
BALI SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

Bali (Indonesia), 2 and 5 December 2013

*Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament
in connection with the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC9)*

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Policy dialogue with Ministers and senior WTO officials

During the sitting on 2 December, parliamentary delegates will be briefed on the status of pre-Ministerial Conference consultations between WTO Members. The dialogue will continue at the sitting on 5 December, when the outlines of the eventual MC9 decisions will already be more or less known. On both occasions, parliamentarians will interact directly with some of the Ministers and senior WTO officials who collectively share the responsibility for advancing the Doha Development Agenda.

3. Debate on substantive themes

(a) Reflections on the post-Bali agenda of multilateral trade negotiations

Given the accumulated burden of a multiyear stalemate in Doha Round negotiations, it would be unrealistic to expect that the Ministerial Conference in Bali could resolve outstanding problems across the board. The Conference may, however, give much-needed impetus to the reflection on how to pursue fresh and credible approaches to advancing trade negotiations, including through the use of alternative negotiating paths. Delegates will be invited to exchange views on a possible parliamentary contribution to the advancement of a longer-term multilateral trade policy agenda better adapted to 21st century realities.

(b) Can bilateral and plurilateral trade agreements bring faster results than the multilateral process?

It is sometimes argued that plurilateral, regional and bilateral trade agreements enable parties to reach levels of trade liberalization that go beyond multilateral consensus and address specific issues that do not figure on the multilateral agenda. Can such agreements complement the WTO system and serve as building blocks for future multilateral trade liberalization? Or is regulatory fragmentation detrimental to the multilateral regime?

4. Panel discussions

(a) Streamlining administrative and other trade-related official procedures. What role for parliaments?

Trade facilitation is meant to reduce red tape and simplify customs and other procedures for handling goods at borders. What are the priority tasks for legislators in creating a more transparent, predictable and efficient environment for cross-border trade? What would the resulting trade gains be for developed and developing countries?

(b) Making the benefits of trade work for sustainable development, job creation and poverty alleviation

As recognized by the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO on previous occasions, the benefits of trade are not automatic and trade itself is a necessary but insufficient condition for triggering and sustaining growth and development. What further measures can be initiated by parliaments to address the trade-employment nexus, stimulate domestic demand and make the trading system work for the poor?

5. Adoption of the outcome document

At the end of the session, the participants will be invited to adopt an outcome document, a draft of which will be prepared by the Conference Steering Committee.