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# PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

*Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament*

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## **Twelfth session of the Conference Steering Committee\***

*22-23 June 2006, IPU Headquarters, Geneva*

### **STATEMENT**

We, parliamentarians from developed and developing countries, members of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, have gathered in Geneva on the eve of a WTO ministerial meeting which will take place at a crucial moment for the future of the multilateral trading system.

As elected representatives of the people, we have a duty to follow and oversee government action in the field of international trade, seeking to promote the fairness of trade liberalization in the interests of our citizens. We observe that government negotiators and WTO officials alike show signs of growing openness to the idea of using the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO as a *de facto* parliamentary dimension of this important intergovernmental body. With the constructive engagement of all parties, achievement of this objective *de jure* should also be within reach.

The WTO Director-General, Mr. Pascal Lamy, shared with us information on the current state of WTO negotiations. For the Doha Round, the moment of truth is now and we cannot mask our concern. We are convinced that declarations by Heads of State and Government will not suffice unless they are translated into practical agreements. Failure to act on the expressions of intent will set back the prospects for enhancing growth and reducing poverty, and increase the space for tensions in international relations. The danger is real.

We call on all WTO Members to come to Geneva at once open-minded and politically determined. We are convinced that concrete results in the areas of agriculture and non-agricultural market access are both politically indispensable and possible. The Doha Round is about development. It is our common responsibility. There is no "plan B".

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\* Members of the Steering Committee from the following countries, regional parliamentary assemblies and international organizations were present at the session: Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, South Africa, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, European Parliament, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the Secretariat of the World Trade Organization.