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WTO NEWSLETTER FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS



WTO OMC

Dear Parliamentarian,

Welcome to the Centre William Rappard, the home of the WTO. It is a great pleasure to host for the second time the Annual Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization. The topic you have chosen for your deliberations is very timely. There has never been a time when we have had a greater need to strengthen the connections between trade and politics.



DG Pascal Lamy

Our relationship with parliamentarians has grown significantly in recent years and it is very much our intention to build on this solid foundation in the years to come. WTO efforts to reach out to legislators have been intensified and have produced good results in terms of sustained dialogue on WTO issues as well as enhanced engagement of legislators with the multilateral trading System and the Doha Round.

Your oversight of international trade and WTO activities has been, and remains of critical importance in ensuring the transparency and legitimacy of our activities. Holding your Conference within WTO premises is an illustration of this engagement. I am sure that your meetings in Geneva today will undoubtedly inject some political energy into our negotiations. This is timely, as our Members explore how best to reengage in the Doha Round.

As elected representative of your people you play a vital role in bringing the key concerns of your citizens to your governments. I am convinced that you can play an instrumental role in strengthening public support for the WTO and the multilateral trading system. Your support in the months to come will be decisive.

I wish you all the best for your endeavours and a very successful 2012 Parliamentary Conference on the WTO.

With my best wishes,
PASCAL LAMY



WTO and Parliamentarians: The Role of the Information and External Relation Division (IERD)

The interaction with Parliamentarians is at the heart of the outreach activities of the WTO. The Information and External Relations Division (IERD) is the principal structure within the WTO Secretariat to deal with Parliamentarians. The outreach activities seek closer ties with legislators around the world and enhanced dialogue on WTO agreements and negotiations. For the past ten years, the division has sought to get in touch with Parliament Members of all regions of the world and attempted to reach out to all the developing countries. It has been our mission to favour the dialogue among parliamentarians and between legislators and the WTO. In doing so, we are acknowledging the pivotal role that Parliamentarians play in the necessary interaction between WTO and the Public. Ensuring the conditions for an informed dialogue with MPs on complex and diversified issues such as the Multilateral trading system and the Doha Round, is key for a well-functioning international trade. Due to their constitutional role parliamentarians have in most cases to ratify all the agreements that result from WTO negotiations. The IERD has organized a series of meetings, workshops and briefings and is each year, as member of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference, collaborating with the International Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament towards the organisation of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO. Also, our organization's Senior Management has attended key international meetings involving Parliamentarians, have regularly addressed Parliaments in capitals, and also met with parliamentary visitors

to Geneva. In sum, the word is outreach! In addition to these important workshops, briefings and conferences, the IERD publishes six times per year a version of this newsletter, tailored specifically to parliamentarians and their interests and intended to provide them in a concise and clear way with information on developments in Geneva.

WTO News

General Council meeting

Geneva, October 3rd and 4th

Director-General Pascal Lamy, in his report to the General Council on 3 October 2012, said that “we need to explore any and all options, small as they may be, for incremental progress on the negotiating agenda”. He said work in the Doha Development Agenda since the last meeting has seen “signs of momentum”, and that his recent contacts have confirmed “this collective desire to re-engage”.

High trade growth of least-developed countries

Geneva, October 10th

At the meeting of the Sub-Committee of Least-Developed Countries on 10 October 2012, many members said they were encouraged by a WTO Secretariat report that the value of LDCs’ total exports (goods and commercial services) grew by 23.9 per cent in 2011 to reach US\$229.8 billion. However, they agreed with Haiti, the LDC coordinator in the WTO, that “a lot remains to be done”.

Lamy urges “smart policies” to maintain European competitiveness

Geneva, October 20th

Director-General Pascal Lamy, in a speech at the European Industry Forum in Berlin on 20 October 2012 said “I believe that a big part of the answer to maintaining the competitiveness of European industry in world markets relates to the need for smart domestic but also European policies”. He expressed the hope that “what we saw in Europe for the last six months, including at this week’s European Council, are the first steps towards exiting the euro crisis and restoring a much needed credibility”.

Economic data

Lamy: Trade growth to modestly rebound in 2013 but world still in “tailwinds of the crisis”

Geneva, October 12th

Director-General Pascal Lamy, in his address to the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry in Tokyo on 12 October 2012, said that “based on current information, and holding a number of assumptions to task, the WTO expects trade growth to modestly rebound to 4.5% in 2013 with exports of developed and developing economies increasing by 3.3% and 5.7%, respectively and imports increasing by 3.4% and 6.1%, it is clear that the world is still working its way out of the crisis”.

WTO releases 2011 trade and tariff data

Geneva, October 23rd

Accessions

General Council accepts Laos’ membership, only ratification left

Geneva, October 26th



Laos’ Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Thongloun Sisoulith (left) and Industry and Commerce Minister Nam Viyaketh (right) head their country’s delegation at the General Council meeting to approve Laos’ WTO membership

WTO members meeting as the General Council on 26 October 2012 have agreed to Laos joining the organization, paving the way for the southeast Asian country to become a member in early 2013.



Laos’ Industry and Commerce Minister Nam Viyaketh (left) receives his country’s name plate from WTO Director General Pascal Lamy as a symbol of being accepted as a WTO member

Working Party seals the deal on Tajikistan’s accession negotiations

Geneva, October 26th

Tajikistan’s accession to the WTO cleared a major hurdle on 26 October 2012 when the Working Party on its accession approved, ad referendum, the package spelling out its terms of entry to the organization.

Technical assistance

Japan offers USD 104,698 for food, animal and plant health standards

Geneva, October 8th

Japan announced it has donated USD 104,698 (about CHF 110,000) to the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) a programme set up to help developing countries improve their expertise and their capacity to analyse and implement international standards on food safety and animal and plant health.

Dispute Settlement

Geneva, October 15th

Mexico files dispute against China on alleged subsidies to clothing and textile products

Geneva, October 18th

Appellate Body issues report on China's duties on steel products from the US

Geneva, October 23rd

Panels set up on China's duties on US automobiles and on US compliance in Boeing dispute

Upcoming events:

15 - 16 November

Parliamentary Conference on the WTO: "Back to basics: Connecting politics and trade"

20 - 21 November

Committee on Regional Trade Agreements

21 - 23 November

Trade Policy Review Body - East African Community (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda)

29 - 30 November

Meeting with Parliamentarians from the Asia Pacific in Vientiane, Laos in partnership with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie

Featured media

LATEST PODCASTS:

15.10.2012: *Trade Policy Review: Bangladesh*

LATEST VIDEOS:

26.10.2012: *WTO welcomes Laos*

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