



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION
CHEMIN DU POMMIER 5, CASE POSTALE 330
CH-1218 LE GRAND-SACONNEX/GENEVA, SWITZERLAND



Geneva/Brussels, 20 July 2006

ANNUAL SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

Since 2002, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament have been jointly leading the way in a process known as the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO) - a permanent mechanism of parliamentary oversight of this inter-governmental body, its *de facto* parliamentary dimension. The principal objective of the Conference is to enhance external transparency of the WTO and make it accountable to legislators as elected representatives of the people.

We are pleased to inform you that this year's annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO will take place on **1 and 2 December 2006** at the **Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG)** and will be hosted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Your parliament is invited to send a delegation to this important event which will follow up on the highly successful sessions of the Conference held in Geneva, Cancún, Brussels and Hong Kong.

The 2006 annual session will come at a crucial moment for the future of the multilateral trading system. As you are no doubt aware, the Doha Round of negotiations, which was supposed to conclude by the end of 2006, is faced with numerous problems, which might jeopardize its outcome. To save the Round, it is imperative to mobilize political will. Parliaments have their share of responsibility in this regard.

As on past occasions, the 2006 annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO is intended primarily for **parliamentarians who specialize in matters of international trade** in their respective parliaments. The session will provide them with an opportunity to obtain first-hand information on recent developments in WTO talks and consider ways of contributing to the revitalization of this process. It will be an occasion to exchange views and experiences with colleagues in other parliaments, interact with government negotiators and WTO officials and engage in a dialogue with civil society representatives.

In conformity with the Conference Rules, practical preparation of the session is carried out by the Conference Steering Committee, which met in Geneva on 22 and 23 June 2006 and established the session's provisional **agenda**, a copy of which you will find enclosed.

./.

A detailed **programme** of the session, taking stock of latest WTO developments, will be elaborated by the Steering Committee at its meeting in mid-September and circulated to all parliaments soon thereafter. It will be also posted on the Inter-Parliamentary Union's website (<http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/trade06.htm>) as well as that of the European Parliament (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/comparl/inta/conference_wto/2006_12/default_en.htm).

Practical information about the session is enclosed, together with **registration** and **hotel reservation** forms. Your attention is drawn to the fact that the deadline for booking hotel rooms through the Geneva Tourism Office is **31 October 2006**. Due to a large number of international events to be held in Geneva in the month of December, reservation of rooms after this date cannot be guaranteed.

We very much hope that your parliament will participate in this year's annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO and look forward to receiving the names of your delegates in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Pier Ferdinando Casini
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union



Josep Borrell Fontelles
President of the European Parliament