

# Accessions to the WTO



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# Article XII

## (Marrakesh Agreement)

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### □ Para 1.

- “Any State or separate customs territory possessing full autonomy in the conduct of its external commercial relations and of the other matters provided for (in the Marrakesh Agreement) and the Multilateral Trade Agreements may accede to (the Marrakesh Agreement), on terms to be agreed between it and the WTO. ...”

# Procedure

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- Submission of request (communication)
- Establishment of a Working Party by GC
- Memorandum (describing foreign trade regime: applicable tariff schedule and other relevant regulations)
- Questions and answers
- Negotiations
  - Bilateral (Market Access neg. on goods and services)
  - Pluri/multilateral
- Accession Protocol and Working Party Report
- Decision by General Council or Ministerial Conference
- Accession to full Membership: Entry into force 30 days after adoption of the decision (and the Protocol)

# Multilateral negotiations

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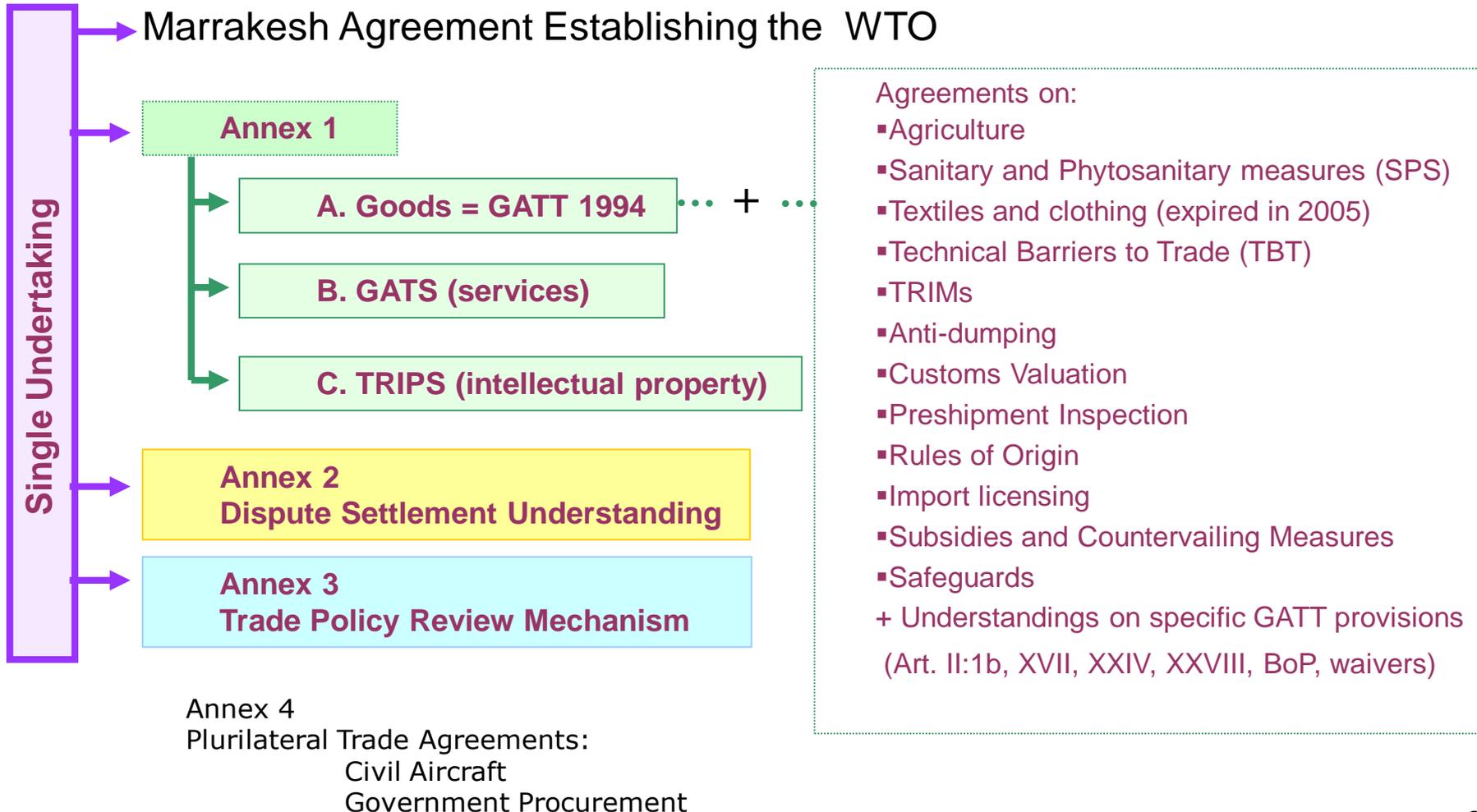
- ❑ Negotiations on WTO rules and disciplines take place within the framework of an Accession Working Party and cover all WTO Agreements
- ❑ Working Party membership is open to all interested WTO Members who may join a given Working Party at any stage of the process.

# Multilateral negotiations

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- Why are these negotiations “multilateral”?
  - Because examining the applicant’s trade regime and ensuring its compliance with WTO rules is of systemic interest to all WTO Members (e.g. non-discrimination).
  
- “Single Undertaking” - multilateral WTO Agreements “binding”. Members (existing or new) can’t apply Agreements selectively.

# WTO Multilateral Trade Agreements



# Main lessons

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- ❑ Establish a clear domestic structure to support the accession process & build capacity of the negotiating team
- ❑ Sensitize private sector to pros and cons of WTO Membership
- ❑ No accession can go the way without necessary political backing and lawmakers' involvement
- ❑ Accession is an opportunity to develop capacity to defend national interests as a WTO Member

# Some General Observations

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- Many accession commitments are standard (compliance with WTO requirements)
- That said..... each accession is “on terms to be agreed”
- Transition periods and LDC Guidelines

# Post Accession

## WTO: Main functions

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Art. III  
WTO Agr.

- ❑ Administering and implementing the multilateral and plurilateral trade agreements (e.g. Notification requirements)
- ❑ Forum for multilateral trade negotiations (e.g. DDA)
- ❑ Dispute settlement (DS)
- ❑ Overseeing national trade policy (TPRS)
- ❑ Co-operation with the IMF and the World Bank (coherence in global economic policy-making)

# NOTIFICATION: What and When?

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- **What:** Legislation, measures and individual actions
- **When:**
  - One-off: “snap-shot”
  - *Ad-hoc*: if ... then notify
  - Regular
    - every 6 months: semi-annual
    - annual
    - other periodicities

Thank you

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