for Vanuatu in 2018, for Lao People's Democratic Republic in 2019, and for Yemen in 2020.

⁵ An informal meeting of the TPRB was held on 23 July 2015 to discuss the trade monitoring report contained in document WT/TPR/OV/W/9.

ANNEX I

TRADE POLICY REVIEWS

WTO Members reviewed, 1989-2015

Europe/Middle East	Asia/Pacific	Africa	America
Albania	Australia (7)	Angola ^b (2)	Argentina (4)
Armenia	Bangladesh ^b (4)	Benin ^{b, 2} (3)	Antigua and Barbuda ² (3)
Austria ¹	Brunei Darussalam (3)	Botswana ² (4)	Barbados (3)
Bahrain, Kingdom of ² (3)	Cambodia ^b	Burkina Faso ^{b, 2} (3)	Belize (2)
Bulgaria ¹	China (5)	Burundi ^{b, 2} (2)	Bolivia, Plurinational State of (3)
Croatia ¹	Fiji (2)	Cabo Verde ^a	Brazil (6)
Cyprus ¹	Georgia	Cameroon ² (4)	Canada (10)
Czech Republic ¹ (2)	Hong Kong, China (7)	Central African Republic ^{b, 2} (2)	Chile (5)
European Union (12)	India (6)	Chad ^{b, 2} (2)	Colombia (4)
Finland ¹	Indonesia (6)	Congo, Dem. Rep. of the ^b	Costa Rica (4)
Hungary ¹ (2)	Japan (12)	Congo, Rep. of ² (2)	Dominica ² (3)
Iceland (4)	Korea, Rep. of (6)	Côte d'Ivoire (2)	Dominican Republic (4)
Israel (4)	Kyrgyz Republic (2)	Djibouti ^{b, 2} (2)	Ecuador (2)
Jordan (2)	Macao, China (4)	Egypt (3)	El Salvador (3)
Kuwait, the State of	Malaysia (6)	Gabon ² (3)	Guatemala (2)
Liechtenstein ² (4)	Maldives (2)	The Gambia ^b (2)	Grenada ² (3)
Moldova, Rep. of ^d	Mongolia (2)	Ghana (4)	Guyana (3)
Norway (6)	Myanmar ^b	Guinea, Republic of ^b (3)	Haiti ^b (2)
Oman ² (2)	Nepal ^b	Guinea-Bissau ^b	Honduras (2)
Poland ¹ (2)	New Zealand (5)	Kenya ² (4)	Jamaica (3)
Qatar ² (2)	Pakistan (4)	Lesotho ^{b, 2} (4)	Mexico (5)
Romania ¹ (3)	Papua New Guinea (2)	Madagascar ^b (3)	Nicaragua (3)
Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	Philippines (4)	Malawi ^b (2)	Panama (2)
Slovak Republic ¹ (2)	Singapore (6)	Mali ^{b, 2} (3)	Paraguay (3)
Slovenia ¹	Solomon Islands ^b (2)	Mauritania ^b (2)	Peru (4)
Sweden ¹ (2)	Sri Lanka (3)	Mauritius ² (4)	St. Kitts and Nevis ² (3)
Switzerland ² (6)	Chinese Taipei (3)	Morocco (4)	St. Lucia ² (3)
The FYR of Macedonia	Thailand (7)	Mozambique ^b (2)	St. Vincent & Grenadines ² (3)
Turkey (5)	Tonga	Namibia ² (4)	Suriname (2)
United Arab Emirates (2)	Viet Nam	Niger ^{b, 2} (2)	Trinidad and Tobago (3)
		Nigeria (4)	United States of America (12)
		Rwanda ^b (2)	Uruguay (4)
		Senegal ^{b, 2} (3)	Venezuela, Bolivarian Rep. of (2)
		Sierra Leone ^b	
		South Africa ² (5)	
		Swaziland ² (4)	
		Tanzania ^{b, 2} (3)	
		Togo ^b (3)	
		Tunisia (2)	
		Uganda ^{b, 2} (4)	
		Zambia ^b (3)	
		Zimbabwe (2)	
46 Members (77 reviews)	30 Members (116 reviews)	42 Members (116 reviews)	33 Members (120 reviews)

The parentheses indicate the number of reviews completed (where this is greater than one).

a First review in 2015.

b Least-developed Member.

1 Now included in European Union (EU-28).

2 Joint review but counted as individual Members for statistical purposes from 2009.

Reviews conducted at end-2015 = 429 reviews at 322 TPRB meetings

WTO Members reviewed = 151 out of 161 Members

Least-developed WTO Members reviewed = 31 out of 34

ANNEX II

Trade policy reviews conducted in 2015

Member	Meeting date	Review cycle (years)
Barbados (3)	27 and 29 January	6
Brunei Darussalam ^a (3)	10 and 12 February	6
Japan ^a (12)	9 and 11 March	2
Pakistan (4)	24 and 26 March	6
Australia ^a (7)	21 and 23 April	4
India (6)	2 and 4 June	4
Canada ^a (10)	15 and 17 June	4
Chile ^a (5)	23 and 25 June	6
New Zealand ^a (5)	29 June and 1 July	6
European Union ^a (12)	6 and 8 July	2
Madagascar ^b (3)	14 and 16 July	6
Dominican Republic ^a (4)	28 and 30 July	6
Guyana ^a (3)	15 and 17 September	6
Angola ^b (2)	22 and 24 September	6
Cabo Verde (1)	6 and 8 October	6
Moldova, Rep. of (1)	19 and 21 October	6
SACU: Botswana (4), Lesotho ^b (4), Namibia (4), South Africa (5), and Swaziland (4)	4 and 6 November	6
Jordan (2)	17 and 19 November	6
Thailand (7)	24 and 26 November	4
Haiti ^b (2)	2 and 4 December	6

Note: Figures in brackets indicate the total number of reviews that will have been conducted by the end of 2015.

a Alternative timeline.

b Least-developed country.

ANNEX III*Proposed programme of reviews for 2016*

Member	Meeting dates (scheduled)
Georgia	19 and 21 January
Morocco	2 and 4 February
Fiji	23 and 25 February
Turkey	15 and 17 March
Maldives	21 and 23 March
Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	4 and 6 April
Ukraine	19 and 21 April
Malawi ^a	27 and 29 April
Honduras	2 and 4 May
Albania	11 and 13 May
United Arab Emirates	1 and 3 June
Democratic Rep. of the Congo ^a	15 and 17 June
Zambia ^a	21 and 23 June
China	5 and 7 July
Tunisia	13 and 15 July
Singapore ^b	26 and 28 July
El Salvador	14 and 16 September
Russian Federation	28 and 30 September
Rep. of Korea	11 and 13 October
Sierra Leone ^a	19 and 21 October
Sri Lanka	1 and 3 November
Guatemala ^b	16 and 18 November
Solomon Islands ^a	13 and 15 December
United States of America	19 and 21 December

a Least-developed country.

b Alternative timeline.

ANNEX IV*Candidates for TPRB Reviews in 2017
(Due date in parentheses)*

Member	
Armenia (2016)	Jamaica (2017)
Belize (2016)	Japan (2017)
Benin ^a (UEMOA) (2016)	Mali ^a (UEMOA) (2016)
Bolivia, Plurinational State of (2011)	Mauritania ^a (2016)
Brazil (2017)	Mexico (2017)
Burkina Faso ^a (UEMOA) (2016)	Mozambique ^a (2015)
Cambodia ^a (2017)	Niger ^a (UEMOA) (2015)
Cote d'Ivoire (UEMOA) (2018)	Nigeria (2017)
Cuba (2001)	Papua New Guinea (2016)
Ecuador (2017)	Paraguay (2017)
Egypt (2011)	Senegal ^a (UEMOA) (2015)
EU (2017)	Switzerland and Liechtenstein (2017)
The Gambia ^a (2016)	Togo ^a (UEMOA) (2018)
Guinea-Bissau ^a (UEMOA) (2018)	Venezuela, Bolivarian Rep. of (2008)
Guinea, Rep. of ^a (2016)	Zimbabwe (2016)

a Least-developed country.