



# PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF UNCTAD XI

Sao Paulo (Brazil), 11 and 12 June 2004



Organised jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Brazilian National Congress  
in co-operation with the UNCTAD Secretariat

## ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

### 1. Adoption of the agenda

### 2. Debate on the themes of UNCTAD XI

*The Bangkok Plan of Action, adopted by UNCTAD X in February 2000, was largely considered to be a roadmap to managing globalization. Four years down the road, representatives of governments, parliaments, the business community and civil society are to meet in São Paulo for a candid overview, free of negotiating constraints, of subsequent developments in the world economy and prospects for its growth, in particular in the developing countries.*

*How have countries at different stages of economic maturity fared? Which policies have shown positive results? To what extent are "failures" attributable to national or international policies? Who is responsible and accountable for framing these international policies, especially those that override national autonomy?*

*Couched as they are in economic terms, these issues, tabled by governments and the UNCTAD Secretary General, are nevertheless profoundly political and require sharply focused responses on the part of parliamentarians as elected representatives of the people. Of the four sub-themes of UNCTAD XI appearing under the overall theme of "coherence", the Parliamentary Meeting will take up the three set out below, with a particular focus on the following specific questions:*

#### (a) Development strategies in a globalizing world economy

- What are the essentials of development strategies? Are they common to all economies at different stages of development and with differing institutional capacities? What are the empirical bases for assessing the outcomes? Are national planning agencies and statistical offices equipped to provide the indispensable information on which to base policies and programmes?*
- Are national policies and programmes, regional integration arrangements and the multilateral rules and policies mutually reinforcing? To what extent is it necessary to enlarge policy space for the developing countries, adapting it to their specific circumstances? Is there a need for new approaches in this regard, for more open and participatory arrangements at all levels?*
- What role can Parliaments play in multilateral policy discussions and rule-making in order to ensure that poverty, environment and gender issues engage the full attention of the public and are attributed the necessary resources? How can national Parliaments better exercise their oversight function vis-à-vis governments that seem to be increasingly accountable to international financial institutions and bilateral aid agencies?*

#### (b) Building productive capacity and international competitiveness

- How does competitiveness, the assumed mantra for the integration of developing countries into the world economy, translate in the real world given that the international financial and monetary system attaches low priority to the production of real goods and services in developing countries and their competitiveness can disappear overnight, for example, as a result of exchange rate volatility?*
- To what extent does the development of national productive capacities depend on supportive regional and international financing arrangements? How appropriate were the policies of the*

*Bretton Woods Institutions, in particular the now-discarded devaluation remedies and conditionalities, when they were applied across the board to deal with liquidity constraints, financial speculation, commodity problems, high energy import dependence, indexed borrowing rates, unsustainable debt repayments, and lack of productive capacity, among other factors?*

- *Is there a need for an international regime to regulate the movement of natural persons, in addition to that of the existing WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)?*
- *What is the role of Parliaments in restoring economic and technical cooperation among developing countries as a necessary component of a symmetrically functioning world economy and as a means of facilitating their integration in it?*

**(c) Assuring development gains from the international trading system and trade negotiations**

- *The current international rules-based trading system, of which the WTO is considered the centerpiece, is a combination of bilateral, regional and multilateral arrangements with varying degrees of binding force. Given UNCTAD's supportive role in the functioning of this system, how can its resources be put to best use for linking international trade, finance, environment, transport and technology with the overall development needs, including those of the least developed, small island and land-locked States?*
- *Following the extension of trade to the sectors of services, intellectual property, environment, competition policy, investment, procurement of public goods and services, transfer of technology, and so forth, the standard by which countries measured their net benefit from an exchange of goods, known as "terms of trade", has disappeared from serious analysis on trade and development. Should UNCTAD undertake a major conceptual and empirical study in this regard giving meaning to the differing conclusions and unsubstantiated claims about globalization and its impact on the poor?*
- *To the extent that the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals depends upon sharing the gains from growth and development broadly, equitably and in the shortest possible time, what is the role of Parliaments in dealing with the existing and widening income and benefit gaps? How can Parliaments use their influence to ensure that governments and multilateral institutions provide periodic reports by which to measure the gains?*
- *What must be done in the WTO system so that developing countries are better equipped for negotiations and the same binding effect is given to the commitments on technical assistance and capacity building as to contractual arrangements in the fields of commerce and technology? How can developing countries be assured of the necessary and sufficient after-sales service and technical support, including through the WTO dispute settlement mechanism, thus securing the balance of benefits from the "single undertaking" in the WTO?*

**3. Interactive panel discussion: The South in search of new solutions**

*The failure of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancún and the subsequent stalemate in multilateral trade talks appear to be pushing developing countries to take initiatives aimed at strengthening South-South trade. To what extent can such initiatives lessen developing countries' dependence on the markets of industrialized countries? Can they increase the South's bargaining power at WTO? During this interactive panel discussion, parliamentarians, government representatives and international experts will assess recent developments in this field from the point of view of their potential impact on long-term development strategies of the South.*

**4. Adoption of the Declaration**

*At the end of the Meeting, the participants will be called on to adopt a Declaration, which will be prepared by the Drafting Committee.*