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# WTO NEWSLETTER FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS



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## Overview of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WTO Information Technology Agreement

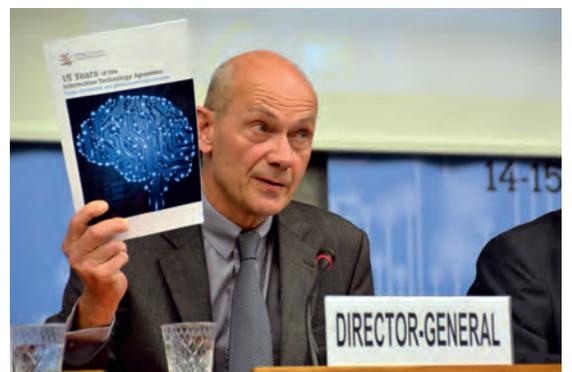
Participants marked the 15th anniversary of the WTO Information Technology Agreement (ITA) by holding a symposium on 14-15 May 2012, which was open to all WTO members and observers, private sector, IT industry representatives, academic experts in IT technologies, international inter-governmental organizations, NGOs and journalists.



ITA Symposium

The purpose of the symposium was:

- » to conduct a review of trade liberalization and evolution of global trade in information and communications technology (ICT) products since 1996, and their impact on developing countries;
  - » to have an overview of the latest developments in the ICT sector (new technology, technological innovation, and the global supply chain), the socio-economic benefits, and as an enabler of sustainable development; and
  - » to look towards the future, what are the prospects for, and challenges to, a further expansion of trade in ICT products?
- » Director-General Pascal Lamy gave the welcome address saying that “15 years ago a group of visionaries conquered what appeared to be insurmountable obstacles and negotiated one of the most successful trade agreements ever. Today, their successors have the responsibility to further expand that legacy.”



Director-General Pascal Lamy

The ITA Symposium, the Director-General said at the General Council meeting on 1 May, “will provide an excellent occasion to look at how the elimination of tariffs in this sector has spurred innovation, has provided affordable access to technologies and has helped other sectors of the economy. It is also meant to serve as a stark reminder of how trade opening can be a win-win game for all its participants, developed and developing countries.”

He added: “As we look back on this sectoral agreement now covering 74 members, I hope it can serve as example of how to move forward pragmatically in opening trade. I also hope it can help bring the ITA agreement to a new phase of greater opening and new participants.”

Keynote addresses were given by former US Trade Representative Ms Charlene Barshefsky and Vice Chairman of Japan Electronics and Information Technology Industries Association Dr Ryōji Chūbachi.

Resource speakers included representatives from leading companies like Microsoft Corporation, Cisco Systems, Nokia Corporation and Hewlett-Packard.

The Chairman of the ITA Committee, Mr Zahari MD ALI, served as facilitator.



Left to Right: Vice Chairman of Sony Corporation Ryōji Chūbachi, Former US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, WTO DG Pascal Lamy, and Chairman of the ITA Committee Mr Zahari MD Ali.

The Ministerial Declaration on Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA) was concluded by 29 participants at the Singapore Ministerial Conference in December 1996. The number of participants has grown to 74, representing 97 per cent of world trade in information technology products.

The ITA provides for participants to completely eliminate duties on IT products covered by the Agreement. Developing country participants have been granted extended periods for some products.

## WTO News

Geneva April 13<sup>th</sup>

### Lamy names panel to identify 21<sup>st</sup> century trade challenges

At the WTO's 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in December 2011, Mr. Lamy suggested that the profound transformations in the world economy require the WTO and the multilateral trading system to look at the drivers of today and tomorrow's trade, to look at trade patterns and at what it means to open global trade in the XXI century, bearing in mind the role of trade in contributing to sustainable development, growth, jobs and poverty alleviation. The analysis of these world trade drivers, which will be produced by the 12 panellists in early 2013, can make an important contribution to debate between Members on the best way to tackle these challenges, Mr. Lamy said.

“The difficulties we, and many other multilateral institutions, have encountered in recent years is indisputable proof that yesterday's solutions simply cannot be applied to the problems we face today. This panel encompasses experts from all corners of the world and nearly every field of endeavour. Their analysis will spark debate and open new channels of thinking on how we can best confront the stumbling blocks that today's rapidly evolving world has strewn in our collective path,” said Mr. Lamy.

The “WTO Panel on Defining the Future of Trade”, will meet several times in 2012. In the autumn, it will have the opportunity to hear the views of WTO Members over these challenges. The first meeting of the group occurred on 16 May in Geneva.

Panellists:

**Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh**, Chairman and Founder, Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Overseas Corporation, Jordan

**Ms. Sharan Burrow**, Secretary-General, International Trade Union Confederation, Brussels

**Ms. Helen Clark**, UNDP Administrator, New York

**Mr. Thomas J. Donohue**, President and CEO, US Chamber of Commerce, Washington

**Mr. Frederico Fleury Curado**, President and CEO, Embraer S.A, Brazil

**Mr. Victor K. Fung**, Chairman of Fung Global Institute and Honorary Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong, China

**Mr. Pradeep Singh Mehta**, Secretary-General, CUTS International, India

**Mr. Festus Gontebanye Mogae**, Former President of Botswana

**Ms. Josette Sheeran**, Vice Chairman, World Economic Forum, Geneva

**Mr. Jürgen R. Thumann**, President, BUSINESSEUROPE, Brussels

**Mr. George Yeo**, Former Foreign Minister, Singapore and Vice Chairman of Kerry Group Limited

**Mr. Fujimori Yoshiaki**, President and CEO, JS Group Corporation, Tokyo

Geneva April 29

### Montenegro and Samoa accession

On 29 April 2012, the WTO welcomed Montenegro as its 154th member. Montenegro applied for WTO membership on 10 December 2004. On 30 March 2012, Montenegro informed the WTO it had accepted its membership package. This is the final step in the accession process.



Welcome banner in front of the William Rappard Centre in Geneva

The WTO also welcomed Samoa as its 155th member on 10 May 2012. Samoa applied for WTO membership on 15 April 1998. On 10 April 2012, Samoa informed the WTO it had accepted its membership package

Geneva May 24

### New Appellate Body Member appointed

On 24 May 2012 the WTO Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) appointed to the seven-member Appellate Body Mr Seung Wha Chang of the Republic of Korea for four years commencing on 1 June 2012.



Mr Seung Wha Chang of the Republic of Korea

Mr. Chang will replace Mr. Shotaro Oshima who resigned from the Appellate Body on 7 January 2012. Born in Korea on 1 March 1963, Seung Wha Chang is currently Professor of Law at Seoul National University where he teaches International Trade Law and International Arbitration.

He has served on several WTO dispute settlement panels, including US - FSC, Canada - Aircraft Credits and Guarantees, and EC - Trademarks and Geographical Indications. He has also served as Chairman or Member of several arbitral tribunals dealing with commercial matters. In 2009, he was appointed by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) as a Member of the International Court of Arbitration.

Brussels May 7-8

### 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Steering Committee of The Parliamentary Conference on WTO and the European Parliament Workshop on the "Future of the WTO and the international trading system"

The 25<sup>th</sup> session of the Steering Committee of The Parliamentary Conference on WTO was held in Brussels on 7 and 8 May; mainly devoted to preparing the next Annual Parliamentary Conference to be held at the WTO next November. On the margins of the Committee meeting, the European Parliament organized a workshop on the "Future of the WTO and the international trading system" on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May. The workshop attracted big crowds to the European Parliament (almost 400 participants), including representatives of the European Industries and many MEPs and their staffers.

WTO Deputy Director General Alejandro Jara briefed both the steering Committee and the Workshop on the current situation at the WTO and with regard to the DDA. He particularly reaffirmed the idea that DDA is not dead but is stalled, and that one of the causes of this are the changes in the international trade environment.



Alejandro Jara, Deputy Director General of the WTO (right) and Vital Moreira, Chair of the Committee on International Trade of the European Parliament (left)

Singapore 15-17 May

### Parliamentary Workshop for ASEAN

The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Parliamentary Workshop for ASEAN and + countries further strengthened the excellent partnership with the Temasek Foundation Centre for Trade & Negotiations. It attracted 50 highly ranked MPs from around the region. Many have funded their own participation giving an illustration of the growing interest for this event across Parliaments in the region. The Speaker of the Singapore Parliament, Hon. Michael Palmer presided over quite an impressive opening ceremony, attended by representatives of the Singapore Government; the Temasek Foundation and the Ambassadors to Singapore of the countries represented at the Workshop.



Participants in the Parliamentary Workshop for ASEAN

Geneva April 16

### “Made in the World” Initiative

On 16 April 2012, the European Commission held a high-level conference, in which the WTO participated, to mark the launch of the World Input-Output Database (WIOD). This new database allows trade analysts to have a better view of the global value chains created by world trade. These added-value chains have become an essential feature of our economic reality as trade is becoming increasingly globalized and today's traded products are not produced in a single location but are the end-result of a series of steps carried out in many countries around the world.

Instead of counting the gross value of goods and services exchanged, the new database reveals the value-added embodied in these goods and services as they are traded internationally. The findings are significant as they change the perception of the competitiveness of certain sectors in some countries.

Bangkok May 30

### Lamy cautions over protectionism

Director-General Pascal Lamy, in a speech to the Thai Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok on 30 May 2012, said: “Protectionism is like cholesterol: the slow accumulation of trade restrictive measures since 2008 - now covering almost 3% of world merchandise trade, and almost 4% of G20 trade - can lead to the clogging of trade flows.”

Geneva May 31

### Germany offers EUR 1 million to WTO training programme for developing countries

Germany has donated EUR 1 million to the WTO Global Trust Fund for 2012. This new donation brings Germany's overall contribution to WTO trust funds to EUR 16.5 million.

This donation will finance technical assistance programmes and training activities for developing and least developed countries with the aim of enhancing their ability to participate effectively in the WTO negotiations and ensure they fully benefit from the results achieved during these negotiations.

Geneva May 1

### Lamy: Members continue to explore opportunities for Doha progress

Director-General Pascal Lamy reported to the General Council on 1 May 2012 that on the Doha Round, “my conversations over the past few weeks with Ministers and delegations have provided me with a sense that Members wish to continue to explore any opportunities to gain the necessary traction and make tangible progress soon.” He added that the recent G-20 Trade Ministerial in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico supported giving “fresh impetus to the Doha negotiations towards results in areas with potential for prompt resolution — such as trade facilitation — while intensifying efforts to find ways and approaches to overcome the most critical and fundamental stalemates in specially challenging areas.”

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## In the Spotlight of the Dispute Settlement Body

- Appellate body issues report on US-Indonesia measures affecting the production and sale of clove cigarettes
- The United States filed a Notice of Appeal in the Certain Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) Requirements dispute
- WTO issues Appellate Body report on US/Mexico tuna case
- EU files dispute against Argentina over measures affecting the importation of good
- India files dispute against the US over countervailing measures on certain Hot-Rolled Carbon Steel Flat Products from India
- China requested consultations with the United

States under the dispute settlement system concerning countervailing duty measures

- Ukraine and Honduras file dispute against Australia over certain measures concerning trademarks and tobacco packaging
- Japan, EU, and US filed a dispute against China over the exportation of rare earths, Tungsten and Molybdenum

## Trade Policy Reviews

### 25 April, Trade Policy Review: Uruguay

[http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/tpr\\_e/tp363\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp363_e.htm)

### 12-14 June, Trade Policy Review: China

[http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/tpr\\_e/tp364\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp364_e.htm)

## FEATURED MEDIA

### AUDIO

15 May 2012: Lamy: Aid for Trade can play "catalytic role" in trade finance for developing countries  
[http://www.wto.org/audio/2012\\_06\\_07\\_gc\\_lamy\\_stat.mp3](http://www.wto.org/audio/2012_06_07_gc_lamy_stat.mp3)

14 May 2012: Lamy says Information Technology Agreement success could inspire further trade opening in other sectors  
[http://www.wto.org/audio/2012\\_05\\_14\\_ita\\_lamy\\_opening.mp3](http://www.wto.org/audio/2012_05_14_ita_lamy_opening.mp3)

1 May 2012: Lamy: Members continue to explore opportunities for Doha progress  
[http://www.wto.org/audio/2012\\_05\\_01\\_gc\\_lamy\\_stat.mp3](http://www.wto.org/audio/2012_05_01_gc_lamy_stat.mp3)

12 April 2012: Trade growth to slow in 2012 after strong deceleration in 2011  
[http://www.wto.org/audio/2012\\_04\\_12\\_stats\\_lamy\\_low\\_pc.mp3](http://www.wto.org/audio/2012_04_12_stats_lamy_low_pc.mp3)

### VIDEO:

15 May 2012: Debate: Trade in information and communications technology products  
[http://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/webcas\\_e/webcas\\_e.htm#video](http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/webcas_e/webcas_e.htm#video)

12 April 2012: World trade figures for 2011, prospects for 2012  
[http://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/webcas\\_e/webcas\\_e.htm#video](http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/webcas_e/webcas_e.htm#video)

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[http://www.flickr.com/photos/world\\_trade\\_organization](http://www.flickr.com/photos/world_trade_organization)

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