

PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

**PRACTICAL
INFORMATION**

Geneva, 17-18 February 2003

PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Contents

	Paragraphs
Date and venue	1-3
Participation	4-8
Registration	9-11
List of Delegates.....	12
Meeting rooms and offices.....	13-14
Arrangements for the conduct of the Conference.....	15-19
Languages	20
Documents	21-22
Information Desk	23
Press office.....	24
Post office.....	25
Official reception.....	26
Visas.....	27-29
Health requirements.....	30
Hotel accommodation	31-33
Catering services	34
Medical services.....	35
Local transport and taxis	36-37
Climate.....	38
Currency.....	39-40
Voltage	41
Requests for further information.....	42

Annex: International Conference Centre of Geneva, map of the area

Date and venue

1. The Parliamentary Conference on the WTO will be held on Monday, 17 and Tuesday, 18 February 2003, at the International Conference Centre of Geneva (CICG), located in close proximity to the Palais des Nations in Geneva (see map in the Annex).
2. The address of the Conference Centre is as follows:

CICG, International Conference Centre, Geneva
15, rue de Varembeé
1202 Genève
3. An inaugural ceremony will be held in the morning of 17 February, followed by three working sessions and a closing session in the afternoon of 18 February. In order to allow sufficient time for deliberations, morning sessions will start at 9.30 a.m. and finish at 1 p.m., whereas afternoon sessions will start at 2.30 p.m. and finish at 6.30 p.m.

Participation

4. In accordance with the decision taken by the Post-Doha Steering Committee at its session in Geneva on 14 and 15 October 2002, the Conference will be an official parliamentary event that is open to the public. **Participants** in the Conference, to be organized jointly by IPU and the European Parliament, will be:

- Delegations designated by parliaments of sovereign States that are members of the WTO;
- Delegations designated by IPU Member Parliaments from countries that are not represented in the WTO; and
- Delegations designated by the European Parliament as well as Andean Parliament, Central American Parliament, Latin American Parliament, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (all Associate Members of the IPU).

5. The Steering Committee decided that **observers** in the Conference will be:

- Representatives of entities and international organisations concerned by issues of international trade;
- Representatives of governments of sovereign States that are members of the WTO;
- Palestine.

6. The Conference will also be open to other persons with a specific interest in international trade questions. These persons may follow the work of the conference without intervening in its proceedings and will have no speaking rights. They will be issued a security badge bearing their name only. They will not receive an official invitation or be accredited to the event.

7. As a rule, the number of MPs in each national delegation should not exceed four. Observer delegations should be in principle limited to two persons.

8. In order to ensure the success of the Conference, it is of paramount importance that each parliament nominate MPs who are directly involved in parliamentary activities dealing with international trade and especially multilateral trade negotiations.

Registration

9. Delegations to the Conference are kindly requested to complete and submit the enclosed registration form for participating delegates and accompanying persons as soon as possible, and by no later than **1 February 2003**. The registration form should be returned to the following address:

Inter-Parliamentary Union
Place du Petit-Saconnex
Case Postale 438
CH-1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
Fax: +4122 919 41 60
E-mail: postbox@mail.ipu.org

Any modifications concerning the composition of the delegation should likewise be communicated to the above address.

10. The Registration Desk, located on the ground floor of the CICC, will be open from 9.30 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sunday, 16 February, and from 8 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. on 17 and 18 February.

11. For identification and security reasons, all delegates are requested to wear their identification badges at all times during the Conference and at social functions.

List of Delegates

12. A provisional List of Delegates will be distributed at the beginning of the Conference. This list will be issued on the basis of confirmations received by the IPU Secretariat up to 6 p.m. on Friday, 14 February. A revised list will be issued in the afternoon of 18 February as part of the documents distribution. Delegations are kindly requested to report any changes in the provisional list to the Registration Desk preferably at the time of registration and by no later than 6 p.m. on Monday, 17 February.

Meeting rooms and offices

13. Both the pre-Conference session of the Steering Committee on Sunday, 16 February and its session in the evening of Monday, 17 February (in camera meetings), will take place at the new IPU Headquarters at the following address: 5, chemin du Pommier, Grand-Saconnex, 1218 Geneva.

14. Allocation of meeting rooms and offices at the CICC during the Conference will be as follows:

Activity	Date	Venue
Registration and information	16-18 February	Welcome desk 1, Ground floor
Inaugural and working sessions	17-18 February	Plenary Room
Office of the IPU Council President	17-18 February	Room 13, 2 nd floor
Office of the President of the European Parliament	17-18 February	Room 11, 2 nd floor
Office of the IPU Secretary General	17-18 February	Room 14, 2 nd floor
Conference Secretariat	17-18 February	2nd floor
Press office	17-18 February	2nd floor
Press Conferences	17-18 February	Room 18

Arrangements for the conduct of the Conference

15. The Conference will be jointly chaired by the President of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the President of the European Parliament. Presidents of regional parliamentary assemblies may be invited to chair some of the debate.

16. The WTO Director-General, Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, will speak at the inaugural session and will make a special presentation in the afternoon of 17 February, when he will also respond to questions from the delegates.

17. The Conference will hold three separate sessions to discuss the three substantive themes agreed upon by the Steering Committee (see annotated provisional agenda of the Conference). Debate in each of the substantive sessions will be launched by a rapporteur who will have 15 minutes for presenting his discussion paper. Each rapporteur will be followed by two discussants who will have 10 minutes each to present their responses.

18. Both participants and observers will participate in the debate either by making brief statements or by asking questions. The debate will be interactive, no formal statements will be delivered and delegates wishing to take the floor shall speak from their seats. In view of the largely informal nature of the debate, no list of speakers will be drawn up in advance. The order of interventions and questions will be decided by the Chair.

19. A panel discussion on the subject of coherence in technical assistance and capacity-building will take place from 11.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on 18 February as an integral part of the debate on the second substantive theme of the Conference agenda. Panellists will be representing international agencies which play a leading role in programmes of technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of international trade.

Languages

20. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish. Four additional channels have been assigned for interpretation into other languages by interpreters brought by national delegations at their own expense. Official written documentation of the Conference will be available in English and French only (see paragraph 21).

Documents

21. The only official documents of the Conference will be its programme, agenda, the List of Delegates, discussion papers prepared by the parliamentary rapporteurs on the three substantive themes of the Conference agenda, the draft Final Declaration elaborated by the Steering Committee and the information notes prepared by the Conference Secretariat. WTO will provide background documents for distribution to delegates upon registration.

22. Should participants and observers wish to distribute their own documents or other material pertaining to the theme of the Conference, they may use a table provided for that purpose in the immediate vicinity of the meeting room.

Information Desk

23. The Registration Desk (see paragraph 10) will also serve as an Information Desk and will handle messages for delegates. Lost property may be turned in or claimed at this Desk.

Press office

24. A Press office will be set up at the CICG for representatives of national and international press, radio and TV. This service will organise press conferences and be responsible for press releases. Journalists wishing to cover the Conference must be duly accredited through the Registration Desk.

Post office

25. A post office is available on the premises of the CCIG, its opening hours are from 7.30 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1.45 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Official reception

26. Details concerning the official reception for delegates, to be held in the evening of 17 February, will be provided on registration.

Visas

27. Attention is drawn to the strict provisions in force regarding entry into Switzerland, which refuses entry to those not having the required visa. Delegates requiring an entry visa must obtain it from the Swiss consulate or diplomatic mission responsible for the necessary arrangements in their country of residence.

28. In exceptional cases, a visa may be obtained upon arrival at Geneva Airport, provided that the IPU Secretariat in Geneva has been advised of this by e-mail (postbox@mail.ipu.org) or via facsimile (+4122 919 41 60) **two weeks prior** to the date of arrival. The following details should be provided in such case: full name, date and place of birth, nationality, type of national passport and its number (date of issue and expiry), date of arrival and flight number.

29. French entry (not transit) visas are required for certain nationalities when transiting a French airport en route to Geneva. Those delegates who wish, upon arrival in Geneva, to cross the border into France must obtain visas in their country of residence before departure, as they are not obtainable in Geneva.

Health requirements

30. Vaccination certificates are not required for admission to either Switzerland or France.

Hotel accommodation

31. Delegates will be responsible for their own hotel expenses. In view of the fact that several major international meetings are taking place in Geneva in the month of February, **it is imperative that hotel reservations be made as soon as possible.**

32. Delegations from countries having a Permanent Mission in Geneva are kindly requested to make their hotel reservations through their respective Mission. All Permanent Missions in Geneva have been informed of the holding of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO. Most Missions are used to receiving national delegations to UN meetings and to handling hotel reservations for them and many have signed preferential tariff agreements with hotels close to the Palais des Nations area and the CICC.

33. Delegations from countries that do not have a diplomatic representation in Geneva may reserve their rooms either via their preferred tourist operator or through the Geneva Tourist Office. Please use the enclosed Hotel Reservation Form to send requests to the latter. The Hotel Reservation Form should be returned directly to the Geneva Tourist Office by no later than **15 January 2003.**

Catering services

34. A 50-place restaurant, a 450-place self-service restaurant and two bars are available on the CICC premises.

Medical services

35. A First Aid station will be open on the CICC premises. Delegates requiring urgent medical attention outside of the conference buildings are advised to contact the "Service d'urgence de l'Association des Médecins de Genève" (local tel. 022 / 320 25 11).

Local transport and taxis

36. The CICC can be reached by bus no. 8, which runs from Veyrier to Avenue Appia, passing through Rive (town centre), Place Cornavin (railway station), Place des Nations (Palais des Nations), and the UIT (ITU), which is located just next to the CICC. Bus no. 5 runs from the Hospital to Palexpo, with stops at Place Comavin and Varembe, next to the CICC building. In addition, bus "F" runs from Place Cornavin to Ferney-Voltaire, France, with stops at Place des Nations and Varembe. Tickets must be purchased and validated **before** entering buses. Individual tickets are available from vending machines at main bus stops, and cards for multiple trips can be purchased at a reduced rate from newsagents in town bearing the "TPG" (Geneva transport service) sign.

37. In Geneva, taxis are only available on call and cannot be hailed in the streets. Geneva taxi drivers know the Conference venue as "CICC" (Rue Varembe). There are taxi ranks in almost all main squares in Geneva and outside the Palais des Nations. Taxis can be called by telephone by dialling the following local numbers: 022 / 320 20 20, 320 22 02 and 331 41 33.

Climate

38. The weather in Geneva in February is quite variable with a possibility of cold winds, rains and occasional snowfalls. The average temperature for the month is 5°C. It is therefore recommended that delegates bring warm clothing, and an umbrella and raincoat.

Currency

39. The currency in Switzerland is the Swiss Franc which consists of notes (10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 1,000) and coins (5, 10, 20, and 50 centime coins as well as 1, 2 and 5 Franc coins). On 20 November 2002, the exchange rate was 1.46 Swiss Francs per \$US 1.00 and 1.47 Swiss Francs per € 1.00.

40. Most major international currencies can be exchanged at local banks, exchange offices and hotels. Moreover, major credit cards are widely accepted throughout both Switzerland and France.

Voltage

41. The voltage in Switzerland is 220 volts, 50 Hz.

Requests for further information

42. Requests for further information concerning the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO should be addressed to:

Inter-Parliamentary Union
Place du Petit-Saconnex
Case Postale 438, CH-1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland

and

European Parliament
ITRE Committee secretariat
ATR 6A62
Rue Wiertz
B-1047 Belgium
Fax: 0032-2-2843299
E-mail: dg2-itre@europarl.eu.int

Annex

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER OF GENEVA (CICG): MAP OF THE AREA

