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[Lamy calls for "full speed" negotiations](#)



Director-General Pascal Lamy, in a speech at an international seminar in New Delhi on 12 March, said "time is not on our side ... the multilateral process of negotiations must therefore kick-in at full speed". He underlined the development potential of the Doha Round in agriculture, industrial goods, services and other areas of the negotiations.

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[Lamy asks for support on "final stretch" of negotiations](#)

Director-General Pascal Lamy, at a seminar in Mexico City on 23 March, asked Mexico and other members for support in concluding successfully the Doha Round. "We are not very far from that success – but this is the final stretch, and as in so many human endeavours, the last part is the most difficult", he said.

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[Lamy briefed NGOs on the state of play of the Doha Round negotiations](#)

Director-General Pascal Lamy will brief NGOs on the state of play in the Doha Round on 27 March at the WTO headquarters. A question-and-answer session will follow the briefing.

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DISPUTE SETTLEMENT [back to top](#)

DSB defers panel on banana dispute



Following the European Communities' objection, the Dispute Settlement Body, on 8 March, deferred the establishment of a panel requested by Ecuador pursuant to Article 21.5 of the DSU in the dispute: "European Communities – Regime for the Importation, Sale and Distribution of Bananas". The DSB agreed to revert to this matter and took note of the statements made by Ecuador, the EC, Colombia, Honduras, Panama, Jamaica, Cameroon, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Côte d'Ivoire, Nicaragua, Cost Rica, Suriname, Guatemala and St. Kitts & Nevis, also on behalf of St. Lucia.

WTO issues compliance panel report on gambling dispute

The WTO, on 30 March, issued the report of the compliance panel in the case brought by Antigua and Barbuda regarding "United States – Measures affecting the cross-border supply of gambling and betting services" (DS285).

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WTO ACTIVITIES [back to top](#)

Lamy says ITA success is inspiration to Doha negotiators



Director-General Pascal Lamy, in opening the WTO Information Technology Symposium on 28 March, commended the Information Technology Agreement on its tenth anniversary as "a major success" – noting that world exports of ITA products have more than doubled during the past ten years. He said that "as we embark into the last lap of the Doha Development Agenda, it is important to keep in mind the contribution that an ambitious initiative to cut barriers to trade, such as the ITA, can make to development".

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Goods Council agrees on chairpersons of subsidiary bodies

The Council for Trade in Goods, on 19 March, elected by acclamation Amb. Karsten Vagn Nielsen of Denmark as its new chairman. It agreed on a slate of chairpersons of its subsidiary bodies for this year.

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Working Party on Bosnia and Herzegovina holds third meeting

The Working Party on the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina held its third meeting on 22 March under the Chairmanship of Amb. István Major (Hungary). Members reviewed a factual summary prepared by the Secretariat. Bosnia and Herzegovina held several bilateral meetings on the fringes of the Working Party meeting on the basis of revised offers on goods and services. The date of the next Working Party meeting will be set once the expected inputs have been received from Sarajevo.

Meeting shows need for result in cotton talks and more coherence on aid

While participants differ on some of the details, they agree that cotton needs a breakthrough in the Doha Round negotiations, and that more is needed to remove blockages on development assistance, Director-General Pascal Lamy said on 16 March. He was speaking at the end of a day-and-a-half "High Level Session" on cotton at the WTO in Geneva, attended by ministers and senior officials from WTO members – including African cotton producing countries and donor governments – and international organizations.

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CTD chair to consult on ASEAN-China accord

The Committee on Trade and Development, on 6 March, agreed that the incoming Chairman should consult informally with concerned delegations to find a way to conclude the Committee's consideration of the notifications made by ASEAN and China under the Enabling Clause. The CTD also resumed its consideration of the European Communities' notification concerning its revised GSP scheme, and agreed that this item would remain on the CTD's agenda. The Committee also took note of notifications concerning the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Customs Union and the GSP scheme of the United States, as well as of a biennial report submitted by the Secretariat of the Latin American Integration Association.

The Chairman briefed the CTD on the 14 December 2006 General Council Decision on the Transparency Mechanism for Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs), and in particular on the CTD's role. He also announced the CTD's first meeting on Aid for Trade (with the OECD's Development Assistance Committee), scheduled for 2 April 2007.

Members had a preliminary discussion on the 14 December 2006 General Council Decision on Transparency for Preferential Trade Arrangements. The CTD then adopted the notification format for RTAs proposed by the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements.

Members agreed to resume at the next meeting their discussion under paragraph 51 of the Doha Declaration. For that purpose, the Secretariat was requested to prepare a revision of its background paper on the developmental aspects of the negotiations. The United States made two submissions under the agenda item concerning the Hong Kong Decision on duty-free and quota-free market access for LDCs. Bangladesh, on behalf of the LDC Group, said that the LDCs would continue to work on issues relating to the Decision in the relevant negotiating bodies.

The Secretariat provided an update on WTO technical assistance activities in 2006, after which the critical financial situation of the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund was outlined. A panel discussion on options and solutions to the commodities problem was held, with participation by the Ambassador of Côte d'Ivoire, ITC and UNCTAD. Another panel discussion will be held at the next CTD meeting, to which other international organizations will be invited. The Committee adopted a work programme for 2007 and elected Ambassador Shree Baboo Chekitan Servansing (Mauritius) as its new Chairperson. Following the usual procedure, the Committee agreed to invite the ad hoc observers to its next meeting, while there were no changes in the positions of Members with respect to requests for regular observer status in the CTD.

Spain has in total contributed EUR715,000 (about CHF1.1 million) to the Trade Facilitation Needs Assessment Trust Fund, the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (DDAGTF), and the Preservation and Enhanced Dissemination of GATT/WTO Documents Trust Fund.

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UK gives a further SFr1.2m for food, animal and plant health standards

The United Kingdom has paid £500,000 (approximately 1,190,000 Swiss francs) to help developing countries analyse and implement international standards on food safety and animal and plant health – so-called sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards. This contribution builds on previous contributions totalling £900,000.

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US renews contribution for food, animal and plant health standards

The United States has given US\$110,000 (approximately 136,000 Swiss francs) to help developing countries analyse and implement international standards on food safety and animal and plant health – so-called sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards.

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1st Regional Trade Policy Course in partnership with the National University of Singapore launched

The first RTPC in partnership with the National University of Singapore for the Asia-Pacific region is taking place from 12 March to 1 June 2007. A total of 28 participants from 27 countries are attending this course. From 2004 - 2006, the Asia-Pacific RTPC was held in partnership with the University of Hong Kong.

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TRADE POLICY REVIEWS [back to top](#)

Canada: Trade regime remains open but some barriers persist

The outward-looking orientation of Canada's trade regime has facilitated the economy's successful adjustment to a number of external shocks, and helps explain Canada's good economic performance during the last four years, according to a WTO Secretariat report on the trade policies and practices of Canada. The report notes, however, that productivity growth has been relatively slow, significant trade barriers still protect certain agricultural activities, and foreign investment restrictions remain in some areas such as telecommunications, audiovisual, and air transport. The report stresses that reform in these sectors could lower costs to Canadian taxpayers and consumers while increasing productivity and competition in the domestic market. The report, along with a policy statement by the Government of Canada, was the basis for the Trade Policy Review of Canada by the Trade Policy Review Body held on 21 and 23 March.

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Australia: Continuing the reform agenda would solidify impressive economic performance.

Against the backdrop of continued wide-ranging structural reforms as well as sound macroeconomic policies, Australia's economic performance has been impressive since the last trade policy review in 2002, with annual average GDP growth of 3.2%, according to a WTO Secretariat report on the trade policies and practices of Australia. The report notes that trade liberalization, much of it unilateral, has been an integral part of the structural reforms that have contributed to this performance, also stimulated by the global boom in demand for mineral products that accounted for 48.4 % of total merchandise exports in 2005. In addition, the high degree of transparency in the formulation and evaluation of Australia's economic policies enhances government accountability and public debate over the merits of these policies. Consequently, transparency has contributed greatly to the continued process of reform. The report also notes the need to press ahead with structural reforms as outlined in the National Reform Agenda, especially those concerning key infrastructure-related services such as electricity, water and transport, in order to raise productivity. The report, along with a policy statement by the Government of Australia, was the basis for the fifth Trade Policy Review of Australia by the Trade Policy Review Body held on 5 and 7 March. The Review was chaired by Amb. Muhamad Noor Yacob (Malaysia), and Amb. Sun Zhenyu (China) acted as discussant.

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contact us : World Trade Organization, rue de Lausanne 154, CH-1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland