

## Summary of initiatives to improve market access for LDCs

Member	Market Access for LDCs	WTO Document Reference (Notifications in bold)
<p>Argentina</p> <p>(Mercosur)</p>	<p>In May 2000, Argentina (on behalf of Mercosur) announced that it provided tariff preferences for LDCs under the GSTP scheme, and following completion of the ratification process for the offers made in the context of the second round of GSTP negotiations, they would be in a position to enhance their preferences.</p>	<p><b>WT/GC/M/55 (2000)</b></p>









Egypt	<p>Following the HLM, Egypt through the GSTP in 1998 notified tariff reductions at HS 8 digit level, ranging from 10 per cent to 20 per cent of existing applied duties, for 77 products of export interest to LDCs, and provided duty-free access, for about 50 products imported into Egypt. In addition, Egypt bound customs duties, with a 10 per cent reduction for industrial products imported from LDCs.</p>	<p><b>WT/COMTD/W/47&amp;</b></p> <p><b>Add.1</b> WT/LDC/HL/M/1 (1997)</p>
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India	<p>Preferences granted under SAPTA to LDC contracting states. In 1997, India granted tariff concessions on 574 tariff lines exclusively to the LDC members of SAARC, and had removed quantitative restrictions on 180 lines exclusively in favour of SAARC LDCs. Further, under the existing GSTP, India provided preferential access to seven LDCs, namely, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Benin, Guinea, Haiti, Mozambique and Sudan. Under the Bangkok Agreement, Bangladesh was given preferential access, and Myanmar and Nepal had preferential access to India under bilateral agreements.</p>	WT/LDC/HL/M/1 (1997)
Indonesia	<p>Announced intention to consider initiatives to improve market access for LDCs at the HLM in 1997.</p>	WT/LDC/HL/M/1 (1997)
Japan	<p>Effective 1 April 2003, Japan expanded the coverage of its GSP scheme, especially duty-free and quota-free treatment for LDCs' products. The number of LDCs' agricultural and fishery products with duty-free and quota-free treatment increased to around 500 items from around 300 existing items. The additional 200 items include prawns and frozen fish fillets. As for LDCs' industrial products, almost all items are already covered by duty-free and quota-free treatment. This expansion increases the duty and quota-free imports from LDCs, from around 80 per cent to over 90 per cent. Earlier in 2002, Senegal had been added to the list of LDC beneficiaries under Japan's GSP Scheme. Changes to ceiling quotas for industrial products were also notified. In 2001, Japan's GSP Scheme, was extended, together with changes, by ten years until 31 March 2011. Following on an earlier proposal, from 1 April 2001, a further 360 products (at HS 9 Digit) from LDCs would be eligible for duty-free and quota-free treatment. About 99 per cent of industrial products, including textiles and clothing, v</p>	WT/COMTD/N/2/Add. 12 (2003)



Mauritius

Notified effective September 1998, duty-free access for five tariff lines originating from LDCs. The products comprise certain crustaceans; guavas, mangoes, mangosteens; axes and billhooks; handsaws and files.

WT/COMTD/W/53

WT/LDC/HL/M/1  
(1997)

Morocco	<p>Morocco notified duty-free access, for 33 African LDCs. Effective 1 January, 2001, duty-free access was accorded to 61 products (at HS 4 to 10 digit level) originating in and consigned from the African LDCs. Debt to Morocco, owed by African LDCs, had also been cancelled. This measure was in fulfilment of the proposal made by Morocco at the HLM in 1997.</p>	<p><b>WT/LDC/SWG/IF/18</b> <b>and G/C/6 (2001)</b></p> <p>WT/LDC/HL/M/1 (1997)</p>
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<p>Norway</p>	<p>In May 2001, Norway announced still further improvements in their preferential scheme in favour of LDCs. With effect from 1 July 2002, Norway would offer duty-free and quota-free treatment to all LDCs' exports (except arms) with no transition arrangements for any product. Earlier in 2000, amendments and improvements to Norway's GSP scheme were notified Norway accorded duty-free and quota-free access to all industrial and agricultural imports from LDCs covered by the GSP programme, with the exception of flour, grains and feeding stuffs. Rules of origin requirements were revised and simplified. Following harmonization in the application of rules of origin with the EC and Switzerland, from 1 March 1998, bilateral cumulation was permitted and the possibility of future diagonal cumulation of origin was being considered. At the HLM, Norway announced that it had on an MFN basis accelerated its Uruguay Round tariff cuts on agricultural products by implementing them from 1 January 1995 instead of 1999. It had also phased out almost all restrictions on textiles and clothing by 1997-98 instead of 2004.</p>	<p>WT/COMTD/M/34 (2001)</p> <p>WT/COMTD/N/6/ Add.1 - 2 WT/GC/M/55 (2000)</p> <p>WT/LDC/HL/M/1 (1997)</p>
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Poland	<p>Since 1990, Poland has applied preferential treatment for products originating from LDCs and in May 2000, it announced that it was examining autonomous improvements to the existing preferential system with a view to providing duty-free and quota-free market access for essentially all products originating in LDCs, in conformity with national legislation and international agreements.</p>	WT/GC/M/55 (2000)
Singapore	<p>Singapore notified at the HLM, duty-free treatment on 107 items (HS 6 digit) of export interest to LDCs in addition to the almost duty-free regime accorded on an MFN basis.</p>	WT/LDC/HL/M/1 Annex 1 (1997)
Slovak Republic	<p>The Slovak Republic informed Members of its existing GSP scheme, offering duty-free and quota-free access to all LDCs' exports. In July 2001, copies of a letter received by the Director-General, with information on its preferential market access scheme for LDCs was circulated to the Sub-Committee. It confirmed in May 2000, that its GSP system would be maintained in the future.</p>	<p>WT/COMTD/LDC/M/25 (2001)</p> <p>WT/GC/M/55 (2000)</p>

Slovenia	<p>In May 2000, Slovenia announced that it was prepared to provide tariff and quota-free access for essentially all products originating in LDCs, independent of WTO membership, consistent with its domestic requirements and international agreements under its newly established preferential scheme. The Government had taken this general decision which would be confirmed through decrees issued.</p>	WT/GC/M/55 (2000)
Switzerland	<p>Switzerland notified its proposal designed to grant duty-free access in the medium term for all products from LDCs. The revision of the GSP with effect from 1 January 2002, would provide LDCs the phased removal of all remaining customs duties. Duties were reduced by an average of 30 per cent on 1 January 2002. Subsequently, from 1 April 2004, an additional reduction of an average of 30 per cent will be granted to LDCs. Market access for LDCs would be reviewed in 2005 before the expiry of the current GSP scheme. In 1997, Switzerland had extended its GSP scheme for ten years. Since 1 March 1997, LDCs were able to benefit from zero tariffs for all industrial and most agricultural products. Some 98 per cent of LDC products entered Switzerland duty-free under its notified preferential scheme and improvements thereof. Rules of Origin for goods benefiting from preferential access had also been simplified. Switzerland had harmonised its regulations with the European Union and in the near future materials originating from Switzerland but also from the European Union and Norway would enjoy the right of</p>	<p>WT/COMTD/N/7 &amp;</p> <p><b>Add.1</b> (2002)</p> <p>WT/COMTD/W/34 WT/GC/M/55 (2000)</p>

		WT/LDC/HL/M/1 (1997)
Thailand	At the HLM in 1997, announced tariff preferences on 74 product groups (at the 6-digit H.S. level,) through which some products would be exempted from import duty and others would be given a margin of preference of 20 per cent from the applied rates. This would be subject to an annual review process.	WT/LDC/HL/M/1(1997)



United States	<p>The United States adopted the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in May 2000 for Sub-Saharan Africa. Thirty-four Sub-Saharan countries (including 23 LDCs), were designated as beneficiaries under AGOA in October 2000, and can avail new GSP benefits for 1835 tariff lines as from December 2000. Earlier improvements under the GSP system, included duty-free access offered on nearly half the 9000 products in the US harmonized tariff schedule. Improvements to the scheme were notified with the addition of 1,783 tariff lines to GSP treatment for LDCs as from 30 May 1997, under the GSP Renewal Act of 1996. Moreover, at the end of the Uruguay Round implementation period, some 70 per cent of US tariff lines would be subject to MFN rates of 5 per cent or less and MFN duty-free treatment would cover more than 40 per cent of tariff lines.</p>	<p>WT/COMTD/N/1/Add. 3</p> <p>WT/GC/M/55 (2000) WT/COMTD/N/1/Add. 2 WT/LDC/HL/M/1 (1997)</p>
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Source: Source: table 10 from report "Market access issues related to products of export interest originating from Least-Developed Countries", Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries Negotiating Group on Market Access, WTO, September 29 2003