



**FOR A FREE, JUST AND EQUITABLE
MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM:
PROVIDING A PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION**

Organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union
Geneva, 8 and 9 June 2001

REVISED ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

- 1. Election of the President of the Meeting**
- 2. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 3. Debate on substantive themes:**
 - (a) Globalisation from a trade perspective: the role and action of parliament as a relay between government and the people**

In every country, Parliament and its members have a constitutional responsibility to represent the people. It is their role to give voice to the concerns and aspirations of the people for a better life. During the millennium celebrations, both the heads of State and governments and Speakers and Presidents of Parliaments identified globalisation as the one main challenge facing the community of nations: how to ensure that it becomes a positive force for all the world's people. They committed themselves to an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. The participants – both members of parliaments and representatives of governments – may wish to discuss people's concerns relating to trade and the role that parliaments can play to address them.
 - (b) WTO and the current international trading system: the role of parliaments in the field of legislation**

One of the two major roles of parliament and its members is to legislate. Parliament makes the laws that govern each country. WTO is a multilateral rules-based system providing for trade negotiations and dispute settlement. These rules need to be translated into national laws and regulations. The participants may therefore wish to exchange views on current trade issues that require legislative action at some point, such as a review of the implementation of Uruguay Round Agreements, on-going negotiations in agriculture or services, accession of new WTO members, an ever growing number of dispute settlement cases and the rise in bilateral and regional trade negotiations and agreements.
 - (c) Parliamentary oversight with respect to future trade negotiations, particularly from the development perspective**

The second fundamental role of parliament and its members is to "oversee" the government. Government is accountable to parliament and the latter monitors and seeks to influence government policy and action. This role is crucial for parliament and its members to be able to truly represent the people and takes on special importance in relation to trade negotiations. The multilateral trading system offers the prospect of expanding trading opportunities but translating this prospect into reality requires a balanced approach that takes into account the interests and concerns of all people. The participants may wish to discuss how to build the consensus necessary for promoting free and fair trade in order to eliminate poverty, enhance employment opportunities and raise standards of living for people in all countries.
- 4. Conclusions: The way forward**

The participants will exchange views on possible follow-up to the Meeting, in particular with regard to furthering parliamentary involvement in decision-making concerning international trade, and will make recommendations for practical action by IPU to build up a parliamentary dimension of the rules-based multilateral trading system. Under this item, the participants will also consider a Declaration drafted by the Preparatory Committee.