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Geneva, 15 June 2009

PARLIAMENTARY PANEL WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE WTO PUBLIC FORUM 2009

Geneva, 30 September 2009

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

Over recent years, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has established a tradition of holding annual public events where participants from government, parliament, civil society, the business sector, academia and the media jointly reflect upon the functioning of the multilateral trading system and analyse the state of advancement of the Doha Development Agenda. The annual **WTO Public Forum** is now a significant feature of the international calendar.

It has likewise become a tradition to hold special parliamentary panels within the overall organizational framework provided by WTO Public Forums. Such parliamentary panels are geared towards the specific interests of members of parliament specializing in international trade and are closely linked with the process known as the *Parliamentary Conference on the WTO*, which is driven by the synergies of the IPU and the European Parliament and constitutes a de facto parliamentary dimension of this inter-governmental organization.

This year's WTO Public Forum will be held on WTO premises in Geneva from 28 to 30 September, under the overall theme *Global Problems, Global Solutions: Towards Better Global Governance*. The Forum will take place at a time when the global economic and financial crisis is taking its toll, international trade is shrinking and protectionist pressures are mounting, while the Doha negotiations are stalled.

In line with the overall theme of the WTO Public Forum 2009, its **Parliamentary Panel** will be entitled *Can protectionism protect trade? The legislator's perspective*. This issue should be of special interest to parliamentarians who oversee government action in the field of international trade and are faced with protectionist pressures resulting from the economic downturn and social recession.

The Parliamentary Panel will take place on **30 September 2009**, from **9 to 11 a.m.**, in **Room CR 1** at **WTO Headquarters** (Centre William Rappard). The panel will be open to all parliamentarians and other participants duly accredited to the WTO Forum, subject to the limits of the room's seating capacity. Interpretation into English, French and Spanish will be provided by the WTO Secretariat.

A detailed programme of the Parliamentary Panel will be posted on the IPU website at <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/wto-forum09.htm> in August. Please note that the Parliamentary Panel is only one of more than 40 different events that are included in the WTO Public Forum's work programme which is exceptionally rich, stretching over three full days.

I would appreciate it if information about the WTO Public Forum 2009 and its Parliamentary Panel could be brought to the attention of those bodies and individual members of your parliament who specialize in questions of international trade and follow the activities of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO.

Please note that, in conformity with WTO practice, all participants in the Public Forum are responsible for their own visa, travel arrangements and accommodation in Geneva. Participants are required to register in advance, using **registration forms** to be found on the WTO website at http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/ngo_e/forum09_background_e.htm. Duly completed registration forms should be returned **directly to the WTO Secretariat** before the official deadline established by the WTO. No on-the-spot registration will be possible.

I wish to make it very clear that the IPU Secretariat is not dealing with any logistical matters relating to the WTO Public Forum. For practical reasons, including the holding of the 121st Assembly of the IPU in Geneva on the heels of the WTO Public Forum, the IPU Secretariat is **not in a position** to help your delegates with accommodation and other practical arrangements in Geneva, which remain the sole responsibility of each of the WTO Forum's participant.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anders B. Johnsson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General