

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



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**Report of the Canadian Delegation to the Parliamentary Panel
within the Framework of the WTO Public Forum 2009 and the
19th 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 30 - October 1, 2009**

Report of the Canadian Delegation to the Parliamentary Panel within the Framework of the WTO Public Forum 2009 and the 19th Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO)

**Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament
The Parliamentary Panel within the Framework of the 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. The sessions of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO are held once a year.

2. Program for the Parliamentary Panel

The 2009 WTO Public Forum was held on WTO premises in Geneva from September 28 to 30, with the theme “Global Problems, Global Solutions: Towards Better Global Governance.”¹ As part of the overall program, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the European Parliament held a parliamentary panel entitled:

Can protectionism protect trade? The legislators’ perspective

This parliamentary panel took place on Wednesday, September 30, 2009.

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.

4. Speakers

The Parliamentary Panel examined how protectionism and trade can co-exist from a parliamentary perspective. The Parliamentary Panel was moderated by Mr. Ram Etwareea, a journalist with *Le Temps*, and included the following speakers:

- Mr. Jacques Bourgeois — MP (Switzerland)
- Mr. Shakeel Mohamed — MP (Mauritius)
- Mr. Vital Moreira — Member of the European Parliament
- Mr. James Bacchus — former Chairman of the WTO Appellate Body, former member of the US Congress

They pointed out that finding the means to protect one’s own national economy without violating the WTO rules is fundamentally a political issue. A number of people noted that many countries, including those in the G-20, have committed to avoiding protectionism.

¹ More than 40 items were on the Forum agenda. For more information, see: http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum09_e/programme_e.htm.

However, reports show a slight increase in protectionist measures in these same countries. While some of these measures fall within the WTO's accepted parameters, they send a contradictory message that could encourage other countries to follow suit. Other people maintained that agriculture needs a certain level of protection because it cannot be compared to services and manufactured products, and it meets non-economic criteria as well (need for food self-sufficiency, land up-keep, etc.). They nonetheless agreed that protectionist measures that hindered trade should be avoided. Overall, the Parliamentary Panel gave participants a unique opportunity to discuss with other interested parties the effects of protectionist measures and the economic crisis on the WTO Doha Round talks.

5. The next parliamentary session on the WTO

The date of the next parliamentary session on the WTO has yet to be determined. The Steering Committee met on October 1, 2009, and submitted a number of proposals for the next meeting.

The 19th Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization

1. Background

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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.

2. Agenda

The Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO met on October 1, 2009, at IPU Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The session included the following agenda items:

- Update on recent WTO developments with the Chairman of the General Council, Ambassador Mario Matus of Chile;
- Discussion about the 2009 WTO Public Forum;
- Participation of parliamentarians in the 7th Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference;
- Suggestions for the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO in 2010 and beyond;
- Steering Committee membership.

3. The Canadian delegation

The Steering Committee meeting welcomed 53 participants from 17 national parliaments and regional parliamentary assemblies, including the Hon. Donald H. Oliver, QC, Senator of the Parliament of Canada.

4. The meeting

The IPU report on the 19th Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference, which includes a summary of decisions taken by the Committee, can be found in Appendix 1.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Donald H. Oliver, Q.C., Senator
President, Canadian Group IPU

Appendix 1

PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

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

Nineteenth session of the Steering Committee

1 October 2009, Geneva

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

1. The Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO met on 1 October 2009 at IPU Headquarters in Geneva and was attended by 21 members of parliament (see list of participants in Annex). The session was co-chaired by Mr. V. Moreira, representing the European Parliament, and, partially, Mr. G. Versnick, representing the IPU.
2. The session took place the day after the annual WTO Public Forum (Geneva, 28-30 September), with its exceptionally rich and diversified programme of events. The fact that many members of the Steering Committee had taken part in the Forum, including the parliamentary panel entitled "Can protectionism protect trade? The legislator's perspective", provided a positive background for the Committee's deliberations and helped to enrich its content. For that reason, the Steering Committee supported the holding of its meetings back-to-back with the annual session of the WTO Public Forum and expressed the wish to see that practice continued in the future, whenever possible.
3. This year's WTO Public Forum was marked by an unprecedented global economic crisis on the one hand and by protracted problems in the Doha Round negotiations on the other. Some of the discussions that had taken place during the Forum were echoed in the Steering Committee. Reference was made, for example, to the relationship between rule-made law (by WTO's Dispute Settlement Body) and parliamentary supremacy. In the panel discussion on "Global Problems, Global Solutions: Towards Better Global Governance", Mr. P. Lamy spoke of a new global architecture in the making, wherein the G20, the international organizations (WTO, WB and IMF and the WHO) and the UN system constituted the three distinct nodes of a triangle. The Steering Committee wondered what place parliaments had in such a configuration. Given the importance of these questions, it was decided that they merited an in-depth discussion at one of the future sessions of the Committee.
4. The Committee was briefed on the state of play in the Doha negotiations by the Chairman of the WTO General Council, Ambassador M. Matus (Chile), who made an introductory presentation and answered four rounds of questions. The global crisis had had a devastating impact on economies, both big and small. International trade - the engine of growth for decades - had not been spared. In the words of the Ambassador, more courage, political engagement and hard bargaining were required to conclude the Doha Round by the end of 2010, but if the recently demonstrated political will of world leaders was translated into real substantive negotiation, the objective could be achieved. Parliamentary support in this endeavour was crucial.

5. The Ambassador spoke at length of the seventh WTO Ministerial Conference, to be held from 30 November to 2 December in Geneva. The overall theme for the Ministerial Conference would be "The WTO, the multilateral trading system and the current global economic environment". The event was announced as a "regular" Ministerial Conference, 19th session of the Steering Committee: Summary of decisions 2. allowing the Ministers to address the global economic crisis and the role of the multilateral trading system. It was not intended as a negotiating session, since the Doha Development Agenda talks were taking place on a separate track. The Conference would be based on a "F.I.T" (full participation, inclusiveness, transparency) approach, would not be structured around negotiating processes, would not have an overloaded agenda, should not divert energy and attention from the DDA, and any issue for action or decision should be agreed well before the Ministerial Conference.

6. Responding to questions about the possibility of establishing more formal links between the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO and the intergovernmental process, Ambassador Matus said that, in the absence of full agreement on this matter and owing to the consensus-based nature of the WTO, it was not yet possible to include parliamentarians within the organizational structure of WTO sessions. He pointed out nonetheless that the legitimacy of the WTO process depended on the support it enjoyed in parliaments. It was their responsibility to approve the mandate for trade negotiations, ratify their outcome and provide appropriate legislative and budgetary frameworks for the implementation of agreements. More deep reflection on the role and place of parliaments in this process was therefore necessary. Ambassador Matus promised to convey the concerns of the parliamentary community to his colleagues at the WTO General Council and to advocate for a stronger parliamentary involvement in the WTO.

7. For their part, members of the Steering Committee undertook to raise this matter with their respective Trade Ministers once again, asking them to revert to the question of the status of members of parliament at WTO Ministerial Conferences. One of the objectives was to add a separate parliamentary category of observers with access rights to Ministerial Conferences.

8. Concluding this part of the debate, the Chair, Mr. V. Moreira, said that it would be important to maintain pressure on both the Trade Ministers and the WTO Secretariat. As far as the European Parliament was concerned, he would raise the issue with the European Commissioner for External Trade. Other parliaments were likewise invited to pursue this line of action, including through holding debates and hearings in parliamentary committees. In parallel, every effort should be made to give more visibility to the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO and to broaden its representativeness, including by the involvement of the US Congress. The future possibility of bringing Australia and Brazil into the Steering Committee was also evoked.

9. Having turned to the question of its own work plans for the remainder of the year and in particular in connection with the seventh WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva (see point 5 above), the Committee decided that it would be politically important to ensure parliamentary presence at this event. More specifically, it was decided that a special, enlarged session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO would be organized on the second day of the Ministerial Conference, 1 December 2009. The meeting would take place on IPU premises (unless the WTO

agreed for it to be held on its territory), and would be open to all members of parliament attending the WTO Ministerial Conference. They would have an opportunity to meet with some of the Ministers, WTO officials and key negotiators, and to consider ways of contributing to the revitalization of the Doha Round. A detailed programme of the enlarged session would be elaborated by the IPU and the European Parliament as the Conference co-organizers.

10. With regard to its long-term plan of work, the Steering Committee felt that at least one full plenary session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO would have to be organized in 2010. Should a WTO Ministerial Conference be held in 2010, a parliamentary session 19th session of the Steering Committee: Summary of decisions 3. would be organized in conjunction with it. As an alternative, a regular annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO would be held either in Geneva or Brussels. In addition, two sessions of the Steering Committee would take place in the first and second half of the year respectively. They would be devoted to preparation of the plenary session of the Conference, including its agenda, debate topics, panellists, guest speakers, outcome document, etc.

11. Finally, the Steering Committee took note, with regret, that the National Assembly of Niger had been dissolved and that there was effectively no parliament in that country at present. Niger being one of the founding members of the Steering Committee representing Africa, the Committee felt it was important to ensure uninterrupted representation of that geographic region. To that end, in conformity with Rule 4.5 of the Rules of Procedure and the agreed principles of rotation among Steering Committee members, the IPU and the European Parliament proposed that the National Assembly of Burkina Faso be part of the Steering Committee for a period of four years, thereby replacing the National Assembly of Niger. The Committee accepted that proposal. Annex

**Nineteenth Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the
WTO**

Dix-neuvième session du Comité de pilotage de la Conférence parlementaire sur l'OMC

Geneva/ Genève, 1/10/2009

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS**

COUNTRY or ORGANISATION PAYS ou ORGANISATION	NAME NOM
BELGIUM - BELGIQUE	Mr. Geert Versnick, MP
CANADA	Senator Donald H. Oliver Mr. Frederic Forge
CHINA - CHINE	Absent
EGYPT - EGYPTE	Mr. Moustafa El Saeed, MP Mr. Mokhtar Omar
FINLAND - FINLANDE	Absent
FRANCE	Senator Jean Bizet Mr. Edouard Denoël
GERMANY - ALLEMAGNE	Mr. Erich Fritz, MP
INDIA - INDE	Shri P.C. Chacko, MP
IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF) IRAN (REPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE D')	Mr. Seyed Hossein Hashemi, MP Mr. Seyed Mostafa Zolghadr, MP Mr. Seyed Ali Mohammad Mousavi Mr. Ebrahim Alikhani
JAPAN - JAPON	Mr. Ken Kagaya, MP Mr. Naokatsu Fuji Ms. Mariko Higuchi Ms. Nana Oyamada Ms. Izumi Duggal Takagi
KENYA	Mr. Chrysanthus Okemo, MP
MAURITIUS - MAURICE	Mr. Shakeel Mohamed, MP
MEXICO - MEXIQUE	Absent
MOROCCO - MAROC	Absent
NAMIBIA - NAMIBIE	Mr. Tsudao Gurirab, MP Ms. Clara Bohitile, MP Ms. Elizabeth De Wee
NIGER	Absent

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
ACTIVITY	Report of the Canadian Delegation to the Parliamentary Panel within the Framework of the WTO Public Forum 2009 and the 19th Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO)
DESTINATION	Geneva, Switzerland
DATES	September 30 – October 1, 2009
DELEGATION	
SENATE	The Hon. Donald H. Oliver, Q.C.
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Mr. Frédéric Forge, Analyst
TRANSPORTATION	\$3,794.82
ACCOMMODATION	\$2,222.89
HOSPITALITY	
PER DIEMS	\$1,460.17
OFFICIAL GIFTS	
MISCELLANEOUS	
TOTAL	\$7,477.88