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General Council approves Viet Nam's membership

Viet Nam is set to become the WTO's 150th member following a decision by the General Council on 7 November to approve the Southeast Asian country's membership agreement. "The remarkable efforts that Viet Nam has put into preparing for membership should be an inspiration to us all, as several members have observed," WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy said.

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> [Summary of the meeting](#)

Members welcome Laos' first goods offer

Laos has submitted its first offer on market access for goods, a proposal that some members said was almost good enough for them to accept as far as industrial products are concerned. But in their 30 November meeting they sought more information on Laos' trading regime and looked forward to the offer on services, which Laos has promised to deliver before the next meeting.

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Lamy: APEC ministers call for rapid restart of the negotiating engines



Director-General Pascal Lamy, in an address to the APEC Business Advisory Council in Hanoi on 15 November, said that all APEC trade ministers have "expressed a sense of urgency and joined in calling for a rapid restart of the negotiating engines in Geneva". He urged the APEC business community to lobby governments for a successful conclusion to the Doha Round.

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Mr. Lamy, in a video address to the 12th Session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Barbados on 23 November, said that moving to full-fledged ministerial negotiations will require “serious thinking and compromises”. He asked parliamentarians to support “relaunching these negotiations in full gear, so that you may reap their full reward”.

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The Director-General, in an address in Montevideo, Uruguay to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the launching of the Uruguay Round, paid tribute to all who helped to make the Uruguay Round a success. He also urged for “renewed political commitment, leadership and goodwill by all WTO Members to prepare the ground for fully-fledged negotiations to resume”.

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In the Malcolm Wiener Lecture at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University at Cambridge, Massachusetts on 1 November, Mr. Lamy expressed the hope that “all WTO Members consider the contribution that the WTO can make to ensuring that globalization works to the benefit of one and all peoples as they reflect on the resumption of the negotiations”.

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WTO issues compliance panel’s report on Argentina-US anti-dumping dispute



At its meeting on 26 October, the Dispute Settlement Body established three panels to examine, respectively, China’s measures on auto parts, US measures on shrimp from Thailand, and US anti-dumping measures on steel from Mexico. Also at the meeting, the US blocked the first-time request by India for a panel to examine the US customs bond directive, and, under Other Business, Brazil expressed concern at the “terrible precedent” set during the process to compose the compliance panel in the “cotton” case.

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Appellate Body issues report on EC customs matters

The Appellate Body, on 13 November, issued its report regarding the complaint of the United States against the European Communities in the dispute “European Communities – Selected Customs Matters” (WT/DS315/AB/R).

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CTD holds first annual review of Hong Kong Decision on LDCs

The Committee on Trade and Development (CTD), on 28 November, held its first annual review of the implementation of the Hong Kong Decision on duty-free and quota-free market access for LDCs, as mandated in Annex F of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration. A number of delegations confirmed their commitment to the Decision.

The Committee formally adopted the Technical Assistance and Training Plan for 2007, after which the Director of the ITTC outlined the critical financial situation of the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (DDAGTF).

Members agreed to postpone until the next meeting a decision on whether to resume their discussion on the developmental aspects of the negotiations under paragraph 51 of the Doha Declaration.

It was agreed that the Chairman should continue to consult informally with concerned delegations to find an acceptable way to conclude the Committee's consideration of the notifications made by ASEAN and China under the Enabling Clause.

A lengthy discussion took place on the EC's revised GSP scheme - notified under the Enabling Clause earlier this year - particularly on the basis of the EC's written responses to questions that had been posed by Brazil, China, India and Pakistan. It was agreed that the item would remain on the CTD's agenda.

The Committee considered a new notification under the Enabling Clause concerning the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Customs Union. In view of questions raised by some delegations, the item will remain on the agenda for the next meeting.

Several African delegations voiced strong support for the Chairman's proposal to hold a panel discussion on commodity issues in the early part of 2007, as part of the CTD's ongoing discussion on the subject, and wanted the participation of one or more farmers' organizations from Africa. The Chairman invited Members to contribute their ideas after the meeting on an appropriately focused theme and on the organizations to invite.

The Committee adopted its Annual Report for 2006, which will be forwarded to the General Council for review at its meeting of 14-15 December 2006. Based on a suggestion by the Chairman under "Other Business", the Committee agreed to consider at its next meeting a recommendation by the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements on a common format for the notification of RTAs. The CTD also agreed to consider at its next meeting whether to once again treat the issue of electronic commerce.

Sub-Committee discusses WTO work programme for LDCs

The Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries, on 15 November, considered three elements of the WTO Work Programme for LDCs: trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives for LDCs; accession of LDCs; and market access for LDCs.

Under the first item, the Sub-Committee heard a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations for an enhanced Integrated Framework (IF). Canada, which is one of the co-chairs of the Transition Team on an enhanced IF, made the report. A large number of Members took part in the discussion, and expressed their support for the enhancement of the IF.

The Secretariat introduced its note, which provides a brief state of play in

the accession working parties of the LDCs. LDCs expressed the need to review the accession process of LDCs, particularly in relation to the accession guidelines which were adopted in 2002.

The Sub-Committee resumed consideration of two Secretariat notes: "Market Access Issues Related to Products of Export Interest to LDCs"; and "Non-tariff Measures on Products of Export Interest to the LDCs". In view of a request from the LDCs, the Sub-Committee agreed that the Secretariat would look into the possibilities of undertaking a study on the market access situation of LDCs in the area of trade in services.

[CTD reviews WTO technical cooperation](#)

The Committee on Trade and Development, on 3 November, focused on issues relating to technical cooperation and training. The Committee considered the Final Report of the Strategic Review of WTO-Provided Trade-Related Technical Assistance, the Management Response to the Strategic Review, the Technical Assistance and Training Plan 2007 and the Semi-Annual Review of the Implementation of Activities – 1 January to 30 June 2006.

The Final Report of the Strategic Review was well received by Members. A distinction was made between the practical, do-able recommendations coming from the Report and those that were more of a policy nature and would require further in-depth discussions. Members also welcomed the Management Response to the Strategic Review and the analysis contained therein. It was generally agreed that there was a need for further opportunities to discuss the recommendations and conclusions of the Report.

Strong support was given to the Technical Assistance and Training Plan for 2007, with several Members commending the improvements and refinements over previous Plans and the way the main practical conclusions and recommendations of the Strategic Review had been incorporated. The Plan was adopted on a provisional basis, since some Members were still awaiting feed-back from capitals. The Secretariat was, however, asked to proceed in seeking donors' contributions to the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund in order to be in a position to start with the implementation of the Plan early next year. In this regard, the Director of the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation expressed his concern about the poor financial situation and stressed the need to ensure secure and predictable funding, in line with the financial rules adopted by Members. The formal adoption of the Plan is expected at the 61st Session of the CTD on 28 November 2006.

The Committee took note of the Semi-Annual Review of the Implementation of Activities - 1 January to 30 June 2006.

[Workshop helps officials use health patent flexibilities](#)

Twenty-eight developing-country officials have taken part in a 27-29 November workshop designed to help their countries make use of the pharmaceutical patents flexibilities in the WTO intellectual property agreement.

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[Tenth Introduction Course on WTO for LDCs concludes in Geneva](#)

The tenth Introduction Course on the WTO for the least-developed countries (LDCs), organized by the Institute for Training and Technical Co-operation of the WTO, concluded on 24 November in Geneva.

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Germany donates an extra CHF 1.5 million for poor countries to fully benefit from the multilateral trading system

Germany has announced a further contribution of approximately CHF1,5 million (EUR 1 million) to the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund, which brings Germany's contribution up to CHF 2.6 million (approximately EUR1.7 million) for the year 2006.

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15th WTO Introduction Day



The 15th Introduction Day was held at the WTO on Thursday 23 November. This day was intended for delegates newly arrived in Geneva, non-governmental organizations, interns currently working in the Secretariat as well as new members of staff. Over 65 participants registered for this event, 80% from outside the Organization.

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Goods Council considers new EC enlargement, extends Kimberley waiver

The Council for Trade in Goods, on 20 November, agreed to forward the European Communities enlargement to include Bulgaria and Romania to the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements for examination, and approved the extension of the WTO waiver for the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for conflict diamonds.

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TBT Committee Meeting Fourth Triennial Review adopted

After two years of preparatory work, the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade adopted, on 9 November, its Fourth Triennial Review Report. The Report provides an overview of the Committee's work after eleven years of implementation and sets out an agenda for the future.

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Lamy says new postal strategy could help trade expansion

Director-General Pascal Lamy, in a video address to the Universal Postal Union Strategy Conference on 8 November 2006 said "the new UPU strategy of integrating the physical, electronic and financial networks could dramatically facilitate expanding global trade".

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[Colombia: Clear progress in modernization and liberalization but further reforms needed](#)

The Trade Policy Review Body, on 22 and 24 November, conducted the third review of the trade policies and practices of Colombia. Amb. Eirik Glenne (Norway) chaired and Amb. Peter Allgeier (United States) acted as discussant for this review. Colombia has achieved steady economic growth in recent years, and has made definite progress in the modernization and liberalization of its trade regime since its previous review in 1996. Non-tariff barriers to trade have been significantly reduced and the country has embarked on an ambitious programme of reforms of many economic sectors particularly services, according to a WTO Secretariat report on the trade policies and practices of Colombia. The report notes that to consolidate and broaden these gains it would be important to address, among others, certain practices related to customs, import licensing, local content requirements, internal taxes and the regulation of certain services. It would be also useful to reassess export promotion and incentive schemes.

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[Rise in fuel prices during 2005 lifts shares of oil-exporters in world trade while US trade deficit reaches record level](#)

"2005 saw a deceleration of world trade caused by a lower economic activity. At a time of uncertainty, a strong, rules-based multilateral trading system is the best insurance policy for the world economy," said WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy on 9 November on the publication of the WTO annual report 'International Trade Statistics 2006'. "The lingering indecisiveness of the Doha Round further saps the confidence in the multilateral trading system as an engine of economic growth and development. It's time for political action to bring the Round to a successful conclusion" added Mr. Lamy.

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[WTO Secretariat announces latest statistics on safeguards actions](#)

The WTO Secretariat, on 29 November, published the latest statistics on safeguards actions notified by WTO Members pursuant to the Agreement on Safeguards.

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[WTO Secretariat reports new anti-dumping investigations continue to decline, while new final measures show increase](#)

The WTO Secretariat reported on 27 November, based on the latest available figures, that in the period 1 January-30 June 2006, the number of initiations of new anti-dumping investigations continued its recently-reported declining trend, while the number of new final measures

increased relative to the corresponding period of 2005.

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Air Transport and the GATS

The WTO Secretariat published, on 12 November, a compilation of the documentation produced in 2000-2001 for the first review of the GATS Annex on Air Transport Services. The 200-page volume is available from the Online Bookshop.

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