



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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Geneva, 26 June 2017

Office of the
Secretary General

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 prominent feature of the international calendar.

It has likewise become a tradition to hold a special Parliamentary session during the WTO Public Forum. Such 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 26 to 28 September, on the WTO premises in Geneva (Centre William Rappard), under the overall theme ***Trade: Behind the Headlines***. The Parliamentary session will be held on **Tuesday, 26 September 2017, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Room W at WTO Headquarters.**

The theme of the Parliamentary session is ***Making trade fair: The contribution of parliaments***. Global trade openness has boosted economic growth and competitiveness. It has also enabled poorer countries to catch up and become part of the global trading system. Over the last years, it has however been evident that not everybody benefits equally from these opportunities, and many people feel left behind, which has in turn stirred up feelings of widespread anxiety and frustration, along with serious questions about the relevance of the global trading system. This has been particularly evident in several election campaigns, not the least in the developed world, and has sparked a new debate on the rules of global trade and the need to make sure that trade is fair and sustainable. The objective of this session is to afford parliamentarians the opportunity to reflect upon their role in this debate and to put forward concrete proposals for parliamentary action and in support of initiatives on how the benefits of trade can be more equally shared and can contribute to more sustainable trade in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The 26 September parliamentary session is open to all duly accredited Forum participants. The WTO Secretariat will provide interpretation in English, French and Spanish. A detailed programme of the session will be posted shortly on the IPU website: <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/wto-forum17.htm>.

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In accordance with WTO practice, all participants in the Public Forum are responsible for their own visa and travel arrangements, as well as accommodation in Geneva. Online registration for the Public Forum is now open. Participants are required to register online via the WTO website:

(https://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum17_e/pf17_reg_e.htm).

Registrations are handled by the WTO Secretariat. On-site registration will not be available.

The IPU is not able to handle any logistical matters relating to the WTO Public Forum and is not in a position to assist delegates with accommodation or any other such practical arrangements relating to their stay in Geneva, which remain the sole responsibility of each of the WTO Forum participants.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Martin Chungong', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Martin Chungong
Secretary General