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Special Focus: World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2010 “Improve the State of the World: Rethink, Redesign, Rebuild”

Davos-Klosters, 27 - 31 January 2010

The Director-General's message

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy participated as discussant in some of the sessions focussing primarily on the likelihood of a imminent recovery of the world economy and on the links between trade and climate change.

The message he sent at Davos stressed the need to redefine international governance. He noted that, while the internationalization of trade and finance has grown exponentially, the system of global governance has not been able to keep up with the ever-changing nature of the world economy. The gap has been made even more strident by the financial and economic crisis. In Davos, he noted the recurrence of a call for “a strong system of multilateral disciplines.”

The World Trade Organization has so far proved an important insurance policy able to maintain protectionist measures within its parameters. But Mr Lamy warns against complacency as the risks of a double-dip and of a jobless recovery are still looming over. A swift conclusion of the Doha Round of negotiations would reinforce the multilateral trading system to the benefit of developing countries, who are “the engine of world growth today” and “who are more dependant on trade than rich countries like the US, Europe or Japan.” The finish line of Doha is in sight, what is needed is the political energy to run the last mile.



Director-General Pascal Lamy at the World Economic Forum. Copyright by World Economic Forum. swiss-image.ch / Photo by Sebastian Derungs



Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation and Federal Councillor of Economic Affairs. Copyright by World Economic Forum. swiss-image.ch / Photo by Sebastian Derungs.

better stabilize our budgets and to contribute to the recovery of the global economy which will induce overall job creation” said Switzerland’s President Doris Leuthard. During the discussion, Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim suggested a summit of world leaders to give the final push to the stalling Doha negotiations.



Celso Amorim, Minister of Foreign Relations of Brazil. Copyright by World Economic Forum. swiss-image.ch / Photo by Remy Steinegger

government on Saturday 30 January. Major WTO players attended the meeting, but the mini-ministerial suffered the notable absence of US Trade Representative Ron Kirk and China’s Minister of Commerce, represented by his Vice-Minister.

The mini-ministerial meeting saw reaffirmed commitments to market opening as the best tool “to fight the crisis, to

Coming events

- 10-12 February Trade Policy Review – El Salvador
- 22-23 February WTO General Council
- 24-26 March Trade Policy Review – Croatia
- 6-8 April Trade Policy Review – Armenia

Trade and climate change

Mr Lamy also took part in the discussion on the link between trade and climate change, an issue which is tainted by competitiveness concerns and the threat of protectionism. He praised the recent summit in Copenhagen as having the potential of creating a functional multilateral framework. He explained that international trade contributes already to the efficient allocation of resources, a feature that can also be valuable for the efficient use of environmental resources. The WTO has the tools to address the environmental issue through trade measures that reduce obstacles to trade in environmental goods and services. What is needed is international coherence by the international actors.



Director-General Pascal Lamy during the session ‘Rethinking Trade and Climate Change’. Copyright by World Economic Forum. swiss-image.ch / Photo by Sebastian Derungs

A mini-ministerial for advancing trade talks

On the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, some 17 trade ministers met for an informal gathering hosted by the Swiss

New at the WTO:

WTO launches discussion forum for World Trade Report 2010

Geneva, 28 January 2010

With the World Trade Report 2010 in the making, the WTO has opened a discussion forum to stimulate debate on the theme for this year’s edition: “Trade in Natural Resources: Challenges in Global Governance”. The online forum is open to the views of WTO delegates, policy-makers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic experts, WTO staff members and all those with an active interest in natural resources. Short articles and comments on the challenges of global trade in natural resources and on the role the WTO could play can be posted on the webpage. Publication of the report is scheduled for July 2010.

Trade Policy Reviews

MALAYSIA 25 and 27 January

A WTO Secretariat report on the trade policies and practices of Malaysia noted that between 2005 and 2008, Malaysia’s economy continued to grow steadily although the pace of growth slowed in the latest years reflecting the global financial crisis and associated sharp fall in exports. The report praised the measures taken by the Government on the relaxation of restrictions on foreign investment in services, and it remarked that an early recovery of the Malaysian economy depends not only on prudent macroeconomic policies but also on structural reforms, like promoting competition, further liberalization in the services sector and moving up the value chain in manufacturing.



Photo WTO Forum 2008

Negotiations

Farm talks start 2010 quietly but more substance lies ahead

Geneva, 21 January 2010

The first agriculture negotiations sessions of the year on 21 and 22 January 2010 saw further discussions of technical work, as delegates prepared to take up more substantive issues 10 days later.

Dispute Settlement within WTO

Under the spotlight of the Dispute Settlement Body:

- » 21 December 2009 Dispute Settlement Body establishes panel to examine China's export restrictions on raw materials
- » 21 December 2009 Appellate Body issues report on US-China dispute over publications and audiovisual products
- » 12 January 2010 Appellate Body makes proposals to amend the Working Procedures for Appellate Review
- » 19 January 2010 Dispute Settlement Body sets up panel on the tyres dispute between the US and China
- » 19 January 2010 Dispute Settlement Body sets up panel on Philippines' taxes on distilled spirits
- » 22 January 2010 Panel rules on dispute over US anti-dumping measures on Thai plastic bags

Aid for Trade

Aid for Trade can help West Africa recover from the global recession

Abuja, 27 January 2010

At the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Aid for Trade review in Abuja, Nigeria, WTO Deputy Director-General Valentine Rugwabiza stressed the need for West African countries to establish the right policy environment to facilitate trade. West Africa faces a number of constraints that hinder its economic development. Aid for Trade can help these countries face up to these challenges through the establishment of trade and export strategies that stimulate recovery. However, to reap the benefits of Aid for Trade, clear priorities and coordinated interventions at regional level are of paramount importance. DDG Rugwabiza called on West African countries to forge an Aid for Trade partnership that would work as a multiplier of trade benefits.

Outreach Activities for Parliamentarians

Parliamentary Workshop for Francophone Africa, Cameroon

Yaoundé, 7-9 January 2010

WTO and its partner Francophone organizations organized the second workshop on WTO issues for legislators in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Attendance as usual was quite high and included highly-ranked MPs and former Ministers of Trade. The meeting addressed the principles and functioning of the WTO and the future of the Doha Round. But the dialogue also touched on other hot topics such as the link between trade and climate change and between trade and intellectual property issues. Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations also came

into the discussion. The workshop benefited from the inputs of WTO and Francophone officials, independent consultants and experts and high officials from the host country, including Cameroon Trade Minister, Mr Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana.

The last day of the meeting was devoted to a visit to the Port of Yaoundé and to a constructive discussion with local banana farmers on the recent "banana agreement" reached in Geneva last December.



Participants at the parliamentary workshop for Francophone Africa in Yaoundé, Cameroon

National dialogue with MPs from Bangladesh

Dhaka, 18-19 January 2010

This national dialogue with MPs from Bangladesh was very productive

and focused on the many interests at stake in the current DDA negotiations for a country like Bangladesh. Negotiations on industrial goods and the quota-free duty-free aspects of the Doha Round were clear priority for all interlocutors met by WTO officials during this activity. Trade Minister,



Bangladeshi Trade Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan, addressing participants at the national dialogue in Dhaka

Mr Muhammad Faruk Khan, stressed the importance for legislators to be aware of the challenges and opportunities that the WTO and the Doha Development Agenda offer to LDCs and to Bangladesh in particular. Similar messages were conveyed during a meeting held with the Prime Minister's Office in Dhaka.



Participants at the national dialogue with MPs from Bangladesh

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Cameroon's Minister of Trade Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, speaking at the parliamentary workshop for Francophone Africa in Yaoundé