



## *MAS Issues a New study on the WTO*

March 1, 2015, Ramallah. The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) issued a recent study titled "*Palestine's Efforts to Accede to the World Trade Organization: Review and Assessment*". This paper is the second in a series of studies, aiming at producing review articles that take stock of work done on important economic and social policy issues that touch on the Palestinian development and that have been often revisited over the past two decades but where no closure has been reached. This review has been prepared by economist Raja Khalidi, a visiting senior researcher at MAS and former Coordinator of the Program of Assistance to the Palestinian People at

UNCTAD, to address the Palestinian efforts made by successive Palestinian governments to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) over the past two decades.

The study is composed of five chapters providing insightful economic and political analytical information on the various legal, economic, and technical issues related to the process of accession of states or the "Separate Customs Territories" to the WTO. The review also presents a number of the Arab countries experiences in this area, before addressing the Palestinian experience from 1999 until 2014 in detail, the developmental and legal prerequisites for the accession, the changing legal arguments of Palestine, the positions of the concerned authorities toward that, and finally the technical programs that accompanied those political efforts.

The study refers to many official documents that were not collected before in a single unified reference, and is based on the personal experience of the author who has lived through and witnessed all the stages of this experiment as a former officer at UNCTAD. The review also gives a critical input on the Palestinian experience and discusses the most appropriate development policies needed for the accession process with minimal damage to the fragile Palestinian economy torn by the occupation, and on the changing legal arguments adopted by the successive Palestinian governments. Finally, the study concludes with a set of recommendations that would, if adopted, constitute a useful guide for future efforts in this file.

