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[Lamy: "We have resumed negotiations fully across the board"](#)



Director-General Pascal Lamy, in his report to the WTO General Council on 7 February, said that "political conditions are now more favourable for the conclusion of the Round than they have been for a long time". He added that "political leaders around the world clearly want us to get fully back to business, although we in turn need their continuing commitment".

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[The Philippines' active involvement in the Doha Round at this crucial time is vital, says Lamy](#)

If we are to reach a result, it is time for all countries to make a contribution now, stressed Director-General Lamy in a speech to the Business Roundtable of the Philippines Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Manila on 23 February.

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[Lamy urges support for environmental chapter of the Doha Round](#)

Director-General Lamy, in an address to the UNEP Global Ministerial Environment Forum in Nairobi on 5 February, warned that a failure of the Doha negotiations "would strengthen the hand of all those who argue that economic growth should proceed unchecked" without regard for the environment. He stressed that "trade, and indeed the WTO, must be made to deliver sustainable development".

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[Lamy to visits East Africa: Freer and fairer trade can help Africa spur growth and alleviate poverty](#)

As part of his ongoing consultations with WTO members on how to move forward the trade talks, Director-General Pascal Lamy toured East Africa on 1-6 February. He met the Presidents of Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, government representatives, parliamentarians, civil society and business



[GENERAL COUNCIL](#) [back to top](#)

[WTO chairpersons for 2007](#)

The General Council, on 7 February, noted the consensus on a slate of names of chairpersons for WTO bodies, and elected Amb. Muhamad NOOR (Malaysia) as its new chairman. The WTO chairpersons for 2007 are:

General Council: H.E. Mr. Muhamad NOOR (Malaysia)

Dispute Settlement Body: H.E. Mr. Bruce GOSPER (Australia)

Trade Policy Review Body: H.E. Mr. Vesa HIMANEN (Finland)

Council for Trade in Goods: H.E. Mr. Karsten Vagn NIELSEN (Denmark)

Council for Trade in Services: H.E. Mr. C. Trevor CLARKE (Barbados)

Council for TRIPS: H.E. Mr. Yonov Frederick AGAH (Nigeria)

Committee on Trade and Development: H.E. Mr. Shree Baboo Chekitan SERVANSING (Mauritius)

Committee on Balance-of-Payments Restrictions: H.E. Mr. Chitsaka CHIPAZIWA (Zimbabwe)

Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration: Mr. Tony LYNCH (New Zealand)

Committee on Trade and Environment: H.E. Mr. Manuel A.J. TEEHANKEE (Philippines)

Committee on Regional Trade Agreements: Mr. Julian METCALFE (United Kingdom)

Working Group on Trade, Debt and Finance: Mr. Ravi BANGAR (India)

Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology: H.E. Mr. Kwabena BAAH-DUODU (Ghana)

Chairpersons of Bodies established under the Trade Negotiations Committee (to serve until the next Session of the Ministerial Conference):

Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation: H.E. Mr. Eduardo Ernesto

SPERISEN-YURT (Guatemala) **Work Programme on Small Economies:** The

Chairman of the Dedicated Session of the Committee on Trade and Development reported that while there had been no formal meetings of the Dedicated Session since December 2006, the proponents had met a number of times recently to discuss their proposals in the various negotiating groups and other WTO bodies, and had also engaged in a number of bilateral and plurilateral meetings on issues concerning Agriculture, NAMA, Services, Trade Facilitation and subsidies. Given the recent developments in the negotiations, it was his understanding that the proponents were keen to resume this work.

Non-recognition of Rights under Article XXIV:6 and Article XXVIII of the GATT 1994 – Communication from Honduras and Guatemala: The

Chairman reported on consultations he had held on 5 February on this matter, which had included all interested delegations and had been without prejudice to any Member's rights under the WTO. The consultations had been positive and constructive and had resulted in a clear understanding that the parties directly concerned would be engaging, in the next few weeks, in direct and substantive dialogue and in good faith on the issues and concerns raised by Honduras and Guatemala. While it remained to be seen what result would emerge from these contacts, they were in his view a necessary step and a sign of progress. The Council agreed to revert to this matter at its next meeting.

Review of the Exemption Provided under Paragraph 3 of GATT 1994:

Reverting to this review under the current two-yearly cycle as provided for in paragraph 3(b) of GATT 1994, Members agreed to proceed in a manner similar to that in 2005. In keeping with this procedure, several

delegations spoke for the record with regard to the review under the current cycle, and were invited to submit comments and questions to the US regarding the operation of the legislation under the exemption, to which the US will be invited to respond. These statements, questions and responses, together with the annual statistical report provided by the US under Paragraph 3 (c) of GATT 1994, will form the basis for this year's review. For the purposes of the review, this matter will be on the Agenda of subsequent General Council meetings in the course of 2007 as the Chairman deems appropriate, or at the request of any Member. The General Council will, furthermore, consider this matter again at its meeting in December this year at which it will take note of the discussions held in the course of the review until then, and take any other action it may agree on. It will also take note that the subsequent review will normally be held in 2009. The US indicated its willingness to organize informal consultations in which interested delegations would be free to ask questions and discuss issues without prejudice to their national positions. The Council adopted the narrative report of the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration on its meetings of September and October 2006. The Committee's recommendations from these meetings had been approved by the General Council in October. The following matter was considered under "Other Business":

Administrative Measures for Members in Arrears: As required under the revised Administrative Measures approved by the General Council in May 2006, the Chair of the Budget Committee informed the Council of the Members that were under Administrative Measures in Categories II - IV. Also as required under the revised Administrative Measures, the General Council Chair requested Members in Categories III and IV of the Measures to inform him, before the next meeting of the Council, as to when their payment of arrears might be expected. In keeping with the Administrative Measures, the Chairman will report on Members' responses to the next Council meeting.

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[European Communities: Improved economic situation, but continued reforms needed](#)

The European Communities' economic situation has improved following the economic slowdown in 2001-03, mainly driven by private investment and exports. The economic recovery has translated into a decline of unemployment and was accompanied by strong expansion of international trade. Nonetheless, sustained recovery would appear to hinge on continued structural reforms, including further liberalization of services both at the intra-EC level and vis-à-vis third countries, according to the WTO Secretariat report on the trade policies and practices of the European Communities. The report also notes that the European Communities is the world's leading exporter and the second-largest importer of goods, and its economy has continued to support global growth by maintaining its market open, but trade barriers remain in a few but important areas, notably agriculture. Indeed, the report states that despite an increase in the exposure of farmers to world markets due to the implementation of the 2003 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), further reduction of export subsidies and tariffs on agriculture are needed. The report, along with a policy statement by the European Communities, was the basis for the eighth Trade Policy Review of the European Communities by the Trade Policy Review Body held on 26 and 28 February 2007. The review was chaired by Amb. Vesa Tapani Himanen (Finland) with Amb.

Claudia Uribe (Colombia) acting as the discussant.

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Argentina: Strong economic recovery: preventing market distortions will be important to sustained growth

Argentina has successfully emerged from one of the worst recessions in its history, and the economy has been growing at a fast pace since 2003, according to a WTO Secretariat report on the trade policies and practices of Argentina. The report notes that the recovery has come hand-in-hand with the adoption of a wide range of policy measures that have included the abandonment of a fixed exchange rate, the renegotiation and reduction of the external debt, and government intervention in domestic price formation. Although Argentina's heterodox mix of measures has, arguably, underpinned its remarkable economic turnaround, the report states that the systemic implications for the global economic system of such a strategy and whether it will prevent another boom-bust cycle in Argentina remain open questions. The report also mentions that a successful transition to a sustainable growth path calls for policy measures to avoid economic overheating and prevent market distortions from becoming entrenched, and that attracting investment is important to address emerging supply constraints, and depends in part on enhancing investor confidence. It also stresses the importance of the international economic environment, which Argentina can help shape by continuing to play an active role in the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). The report, along with a policy statement by the government of Argentina was the basis for the second Trade Policy Review of Argentina by the Trade Policy Review Body held on 12 and 14 February. The Review was chaired by Amb. Uribe and Amb. Bruce Gosper (Australia) acted as discussant.

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WTO winter eTraining courses begin

The WTO eTraining Winter Term for developing-country officials started on 12 February 2007 and ends on 30 March 2007, reaching out to more than 500 participants from all over the world.

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Luxembourg offers EUR450,000 to the WTO training programme for the benefit of poorer countries

Luxembourg has donated EUR450,000 to the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund for 2007.

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Norway offers CHF2 million to the WTO training programme for the benefit of poorer countries

Norway has donated NOK10 million (CHF2 million) to the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (DDAGTF) for 2007. Norway is today the second biggest contributor to the DDAGTF.

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Private standards are a mixed blessing, committee hears



Standards set by private sector bodies can boost trade, but they can also make life difficult for small suppliers, the WTO committee dealing with food safety and animal and plant health heard in its 28 February-1 March meeting.

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TRIPS Council reviews Saudi Arabian legislation

The TRIPS Council, on 13 February, reviewed the TRIPS implementing legislation of Saudi Arabia, and took note of the outstanding material required to complete the pending reviews of eight Members. It agreed to review the legislation of Viet Nam, a newly acceded Member, at its first meeting in 2008. The Council continued its discussion of the agenda items on the review of the provisions of Article 27.3(b), the relationship between the TRIPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore. The Council agreed that the incoming Chair hold further consultations in due course on how the Council should organize its future work on the review of the application of the provisions of the Section on geographical indications under Article 24.2. The Council elected H.E. Ambassador Yonov Agah from Nigeria as its Chairman for the coming year.

GPA Committee elects new chair

The Committee on Government Procurement, on 14 February, elected Mr. Nicholas Niggli of Switzerland as chairman, with immediate effect. Following this meeting and through 15 February, the Committee held a series of informal sessions, which included a review of the state of the market access negotiations under Article XXIV:7. Agreement was reached on arrangements for the required legal check of the text of the new Agreement on Government Procurement on which provisional agreement was reached on 8 December 2006 and verification of the linguistic consistency of the English, French and Spanish versions. Work continued on the development of decisions on arbitration procedures and indicative criteria regarding the elimination of government control or influence over entities, building on submissions provided by Parties, for use in the event of modifications to GPA Parties' schedules.

Montenegro Working Party holds third meeting

The Working Party on the Accession of Montenegro to the WTO held its third meeting on 27 February. The delegation from Montenegro was led by Dr. Gordana Djurovic, Deputy Prime-Minister for European Integration. The Working Party continued its examination of the country's foreign trade regime, and the Secretariat was requested to prepare a Factual Summary of Points Raised. The timing of the next meeting will be decided once new inputs have been received from Montenegro.

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ILO and WTO Secretariat issue joint study on trade and employment



The International Labour Office and the WTO Secretariat, on 19 February 2007, issued "Trade and Employment: Challenges for Policy Research". Director-General Pascal Lamy and ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, in their foreword to the study, said "the multilateral trading system has the potential to contribute to increasing global welfare and to promote better employment outcomes".

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The WTO website gets a new look

On 7 February, the website got a new look in response to a recent survey of users.

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The Salzburg Retreat: A presentation of outcomes for the Doha Round



Experts from four leading institutions present the outcomes of an intensive four-day problem solving retreat dedicated to advancing the Doha Development Agenda. The retreat, held in Salzburg, Austria, from 16-20 February, brought together 50 leading figures from government, industry and civil society who are based in developed, developing and least-developed countries. Director-General Pascal Lamy opened the meeting and a number of WTO negotiating chairs participated in the session. By putting the Doha negotiations into a global context and clarifying the potential gains and costs that may arise from a failure of the talks, participants sought to lay the political groundwork for resolving current differences while building momentum for a conclusion.

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