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Geneva, 28 February 2008

ANNUAL 2008 SESSION
OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO
Advance Information

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 hold it accountable to legislators as elected representatives of the people.

I am pleased to inform you that, subject to a formal decision to be taken by the Conference Steering Committee in early April 2008, this year's annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO will take place on **11 and 12 September 2008** 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 come at a crucial moment for the success of the Doha Round of negotiations and the entire future of the multilateral trading system embodied by the WTO.

In conformity with the Conference Rules, the annual session is intended primarily for **parliamentarians who specialize in matters of international trade** in their respective parliaments. The Conference 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 also 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.

The provisional agenda and programme of the annual 2008 session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO will be established by the Conference Steering Committee in April 2008. These documents will be circulated to all parliaments soon thereafter and also posted on the IPU's website (<http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/trade08.htm>).

To advance practical preparations for the session and allow sufficient time for the delegates to make relevant logistical arrangements, you will find enclosed the session's registration and hotel reservation forms. Because of the large number of international events taking place in Geneva in the month of September, we urge you to reserve hotel rooms for your delegation as soon as possible. This can be done either through your country's diplomatic mission in Geneva or through the Geneva Tourism Office. Please note that the deadline for booking hotel rooms through the Geneva Tourism Office is **4 August 2008**. Reservations made after this date cannot be guaranteed.

I very much hope that your parliament will be represented at the annual 2008 session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO and look forward to receiving the names of your delegates in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anders B. Johnsson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General