
ANNUAL 2011 SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

Geneva, 21-22 March 2011

Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Debate on substantive themes:

(a) Multilateralism in the midst of the rising tide of bilateral and regional trade pacts

The international trading system looks increasingly fragmented and multi-layered. Do regional trade agreements and bilateral arrangements present a challenge to the credibility and viability of the WTO? Is multilateralism still the best option to harness globalization and manage interdependence?

(b) Rebalancing the rules of the multilateral trading system in favour of the poor

The objective of development, with particular focus on trade-related needs of the least developed countries, is central to the Doha Development Agenda, which seeks to redress asymmetries and imbalances affecting these countries. Despite the promise made at the start of the Doha Round, tangible results in the area of development are yet to be seen. How can parliaments help break the deadlock? What reforms are necessary to ensure that developing countries can benefit from the increase of their share of world trade and can reduce poverty?

3. Hearing with the WTO Director-General

It has become customary for the WTO Director-General to meet with parliamentarians specializing in international trade. During this interactive session, which is not unlike traditional parliamentary hearings, the Director-General will answer questions and listen to brief comments from the delegates.

4. Dialogue with senior WTO negotiators.

Trade and sustainable development: from collision to cohesion

Sustainable development is at the core of the WTO's mission. However, the pace of negotiations under the Doha mandate related to environment leaves much to be desired and appears to be subdued to progress on other negotiation tracks. As Ambassadors directly involved in WTO negotiations, the distinguished panellists are best placed to ponder on the subject of an optimum form of interlinkage between the need to promote international trade and sustainable development.

5. Interactive panel discussion.

Connecting to society: Trade policy-making in the era of mass communication

The efforts of the WTO to make the multilateral trading system better understood have borne some fruit recently, but accusations that the system lacks transparency and accountability still persist. In the era of new communication technologies, what possibilities are there to connect more effectively the WTO to society? What role should the legislator play in this regard?

6. Adoption of the outcome document

At the end of the session, the participants will be invited to adopt an outcome document, the draft of which will be prepared by the Conference Steering Committee.