
ANNUAL 2011 SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

Geneva, 21-22 March 2011

Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament

OUTCOME DOCUMENT ***Adopted by consensus on 22 March 2011***

1. We, parliamentarians assembled in Geneva for the annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, welcome the signs of renewed energy and broader engagement by WTO Members in the negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda. The recently injected political momentum should be used to bring the Round to a successful, ambitious, comprehensive, fair and balanced conclusion that is consistent with its original mandate and builds on advances made so far. We encourage WTO Members to seize the narrow but real window of opportunity to conclude the Round by the end of 2011.
2. Convinced that multilateralism remains the best option to harness globalization and manage interdependence, we reaffirm our commitment to the universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and fair multilateral trading system as embodied in the WTO.
3. International trade is a powerful engine of sustained economic growth and development and is required for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Against the background of a deep and widespread economic downturn, the multilateral trading system has proven its value. The very existence of WTO disciplines, rules and binding mechanisms played a crucial role in weathering the threat of protectionism and jumpstarting the economic recovery.
4. The needs and interests of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, are at the heart of the Doha Development Agenda, which seeks to redress asymmetries and imbalances affecting them. Beyond greater market access opportunities, it is important for small and vulnerable economies, including the least developed countries, that special and differential treatment be made more effective, meaningful and operational across the negotiating areas and through greater policy flexibility and binding commitments on technical assistance and capacity building. We call upon developed countries that have not yet done so to provide immediate, predictable, duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all products originating from the least developed countries. Developing economies that are advanced enough to do so, or declare themselves in a position to do so, should also contribute to this process.
5. The Doha Round is premised on the consensus that, to be concluded satisfactorily, the negotiations should advance in all domains under a single undertaking. Recognizing the paramount importance of progress in areas such as agriculture, non-agricultural market access, services, rules and trade facilitation, as well as the Dispute Settlement Understanding, we call on WTO Members to accelerate their work also on special and differential treatment provisions, the development-related mandate concerning the TRIPS Agreement, implementation-related issues and concerns, transfer and dissemination of technology, and access to knowledge for the benefit of developing countries.
6. We believe it is important to ensure that market opening and fair trade liberalization go hand in hand with sustainable development, which contains three pillars: economic

development, environmental protection and social development. Drawing from the lessons of the financial and economic crisis, we also see the need for greater coherence between the different segments of global governance, including the WTO, the Bretton Woods institutions, the United Nations, ILO and other like-minded organizations. Sustainable global development policies are inconceivable without better coordination between these multilateral organizations, which share to a large extent the same objectives.

7. In order to make the WTO a truly universal organization, we underscore the requirement to facilitate the accession process for all developing countries, and in particular the least developed countries, while fully respecting the need for special and differential treatment. We call for the removal of political obstacles that stand in the way of ensuring the inclusiveness and universal character of WTO membership and for greater flexibility towards the least developed countries.

8. The protracted Doha Round negotiations have underscored a systemic need to improve the functioning of the WTO as a negotiating forum. It is necessary to rethink its processes and decision-making structures. We encourage WTO Members to give thorough consideration to relevant ideas and proposals, progressively forging a consensus on ways to do this. We are convinced that this should be done so as to strengthen the democratic character and legitimacy of the system, in particular for members with less economic power, and by devising a modus operandi that can reconcile efficiency and equity in negotiations.

9. We are convinced of the need for a strong and effective parliamentary dimension to the WTO and welcome the fact that, for the first time ever, an annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO takes place on the premises of this intergovernmental organization. Parliamentarians, as elected representatives of the people, have a duty to provide effective oversight of international trade negotiations, ensuring their transparency and fairness at the international and national levels. It is also their responsibility to remain vigilant so that the multilateral trading system contributes to sustainable development for all, taking fully into account the special and differential needs and capacities of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries.

10. The road to fairer and more equitable international trade starts with the conclusion of the Doha Round. We, as parliamentarians, therefore, call on all parties - both developed and developing countries - to show greater leadership and flexibility to make the necessary breakthroughs that will enable a successful outcome. We call on our parliamentary colleagues around the world to use all the means at their disposal to convey to their respective governments our shared sense of urgency concerning the present state of WTO negotiations. It is imperative to change gear, fuelling and sustaining the momentum in order to bring the negotiations to a close by the end of the current year.