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# PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

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

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## Webinar

### *Trade and health: Parliamentary perspectives on MC12*

*In the context of 12th WTO Ministerial Conference  
Monday, 8 November 2021, 14.00 to 16.00 (CET)*

#### **Concept note**

The Covid-19 pandemic has put the issue of trade and health plainly on the WTO agenda. It triggered a wave of trade-restrictive measures, particularly related to the trade in medical products, with significant implications for global supply chains. Often, these measures exacerbated existing inequalities and led to an uneven global fight against the pandemic, with uneven access to vaccines being at the center of the discussion.

While international mobilization led to the discovery of COVID-19 vaccines, the latter have not been accessible to the vast majority of the world's population. At the same time, the spread of the pandemic has disrupted global trade and economic networks at large.

The WTO is therefore facing a dual challenge. It has to find a way forward on facilitating the fight against the pandemic through trade policy while at the same time managing the global economic fallout of the pandemic. In this regard, the international community is stepping up initiatives for a rapid return to normal life. Among these, there is broad support for integrating an equitable vaccine access strategy which would support a resilient economy. Other measures, including those that should help promote the production, distribution and use of drugs, vaccines and therapeutic, diagnostic equipment will also be the subject of in-depth discussions, particularly during the 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO.

In light of their constitutional prerogatives, parliamentarians are at the forefront of this unprecedented mobilization intended to provide robust solutions to a resilient and long-lasting recovery.

It is in this perspective, and also in the context of MC12, that a webinar on *Trade and health: parliamentary perspectives on MC12* will be organized. It will be an opportunity for parliamentarians to explore and draw up concrete proposals aiming at supporting discussions on the consolidation of the interaction between trade and public health required to curb the current health, economic and social crisis.

The webinar will be addressed by:

- Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO)
- Ambassador David Walker, Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the WTO, Facilitator on WTO response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The webinar will be moderated by:

- Mr. Nadir Manzoor, Speaker of the Parliament of Guyana, co-Chair of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, and
- Mr. Bernd Lange, MEP, Chair of the Committee on International trade (INTA) and co-Chair of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO.

The webinar will take place on the Zoom platform.