

WTO Update on Liberia Post Accession Commitments 2017

Liberia submitted its application to the WTO in 2007 and held four working party meetings that concluded Liberia's accession negotiations and adoption of the draft accession package on October 8, 2015. However, Trade Ministers at the Tenth Ministerial Conference (MC10) in Nairobi, Kenya formally approved the Accession package for Liberia and was jointly signed by H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the Director General of the WTO.

In fact, the pace of Liberia accession processes were so tremendous as a result of sustained engagements from the member countries and the WTO secretariat, as well as the strong support of the Swedish Government, particularly, the Swedish National Board of Trade.

Now that Liberia is a member of the WTO, the focus has shifted to the post-accession implementation phase. The objectives of Liberia's Post Accession phase are to ensure that Liberia takes full advantage of WTO membership, i.e:

- a. WTO rules adhered to over time
- b. Necessary reforms implemented
- c. Trade regime transparent
- d. Liberia being an active WTO member in prioritized committees (e.g. SPS/TBT/TF), and
- e. Stronger private sector development

The work of implementing Liberia's WTO commitments is governed by the Liberia Post-Accession Plan (LPAP). Therefore, the Government of Liberia has continued to ensure full compliance to the implementation of Liberia's WTO commitments. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is responsible for overseeing the implementation process and in liaison with other Ministries & Agencies continuously works on ensuring the necessary reforms are implemented on time.

In many cases Liberia already live up to the WTO rules, where Liberia's laws and regulations are inconsistent with WTO rules new laws and regulations have been or are being drafted, including:

- ✓ Amended Revenue Code submitted to the National Legislature for ratification.
- ✓ The Competition Law has been enacted and published in the Official Gazette.
- ✓ Liberia has maintained a liberal pricing policy and will ensure compliance with publication obligation and price controls application in a WTO-consistent manner.

- ✓ Liberia is committed to ensure the right to appeal which is covered in various laws and regulations across Ministries, Agencies and Commissions.
- ✓ WTO Focal Persons across ministries and agencies have been identified to ensure compliance and implementation of WTO commitments.
- ✓ Liberia has enacted a Foreign Trade Law that grants full rights to import and export in a non-discriminatory approach.