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Lamy: Ministers here, but will there be negotiations?



Lack of progress in discussions immediately before the weekend's deliberations on template agreements – known as modalities – is “sobering”, Director-General Pascal Lamy told an informal meeting of the full membership on 30 June. A number of countries shared his concern that continuing deadlock could wreck the chances of concluding a deal that would boost global economic growth, correct imbalances and promote development.

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Earlier, Mr. Lamy outlined the schedule for ‘moment-of-truth’ meetings. From 30 June, a series of meetings open to all members, alternating with hard talking among a representative group of ministers and other forms of consultations, will aim to produce “vital operational decisions” over the weekend.

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In his opening address to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Conference on the WTO in Geneva on 22 June, the Director-General said the following week is “a crucial moment for the negotiations” with a number of ministers aiming to narrow differences in industrial and agricultural goods. “We have now a once in a generation opportunity to correct imbalances in multilateral trade—I ask that we not waste it”, he said.

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The chairpersons of the negotiating groups on agriculture and on non-agricultural products, on 22 June, circulated to members draft texts for their respective negotiating areas.

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Mr. Lamy, in a speech at the 12th International Economic Forum of the Americas on 5 June. in Montreal, said that the current negotiations are difficult because “this Round is deeper, larger and fairer across the board” than previous rounds.

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TRADE POLICY REVIEWS [back to top](#)**Chinese Taipei: A record of strong growth which continued reform can help to maintain**

The Trade Policy Review Body, on 20 and 22 June, conducted the first review of the trade policies and practices of the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu (Chinese Taipei). The review was chaired by Amb. Claudia Uribe (Colombia). Amb. Bruce Gosper (Australia) acted as discussant.

The economy of Chinese Taipei appears to be on a steady growth path, given the ongoing implementation of macroeconomic policy measures and structural reforms, including trade liberalization, with the authorities forecasting GDP growth of 4.25% in 2006, according to a WTO Secretariat report on the Trade policies and practices of Chinese Taipei. But a number of challenges remain, as the Chinese Taipei authorities recognize. The report says that of great importance to Chinese Taipei's longer-term growth prospects will be its efforts to implement structural and other economic reforms to boost competition, including trade liberalization particularly in agriculture.

The report also says that further improvement of Chinese Taipei's investment environment would contribute to attracting inbound direct investment, and improving the efficiency of its economy.

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Iceland: Openness and specialization have led to high living standards

The Trade Policy Review Body, on 7 and 9 June, conducted the third review of the trade policies and practices of Iceland. Amb. Uribe chaired the review; Mr. Karl Ehlers (United States) acted as discussant.

Iceland's standard of living is among the world's highest, in part due to the overall openness of its economy, which has allowed Iceland to reap significant benefits from specialization and trade according to a report on the trade policies and practices of Iceland published by the WTO Secretariat.

Iceland has continued to diversify its economy and undertaken macroeconomic and liberalising reforms over the last six years. Many of these reforms have been driven by Iceland's participation in the European Economic Area (EEA). This has widened the gap between the treatment Iceland affords to its EEA partners and to other WTO Members in various areas. The report suggests that closing this gap by applying reforms on an MFN basis, and securing them in the WTO, would help reduce remaining distortions, enhance competition in the domestic market, and prevent over-reliance on the EEA market.

The report also calls for Iceland to take further steps to reduce agricultural support and protection, in particular in the dairy and lamb sectors, which could bring economic benefits and help align agricultural policy with the market-based solutions implemented in other sectors.

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DISPUTE SETTLEMENT [back to top](#)

DSB establishes panels in salmon, microchips disputes



- The Dispute Settlement Body, on 22 June, established a panel to examine the EC's anti-dumping measure on farmed salmon from Norway (DS337).
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- The DSB, on 19 June, established a panel to consider Japan's countervailing duties on imports of certain Dynamic Random Access Memories (DRAMs) from Korea (DS336).
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- At the DDSB meeting on 9 June, the EC blocked Norway's first request for a panel to examine the EC's anti-dumping measures on farmed salmon from Norway.
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Registration begins for public hearings of "US/Canada – Continued suspension of obligations in the EC–hormones dispute" (complainant EC) panels

At the request of the parties in the disputes the panels have agreed to open their proceedings with the parties and scientific experts on 27-28 September and with the parties on 2-3 October 2006.

WTO ACTIVITIES [back to top](#)

Christmas may come late this year for the SPS Committee



Chinese exports of wooden Christmas trees were the subject of one of the 13 specific trade concerns raised during the 27-28 June 2006 meeting of the WTO committee dealing with plant and animal health and food safety – sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS).
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TBT Committee Meeting

The Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (the "TBT Committee") met on 7-9 June.
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