

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien
Union interparlementaire

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the Parliamentary Panel
within the Framework of the WTO Public Forum 2011 and
the 24th Session of the Steering Committee of
the Parliamentary Conference on the
World Trade Organization (WTO)**

Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

**Geneva, Switzerland
September 19-21, 2011**

Report

The Parliamentary Panel within the Framework of the 2011 WTO Public Forum

1. Background

The Parliamentary Conference on the WTO is a joint undertaking of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament. Its primary objective is to enhance the external transparency of the WTO and make it accountable to parliamentarians as elected representatives of the people.

Linked with the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament have traditionally organized special parliamentary panels during WTO Public Forums. Such parliamentary panels are geared towards the specific interests of members of parliament specializing in international trade.

The WTO Public Forum is an annual event where participants jointly reflect upon the functioning of the multilateral trading system and analyse the state of advancement of the Doha Development Agenda. This forum provides an opportunity for governments, non-governmental organizations, academics, businesses and students to come together to discuss issues regarding the multilateral trading system. The WTO organizes the first plenary session and various organizations organize other sessions that are open to the public.

2. Program for the Parliamentary Panel

The 2011 WTO Public Forum was held on WTO premises in Geneva from September 19 to 21, with the theme “Seeking Answers to Global Trade Challenges.”¹ As part of the overall program, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the European Parliament held a parliamentary panel entitled:

Trade in Natural Resources – Curse or Blessing? A Parliamentary Perspective

This parliamentary panel took place on Tuesday, September 20, 2011.

3. The Canadian delegation

Representatives from various parliaments, members of the WTO and civil service organizations participated in the Parliamentary Panel, including the Hon. Donald H. Oliver, QC, Senator, Speaker pro tempore of the Senate.

4. Speakers

The Parliamentary Panel revolved around the question of whether natural resources are a curse or a blessing for a country, and the role of parliamentarians in promoting

¹ More than 40 items were on the Forum agenda. For more information, see:
http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum11_e/programme_e.htm.

democratic, anti-corrupt, transparent, environmental and development-friendly policy on trade in natural resources. The Parliamentary Panel was moderated by Mr. Ram Etwareea, Journalist at Le Temps (Geneva, Switzerland), and included the following speakers:

- Mr. Jörg Leichtfried, Member of the European Parliament;
- Mr. Piet van der Walt, Member of Parliament, Namibia; and
- Ms. Roberta Piermartini, Senior Economist, Economic Research and Statistics Division, WTO

Panelists agreed that natural resources could only be a blessing when they are well regulated. While the possession of natural resources could provide a good head start for economic development and diversification if the right policies are adopted, countries whose economies are dominated by the extraction and export of natural resources also run the risk of hampering economic growth in other areas. Furthermore, the extraction and use of natural resources has important environmental and sustainability implications. The panel also discussed the role of multinational mining companies, and agreed upon the importance of balance with local small and medium enterprises, regulation and environmental standards. On the topic of whether every country should have access to natural resources, the panel agreed that export policy is not the first best choice to conserve natural resources, and such policy should be implemented carefully. The WTO dispute case on raw material export restriction was mentioned. During the Q&A session, comments touched on the corruption problem, the use of GATT Article XX to restrict natural resources exports, and on the absence of a new set of WTO rules on natural resources trade.

5. The next parliamentary session on the WTO

The date of the next activity of the parliamentary conference on the WTO has yet to be determined. The Steering Committee met on September 21, 2011, and submitted a number of proposals for the next meeting.

The 24th Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization

1. Background

The Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO is responsible for all matters relating to the organization of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO.

The Parliamentary Conference on the WTO is a joint undertaking of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament. Its primary objective is to enhance the external transparency of the WTO and make it accountable to legislators as elected representatives of the people. The sessions of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO are held once a year and on the occasion of WTO Ministerial Conferences.

2. Agenda

The Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO met on September 21, 2011 on the IPU premises in Geneva, Switzerland. The session included the following agenda items:

- Update on recent WTO developments with the WTO Deputy Director-General; Mrs. Valentine Sendanyoye Rugwabiza;
- Discussion about the 2011 WTO Public Forum;
- Discussion on the rotation of the Steering Committee membership in 2012; and
- Discussion on future activities of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO.

3. The Canadian delegation

The Steering Committee meeting welcomed 42 participants from 16 national parliaments and regional parliamentary assemblies, including the Hon. Donald H. Oliver, QC, Senator, Speaker pro tempore of the Senate of Canada, who co-chaired the meeting.

4. The meeting

The meeting started with a presentation from the WTO Deputy Director-General Valentine Sendanyoye Rugwabiza, followed by a period of questions and answers. A summary of the discussions with the WTO Deputy Director-General can be found in Appendix 1.

The Hon. Donald H. Oliver initiated a discussion on the ways to improve the parliamentary dimension of the WTO and to strengthen the input of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO into the WTO process. Members of the Steering Committee agreed with his suggestion to convey the views of the Steering Committee to WTO negotiators in a more systematic way. The modalities

of this reporting mechanism this will be discussed at a future session of the Steering Committee.

In addition, the Hon. Donald H. Oliver obtained consent from the members of the Steering Committee to convey a political message from parliamentarians to the 8th WTO Ministerial Conference that will be held in December 2011. As the Parliamentary Conference co-organizers, the IPU and the European Parliament will prepare the message based on the Outcome Document adopted at the 2011 session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO.

The IPU report on the 24th Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference, which includes a summary of decisions taken by the Committee, can be found in Appendix 2.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis, Senator
Canadian Group of the IPU

Appendix 1

Parliamentary Conference on the WTO September 21 2011, IPU Headquarters, Geneva 24th Session of the Steering Committee Summary of Discussions with WTO Deputy Director-General Valentine Sendanyoye Rugwabiza

Mrs. Valentine Sendanyoye Rugwabiza, Deputy Director-General of the WTO, appeared before Members of the Steering Committee to discuss recent developments at the WTO. She made a presentation and answered questions from the members.

Mrs. Rugwabiza first gave an overview of the current economic situation. As the world moved from a financial crisis to a growth crisis, global trade has been negatively affected. While global trade grew by 14.5% in 2010, trade growth in 2011 is projected to be rather limited. Although protectionist measures have been contained in 2009 and 2010, there are currently a lot of pressures on governments to take a more protectionist approach.

With respect to the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), Mrs. Rugwabiza mentioned that a lot of things have been achieved in the past 10 years but that the current negotiation round is now at an impasse. The world has seen a lot of transformations, new members have joined the WTO, the economic power has shifted, and the world agenda has evolved as global issues have emerged (energy, food security, climate change, exchange rate). All of these changes have had an impact on the Multilateral Trading System (MTS). The WTO membership is somewhat split between those, who would like to move to 21st century issues, and those, who believe we cannot move on those issues if the DDA has not been dealt with. Some members fear to divert attention into new issues whereas movement is not guaranteed on the DDA front. Furthermore, DDA issues such as agricultural subsidies will not disappear. It has not been decided yet if those new issues will be addressed at the next ministerial conference, but some countries have started to act. For example, Brazil asked the WTO's Working Group on Trade, Debt and Finance, to take a look at the impact of currency exchange rates on international trade.

Members recognize that if the rule-making part (the DDA round of negotiations) of the WTO was to be paralyzed, it would have an impact on the whole system. The WTO is more than the DDA, it is also about rule enforcement, and accountability. Members agree on the need for a way out of the impasse. At the next ministerial conference in December, ministers will have to talk about new approaches and provide guidance on how to move on the negotiation front. The Chair of the General Council is consulting members on the organization; members have put forward a number of issues including DDA. Some members are already looking for a pragmatic approach to adopt what is already mature and pose little problem at the table (such as trade facilitation). They are looking for flexibility in negotiating procedure and may review the principle of the single

undertaking. The ministerial conference also has a mandate to review key elements of the organization.

Mrs. Rugwabia recognized that the media coverage about the DDA is rather negative, and that most news outlet would characterised it as “dead.” There is a need to find new ways to improve communication. It was said that members have not been very good at communicating to their population the stake of the negotiations, but it is ultimately their role since people trust their government more than the WTO administration. The WTO outreach activities are targeting parliamentarians and government officials rather than the general population.

Regarding a question on bilateral or plurilateral free trade agreements (FTA), Mrs. Rugwabia indicated that the WTO monitors FTA through a mandate included in WTO agreements, and that countries must notify agreements with a factual presentation. There is a possibility that members would strengthen the monitoring system with an analytical rather than a factual presentation. She mentioned a WTO report on bilateral agreements and its relations to the MTS. FTAs are not driven by tariff reduction but rather by new regulations setting or regulation harmonization. There is currently a “spaghetti ball” of regulations that is impeding trade. One problem with this approach is that it excludes members with least developed regulatory systems.

Mrs. Rugwabia briefly touched upon the negotiations on the accession of Russia to the WTO. Russia remains the largest economy outside the WTO membership. Negotiations have accelerated, and Russia accession could be dealt with at the next ministerial conference.

Responding to a question about the significance of gender in trade issues Mrs. Rugwabia indicated that agreements are negotiated in a gender neutral way. The gender dimension, however, is not reflected in negotiations, but it is reflected in some members’ position and trade policies.

Appendix 2

PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

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

Twenty-fourth session of the Conference Steering Committee

21 September 2011, IPU Headquarters, Geneva

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

1. The Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO met on 21 September 2011 at IPU Headquarters. The session was co-chaired by Senator D. Oliver (Canada), representing the IPU, and Mr. V. Moreira, MEP, representing the European Parliament, and was attended by 47 persons (see list of participants in *Annex 1*).
2. On 20 September, the session was preceded by a Parliamentary Panel on the theme *Trade in natural resources – A curse or blessing? A parliamentary perspective*, held within the framework of the WTO Public Forum 2011 (Geneva, 19-21 September). Having exchanged their impressions of the Panel, the members of the Steering Committee were unanimous that the event had been a success. The Committee welcomed the fact that its own session was held back-to-back with the annual WTO Forum and spoke in favour of continuing that practice in the future. Regarding the themes of future panels, it was suggested that the issue of parliamentary influence on the WTO should be taken up on a regular basis, e.g. once every three years.
3. The Committee was briefed on the state of play in the Doha Round by the WTO Deputy Director-General, Mrs. Valentine Sendanyoye Rugwabiza, who made an introductory presentation and responded to numerous questions. She started by pointing out that the current global context was having a negative impact on multilateral negotiations, including the Doha Round. While it had proved possible to keep protectionist pressures under control a couple of years ago, it was feared that those pressures were resurfacing. Lack of confidence in financial markets, unsustainable budget deficits and high unemployment all contributed to the bleak outlook. Mrs. Rugwabiza went on to say that, as was often the case in times of economic and political challenges, the stabilizing role of legislative institutions was crucial.
4. Since 2001, when the Doha Round had been launched, the world saw major transformations not only in terms of global geopolitics but also in the situation of individual WTO Members. That was evidenced by the plethora of new issues that emerged after the Doha Development Agenda had been adopted. While some Members were urging the WTO to move to "21st-century issues", others were pointing out that old problems should not be left unresolved.
5. Some of those differences would likely spill over into the forthcoming 8th WTO Ministerial Conference, to be held in Geneva from 15 to 17 December 2011. There was talk, for example, of the need to introduce more flexibility into the system and modify some of the procedures, such as the single undertaking. However, Ministers would have to hold genuinely frank conversations in order to advance along that path. In the words of Mrs. Rugwabiza, the situation was very complicated and it was not just the Doha Round that was at stake but the very preservation of multilateralism. She added that WTO negotiations had been left perhaps for too long in the hands of the negotiators only.

6. The ensuing question-and-answer session dealt with diverse subjects such as food security and export restrictions, the proliferation of bilateral and regional trade agreements, the gender dimension of trade negotiations, accession of the Russian Federation to the WTO, etc. The Deputy Director-General reiterated her willingness to pursue candid dialogue with parliamentarians in the future.

7. As part of its agenda, the Committee considered issues relating to future activities of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO. With regard to activities to be undertaken in 2012, the Committee agreed that they should include one full-scale plenary session of the Conference and two sessions of the Steering Committee. In the unlikely event that some breakthrough in the Doha Round would lead to the convocation of a WTO Ministerial Conference in 2012, it would be desirable to hold a parliamentary session in parallel with the Ministerial event. More realistically though, the Parliamentary Conference should take place in the second half of 2012 on the WTO premises in Geneva, as was the case for the 2011 session. The Steering Committee would meet in the first quarter of 2012 to finalize plans for the holding of the plenary session of the Conference, and then again in the second half of the year, possibly in conjunction with the WTO Public Forum.

8. Regarding the forthcoming 8th WTO Ministerial Conference, the Committee observed that protracted difficulties in the advancement of the Doha Round negotiations had resulted in a scaling-down of the Conference's expectations. In the words of the current Chairman of the WTO General Council, Ambassador Y.F. Agah of Nigeria, WTO Members had to think of what was achievable at the Conference 'in a pragmatic and realistic spirit'. The Steering Committee took note of the fact that the Ministerial Conference was construed as a relatively small-scale event at which official delegations would be necessarily limited in size. Under current circumstances, it was felt that the Conference was unlikely to provide a space for a meaningful parliamentary participation.

9. The Committee therefore concluded that holding a formal parliamentary meeting in Geneva at the time of the 8th WTO Ministerial Conference would be problematic. If at all possible, the IPU and the European Parliament should look into the possibility of inviting parliamentarians present in Geneva at the time of the Ministerial for an informal meeting or a social function, possibly on IPU premises. In this regard, the European Parliament confirmed its intention to be present at the Ministerial Conference with a small delegation.

10. At the same time, the Steering Committee felt that it would be opportune to convey a political message from parliamentarians to the 8th WTO Ministerial Conference. The Outcome Document adopted by consensus at the 2011 session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO (Geneva, 21-22 March) contained all the necessary elements of such a message. The IPU and the European Parliament, as the Conference co-organizers, were mandated to prepare the text of the message and convey it to the WTO ahead of the Ministerial Conference.

11. Reflecting on the format and impact of its work, the Steering Committee concurred that, in the future, it would be desirable to convey the views of parliamentarians to WTO negotiators in a more systematic way. To this end, future Steering Committee sessions should seek to adopt succinct declarations with a view to providing political momentum to the multilateral trade negotiations and helping enhance the parliamentary dimension of the WTO. Likewise, individual members of the Steering Committee were encouraged to report back to their respective parliaments on events such as the WTO Public Forum and Steering Committee sessions. With a view to establishing more methodical working modalities, the Committee decided to have a discussion on feedback and reporting mechanisms at one of its future sessions.

12. The Committee exchanged views on how to organize partial rotation of its membership in 2012, when the mandate of some of its members would expire. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, national parliaments normally hold a seat on the Steering Committee for a period of four years, with a possibility of renewal if the Steering Committee so decides. To carry out next year's rotation in a manner that would respect the Committee's representative nature and optimize its efficiency, it was decided to:

- (a) reassign one seat from the region of Europe and North America to Latin America and the Caribbean, as already recommended by the Committee in October 2007;
- (b) strictly abide by the statutory provision that no more than half of the parliaments representing a given geographical region should be replaced at any one time;
- (c) reconfirm the understanding that principal trade negotiators and major economies should be always represented on the Committee and that priority should be given to WTO Member States;
- (d) while planning for the rotation, take into consideration members' past records of attendance of the Committee sessions;
- (e) request the IPU and the European Parliament to prepare a joint proposal based on the above-mentioned principles for consideration by the Steering Committee at its 25th session. The IPU was invited to make use of its internal consultation mechanisms involving the geopolitical groups.

13. In conformity with the Rules of Procedure of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, the Steering Committee approved two changes to the List of Observers invited to follow the work of the Conference. More specifically, it added to the list the Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Member States of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IPU-IGAD) and removed from the list the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation (AITIC), the latter having ceased to function due to financial difficulties. An updated version of the List of Observers is to be found in *Annex 2*.

Twenty-fourth Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO
Vingt-quatrième session du Comité de pilotage de la Conférence parlementaire sur l'OMC
Geneva/ Genève, 21/09/2011

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

COUNTRY or ORGANISATION <i>PAYS ou ORGANISATION</i>	NAME <i>NOM</i>
BELGIUM - BELGIQUE	Mr. Dirk Van Der Maelen, MP
BURKINA FASO	Mr. Benoît Ouattara, MP
CANADA	Senator Donald Oliver Mr. Frédéric Forge
CHINA - CHINE	Mr. Liu Ming
EGYPT - EGYPTÉ	<i>Absent</i>
FINLAND - FINLANDE	<i>Absent</i>
FRANCE	Senator Michel Becot Mr. Jean-Luc Fernandez
GERMANY - ALLEMAGNE	Mr. Andreas Lämmel, MP
INDIA - INDE	<i>Absent</i>
IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF) IRAN (REPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE D')	<i>Absent</i>
JAPAN - JAPON	Ms. Misako Yasui, MP Ms. Yuko Suzuki
KENYA	<i>Absent</i>
MAURITIUS - MAURICE	<i>Absent</i>
MEXICO - MEXIQUE	<i>Absent</i>
MOROCCO - MAROC	Mr. Saïd Dor, MP
NAMIBIA - NAMIBIE	Mr. Piet van der Walt, MP Mr. Arnold Tjhuiko, MP Ms. Elizabeth De Wee
NIGERIA	<i>Absent</i>
SOUTH AFRICA - AFRIQUE DU SUD	Mr. Johannes Hendrik De Lange, MP Mr. Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu, MP
THAILAND - THAILANDE	Ms. Pusadee Tamthai, MP Senator Charin Hansuebsai Mr. Panya Kotthen

UNITED KINGDOM - ROYAUME-UNI	Lady Hooper Lord Paul of Marylebone
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - ETAS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE	<i>Absent</i>
URUGUAY	Senator Luis Alberto Heber Senator Alberto Couriel Ms. Ivonne Pasada, MP Mr. Oscar Piquinela
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - PARLEMENT EUROPEEN	Mr. Vital Moreira, MEP Mr. Paul Rübig, MEP Mr. Pablo Zalba Bidegain, MEP Mr. Jörg Leichtfried, MEP Mr. Niccolò Rinaldi, MEP Mr. Keith Taylor, MEP Mr. Alberto Rodas Ms. Helena Halldorf-Romero Ms. Arielle Rouby Ms. Barbara Melis Mr. Botond Török-Ilyés Ms. Ursa Pondelek Mr. Hannariika Niemenen Mr. André Corrado
COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DU COMMONWEALTH	Mr. Joe Omorodion
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE	Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General Mr. Serguei Tchelnokov Mr. Anthony Hill
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE	Mr. Kimmo Sasi, MP (Finland) Mrs. Aiste Ramanauskaite
WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU COMMERCE	Mrs. Valentine Sendanyoye Rugwabiza, Deputy Director-General Mr. Said El Hachimi

**LIST OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND OTHERS TO BE INVITED TO FOLLOW
THE WORK OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO AS OBSERVERS**

*Approved by the Steering Committee at its 7th session (Geneva, 7 September 2004),
amended at the 11th session (Hong Kong, 15 December 2005), 17th session (Geneva, 4 April 2008)
and 24th session (Geneva, 21 September 2011)*

Palestine

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
International Labour Organization (ILO)
International Monetary Fund (IMF)
United Nations (UN)
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
World Bank
World Trade Organization (WTO)

ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA)
African Parliamentary Union (APU)
Amazonian Parliament
Andean Parliament
Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union
ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO)
Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU)
Baltic Assembly
Central American Parliament
Confederation of Parliaments of the Americas (COPA)
EFTA Parliamentary Committee
Indigenous Parliament of the Americas
Interparliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community
Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States
Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)
Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Member States of the Inter-Governmental Authority on
Development (IPU-IGAD)
Latin American Parliament
Maghreb Consultative Council
Nordic Council
Pan-African Parliament
Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (PABSEC)
Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE
Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and the Russian Federation
Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Co-operation (PAEAC)
Parliamentary Union of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference Members (PUOICM)
Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
ACTIVITY	Parliamentary Panel within the Framework of the WTO Public Forum 2011 and the 24th Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO)
DESTINATION	Geneva, Switzerland
DATES	September 19-21, 2011
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Donald H. Oliver, Q.C.
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Frédéric Forge, Analyst
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 8,563.73
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 2,782.97
HOSPITALITY	
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,800.14
OFFICIAL GIFTS	
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	
TOTAL	\$ 13,146.84