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[Lamy welcomes conclusion of Saudi Arabia's WTO negotiations](#)



Director-General Pascal Lamy, on 28 October, welcomed the conclusion of the Working Party negotiations on the accession of Saudi Arabia to the WTO. "This is a very important step in Saudi Arabia's accession to the WTO. I am glad to see that the tremendous amount of work done by Saudi Arabia has now brought it closer to WTO entry. We look forward to confirmation by the General Council in the days to come," he said.

[Working Party head underlines Bhutan's LDC status](#)

Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch, at the second meeting of the Working Party on the accession of Bhutan on 6 October, said members must keep in mind Bhutan's special status as a land-locked, least-developed country in the negotiations.

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[Serbia's membership negotiations now underway](#)

Serbia's Foreign Economic Relations Minister Milan Parivodic, at the first meeting of the country's accession working party on 7 October, declared that WTO membership is a "sine qua non" for Serbia's competitiveness and integration into the world economy.

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Montenegro membership talks launched

Montenegro's International Economic Relations Minister Gordana Djurovic said the first meeting of the country's accession Working Party held on 4 October marked "an important step in Montenegro's transition to a fully free-market and free-trade oriented economy".

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Yemen underlines commitment to WTO entry

Yemen's Industry and Trade Minister Khaled Rajeh Sheikh, at the second meeting of the country's working party on 3 October, said that WTO membership is "a necessary step and an important component in our efforts to integrate into the world economy".

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Uzbekistan Working Party holds third meeting:

The Working Party on the Accession of the Uzbekistan held its third meeting on 14 October. It continued its examination of country's foreign trade regime on the basis of additional replies to questions, the revised legislative action plan, and revised checklists or information provided on agriculture, SPS, TBT and TRIPS. A plurilateral meeting was also held the same day to discuss domestic support and export subsidies in agriculture.

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WTO Deputy Directors-General Alejandro Jara of Chile, Valentine Rugwabiza of Rwanda, Harsha V. Singh of India and Rufus Yerxa of the United States began their terms of office on 1 October 2005. Director-General Pascal Lamy informed the General Council about his choice of Deputy Directors-General last July.

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Lamy calls for a draft ministerial text by mid-November



At the General Council meeting on 19 October, Mr. Lamy as chair of the Trade Negotiations Committee stressed the need for urgent action by all with a view to producing, by mid-November, a draft Ministerial text based on convergence among negotiators.

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The Director-General, in a [speech](#) during an interactive video conference from Paris to the Annual Conference of the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank in Helsinki on 22 October said “while we have seen some progress in the agriculture dossier last week, positions are still too far apart on agricultural market access to allow the negotiations to progress”. The previous day, he delivered the Master of Public Affairs inaugural lecture at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris.

In his [report](#) to the General Council on 19 October, the Director-General said he will stress to Ministers meeting informally in Geneva that “we are under severe pressure of time” in the negotiations. He said the Ministers must build on last week’s momentum “to allow us to advance on all issues across the board”.

Mr. Lamy, in a [statement](#) at the meeting of the WTO Trade Negotiations Committee on 13 October, said that the trade talks have gained “a new momentum” with the agriculture proposal by the United States. He added that “it is essential that the development aspect of agriculture negotiations be kept at the centre stage, as it is for the Round as a whole”.

The Director-General Hong Kong, China's Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology John Tsang, who is also chairman of the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference, were keynote speakers of a [roundtable forum](#) on 16 October at the Hong Kong University. NGO representatives participated in an open-floor discussion. The host government's website broadcast the event. Mr Lamy also spoke to journalists at the Hong Kong Foreign Correspondents Club.

In a [speech](#) to the International Trade Centre Executive Forum on National Export Strategy in Montreux on 5 October, Mr. Lamy stressed that “services are a core element of the Doha Development Agenda”. He added that “there is clear link between development and benefits brought about by the opening of services markets”.

African cotton proponents hail 'landmark' progress on development

The African proponents of the cotton initiative have welcomed progress on the developmental side of the initiative, saying this aspect of the 1 August 2004 framework is finally taking shape, the Cotton Sub-Committee learnt in its seventh meeting on 28 October.

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Republic of Guinea: Improved trade regime but good governance and trade diversification remain major challenges



Guinea has generally improved its trade regime since the last review took place in 1999, in particular by unifying the tariff in 2005 upon implementing the reform agreed with other members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), according to a WTO Secretariat Report on the Trade Policies and Practices of the Republic of Guinea. Guinea's trade policy is now aimed at increasing the contribution that trade makes to economic growth by diversifying and boosting exports, especially those of the agricultural, fisheries and non-mining sectors. The report notes that good governance, diversification of exports from dependence on minerals and fiscal reform are among the main challenges for the Republic of Guinea to emerge from its economic crisis and successfully reduce poverty.

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WTO encourages Tunisia to continue its reforms

The second Trade Policy Review of Tunisia ended successfully after a detailed analysis of its reforms since the first review in 1994. The Tunisian delegation at the meeting was headed by H.E. Minister Mondher Zenaïdi. Members congratulated Tunisia on its sustained economic growth and its progress in improving the standard of living, achieved largely thanks to its macroeconomic reforms of the past decade. Some members also congratulated Tunisia for its efforts in the area of trade facilitation and the dismantling of quantitative import restrictions. In view of its high tariffs, Members encouraged Tunisia to step up its trade reforms in order to adhere more closely to the principles of the WTO, to overcome the dualism within its economy, and to exploit its comparative advantages more effectively.

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The WTO issued the following panel reports in October 2005:

- On 31 October, on European Communities' complaint against "United States – Laws, regulations and methodology for calculating dumping margins ("zeroing")" (DS294);
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- On 28 October, regarding the case "Korea – Anti-dumping duties on imports of certain paper from Indonesia" (DS312); and
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- On 7 October, on the United States' complaint against "Mexico – Tax measures on soft drinks and other beverages" (DS/308).
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The WTO issued the following arbitrator's awards:

- On 28 October, regarding the reasonable period of time for the EC to implement the recommendations and rulings of the Dispute Settlement Body in the case "European Communities – Export subsidies on sugar" (DS265, DS266, DS283); and
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- On 27 October, the second award regarding the European Communities' implementation of the waiver granted by the Doha Ministerial Conference in relation to its banana regime ("European Communities – The ACP-EC Partnership Agreement, Decision of 14 November 2001," WT/MIN(01)/15).
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Trade is "fundamental tool" in fight against poverty

Director-General Lamy, in a [speech](#) to the UN Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva on 6 October, said that "the bottom line will have to be that trade must act, and deliver, as an engine of GDP growth and development". He added that "the economic interests and development needs of developing countries lie at the heart of the Doha Agenda". In his [opening address](#) to the WTO Symposium on Trade and Sustainable Development on 10 October, the Director-General said that the WTO must ensure its rules help correct environmental problems and support the implementation of multilateral environmental protection accords. He also urged trade liberalization in goods and services that can help protect the environment.

[Transition period extended for export subsidies of developing countries](#)

The WTO Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM Committee), on 27 October, extended by another year (until end 2006) the transition period for the elimination of export subsidy programmes of 19 developing countries. These countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Jamaica, Jordan, Mauritius, Panama, Papua New Guinea, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Uruguay.

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

The eighth Introduction Course on the WTO for the least-developed countries (LDCs), organized by the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation of the WTO, concluded on 21 October in Geneva.

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[Trade growth in 2005 to slow from record 2004 pace](#)



Lower economic output, brought on in part by the sharp rise in oil prices, will slow world trade growth in 2005, according to WTO annual publication International Trade Statistics released on 27 October. World merchandise exports are expected to grow by 6.5 per cent in 2005, markedly less than the 9 per cent growth recorded in 2004. "While growth in trade will remain satisfactory in 2005 the decelerating trend is cause for some concern," said WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy. "To set us on the right course we need to create more opportunities for trade, particularly in developing countries, and we need to adjust global trade rules to better meet the needs of entrepreneurs in the 21st century. The way to achieve this is through the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda round of global trade negotiations."

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[Book celebrates 10th anniversary of the WTO dispute settlement system](#)

The WTO, on 6 October, released "Key Issues in WTO Dispute Settlement: The First Ten Years". Edited by Deputy Director-General Rufus Yerxa and Legal Affairs Division Director Bruce Wilson, the book contains contributions by WTO Secretariat professionals and outside experts.

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[WTO Secretariat reports continuing declines in both new anti-dumping investigations and new final anti-dumping measures](#)

The WTO Secretariat, on 24 October, reported that in the period 1 January-30 June 2005, the number of initiations of new anti-dumping investigations and the number of new measures applied continued their previously-reported declining trends. During January-June 2005, 15 Members reported initiating a total of 96 new investigations, down from 106 initiations in the corresponding period of 2004. A total of 12 Members applied 53 new final anti-dumping measures during the January-June 2005 period, compared with 58 new measures applied during January-June 2004. Twenty-one of the 96 new initiations were opened by developed Members, and 24 of the 53 new final measures were applied by developed Members, during the first half of 2005. This compares with 40 new initiations opened and 23 new measures applied by developed Members during the first half of 2004.

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