



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Chemin du Pommier 5
Case postale 330
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland
www.ipu.org

Geneva, 6 May 2014

Parliamentary session within the framework of the WTO Public Forum 2014

Geneva, WTO Headquarters, 1 October 2014

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 sessions within the overall organizational framework provided by WTO Public Forums. Such parliamentary sessions 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 from 1 to 3 October, on WTO premises in Geneva (Centre William Rappard), under the overall theme **Why trade matters to everyone**. The Forum's programme is exceptionally rich and includes over 40 events, including a **Parliamentary Session**, which will take place in the **afternoon of Wednesday, 1 October 2014**.

The title of the Parliamentary Session is **Post-Bali agenda: where does parliamentary oversight fit in?** Through various institutional mechanisms, parliaments are responsible for providing effective democratic oversight of the multilateral trading system as embodied by the WTO. They oversee international trade negotiations and scrutinize implementation of the commitments entered into by governments. As representatives of the people, parliamentarians are well-placed to listen to and convey to the WTO the concerns and aspirations of citizens, businesses and other stakeholders. At the same time, legislators bear their own share of responsibility for ensuring that the benefits of trade are distributed in a fair way and contribute to the reduction of poverty and inequality. As the WTO is advancing in the preparation of the post-Bali work programme, it is necessary to instil new energy into the parliamentary dimension of the WTO as well. The Parliamentary Session will be an opportunity to consider different policy responses to meet this challenge.

The Session 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 Session will be posted on the IPU website at <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/wto-forum14.htm>.

I would appreciate it if information about the WTO Public Forum 2014 and its Parliamentary Session 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.

In conformity with WTO practice, all participants in the Public Forum are responsible for their own visa, travel arrangements and accommodation in Geneva. Online registrations for the Public Forum will be open in June. Participants are required to register, by **21 September 2014** at the latest, using the WTO website (http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum14_e/public_forum14_e.htm). Please note that registration is handled by **the WTO Secretariat** and that no on-the-spot registration is 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 and 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 long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anders B. Johnsson
IPU Secretary General