



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



Geneva/Brussels, 20 May 2008

ANNUAL 2008 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 **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 comes at a crucial moment for the Doha Round of trade negotiations and indeed the future of the entire multilateral trading system.

As on past occasions, the 2008 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 3 and 4 April 2008. Detailed programme and agenda of the session, taking stock of latest developments in Doha Round talks, will be elaborated closer to the date of the Conference and circulated to all parliaments, as well as posted on the websites of the IPU and the European Parliament.

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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 **4 August 2008**. Due to a large number of international events to be held in Geneva in the month of September, reservation of rooms after the official deadline cannot be guaranteed. Booking of rooms can be made also on-line (see practical information note)

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,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The signature on the left is for Pier Ferdinando Casini, and the signature on the right is for Hans-Gert Pöttering. Both signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pier Ferdinando Casini
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Hans-Gert Pöttering
President of the European Parliament