

Special Edition: Parliamentary Conference

Welcome Message by DG Pascal Lamy



DG Pascal Lamy

*Dear Parliamentarian,
Welcome to the Centre William Rappard, the home of the WTO. It is indeed a great pleasure for us to host, for the first time, your Annual Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization.*

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 key importance in ensuring the transparency and legitimacy of our activities.

Your Conference comes at a crucial juncture. The leaders of the G-20 and APEC provided the Doha Round negotiations with a much needed impetus last year when they identified the year 2011 as a window of opportunity for concluding the round. We have seen, over the last months, an intensification of the negotiations and there is, certainly an overall sense of greater engagement and focus, with no single topic being left behind. But as I have warned the WTO membership recently, the pace of work is not only too slow, but also too short of the kind of substantive progress needed to reach the landing zone of possible agreement within the window of opportunity leaders have identified. A major acceleration at all negotiation levels is needed. The window of opportunity is still there, but is narrowing very rapidly.

For this reason, we need all the help we can get. As elected representative of your people, and considering the vital role you hold in bringing the key concerns of your citizens to your governments, I am convinced that you can play a determinant role in the revitalization of this process. In fact, your support, over the next months will be decisive.

I wish you all the best for your endeavours and a very successful 2011 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

Intellectual property should be part of poorest countries' development infrastructure — Lamy

Geneva, February 14th

Director-General Pascal Lamy, in his speech at the Forum on Intellectual Property for Least Developed Countries on 14 February 2011 in Geneva, called for “creating the viable technological base proposed in TRIPS and the knowledge base for innovation and creativity, so that the intellectual property system forms part of the development infrastructure for LDCs”.

Lamy: “Pragmatic solutions need to be found now to enhance global governance”

Florence, February 19th

Director-General Pascal Lamy, in a speech to the European University Institute in Florence on 19 February 2011, said that “today's world is confronted with major global challenges... Pragmatic solutions need to be found now to enhance global governance and better address the problems that our world is facing”.

Doha Round can help lift Africa's agriculture — Lamy

Geneva, February 21st

Director-General Pascal Lamy, in opening the conference on “Harnessing Agriculture for Development through Trade” sponsored by CUTS in Geneva on 21 February 2011, said that “the Doha Round will help level the playing field for Africa, correcting historical injustices in the world trade rule-book”. He also said that “African agriculture needs to become more efficient, and in that efficiency it needs to discover ‘specialization’”.



DG Pascal Lamy

Lamy calls for major acceleration of negotiations

Geneva, February 22nd

Director-General Pascal Lamy reported to the General Council on 22 February that he was encouraged by recent discussions among Senior Officials but warned that “a major acceleration at all levels — multilaterally, plurilaterally and bilaterally — is needed”. He added that “the window of opportunity is still there, but it is narrowing everyday”.

WTO chairpersons for 2011

Geneva, February 22nd

The WTO General Council noted the consensus on a new slate of names of chairpersons for WTO bodies. The names can be found at http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres11_e/pr626_e.htm.



A Chairperson's seat in a WTO meeting room

Geographical indications draft completed swiftly but with 208 differences

Geneva, March 3rd

In less than two months, a drafting group of negotiators has produced a complete text on the proposed multilateral register for geographical indications for wines and spirits. But because all the present divergent positions are included, the 9-page document — presented to a formal negotiation meeting on 3 March 2011 — contains around 208 pieces of rival text, marked by square brackets.

Members seek stronger push for new negotiations texts by Easter

Geneva, March 8th

WTO ambassadors told an informal meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee on 8 March 2011 that they share Director General Pascal Lamy's concern that recent progress on substance in the Doha Round is not fast enough to meet late April targets.

Financial Help and Aid for Trade

Spain gives €1 million to support least-developed countries' trade

Germany offers EUR 1 million to WTO training programme for developing countries

In the Spotlight of the Dispute Settlement Body

- Ukraine files dispute against Moldova
- Thailand appeals cigarettes dispute panel report
- WTO adopts panel report on US/Korea zeroing
- China files dispute against US
- Moldova files dispute against Ukraine

We would like to hear from you:

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FEATURED MEDIA

Latest podcast: 08.03.2011: Statement by Pascal Lamy to the TNC

Latest video: 02.11.2010: Interview with former WTO Director-General Peter Sutherland

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