



Panel Discussion – 14 November 2012

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Panel Discussion

**“What does the Russian WTO accession mean for Central Asia?
What is the role of the WTO in regional and multilateral economic integration in Central Asia?
What has been the Kyrgyz and Kazakh experience so far?”**

By Vladimir Sherov (St. Petersburg University, Russia)
Rimma Kiseleva (Ministry of Economy, Kyrgyzstan)
Rajesh Aggarwal (ITC)

The panel discussion started with a presentation of Rimma Kiseleva, Head of WTO and Trade Policy Department, Ministry of Economy and Antitrust Policy, Kyrgyzstan, on the experience of the country's WTO membership. Kiseleva stressed that Kyrgyzstan made a conscious choice of further liberalization and integration into the international trade system in its early years of independence in the 1990s. The speaker presented positive impact of the accession on geographical widening of Kyrgyz Republic's trade relations, improvements made in trade in services, and an increase of GDP. WTO membership worked particularly well in Kyrgyzstan for the liberalization of the financial sector and the creation of a more investor-friendly environment.

With its accession to the WTO Kyrgyzstan was confirmed as a country with a comparatively transparent and liberal trade regime conducive for investments. . Moreover, the stability of commitments within the WTO structure releases states

from constant bilateral negotiations and increases transparency and harmonization of domestic legislation. In her conclusion, Kiseleva underlined a special position of the Kyrgyz Republic within as a small low-income country in transition. .This status enables Kyrgyzstan to abstain from taking further commitments which will occur after the current Doha round of negotiations in the WTO is concluded.



The next panel speaker, Vladimir Sherov, Associated professor of St. Petersburg University, Russia discussed the advantages and challenges of Russia's recent accession to the WTO. Besides the number of concerns including increasing set of commitments for

the Russian Federation, the long-lasting strategic goals as improvement in macroeconomic situation in the country, became the main incentive behind the country's accession to the WTO. As an important player on the world trade market, Russia hopes that the WTO membership will have positive effects on its trade with other members of the WTO.

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