

PRESS RELEASE

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WTO ORGANIZES SECOND "GENEVA WEEK" FOR NON-RESIDENT DELEGATIONS

An information week for WTO Members and Observers without permanent representation in Geneva will take place from 21 to 27 October at the WTO. The "Geneva Week" is designed to bring up to date on WTO activities those WTO Members and Observers who are unable to attend WTO meetings in Geneva. The WTO, in cooperation with 13 other international organizations, is organizing this Geneva Week to give representatives from these governments reports on different areas covered by the WTO and to inform them about technical assistance in these fields.

"All countries participating in the WTO system, including rich and poor, large and small, must be fully aware of the on-going work and discussions in the organization, and also the possibilities for trade-related assistance that are available through the WTO and its sister agencies. Through annual sessions of the Geneva Week and also through constant communication we are helping our smaller Members and Observers to participate better in the WTO process. It is a way of increasing participation and transparency," said Mike Moore, WTO Director-General.

The Geneva week will start with a Seminar on Small Economies open to all WTO Members and Observers. It will end with the 31st session of the Committee on Trade and Development. During the week, there will also be a discussion on electronic commerce open to all Members and Observers.

Thirty-seven WTO Members and Observers will attend the Geneva Week. Invitations were sent both to their Trade Ministries and their permanent delegations in Europe. Their presence is funded by the Swedish government, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the International Trade Center (ITC).

A first "Geneva Week" was successfully held in November 1999. This year, the Geneva Week will focus on the on-going work programme, including implementation of WTO agreements; mandated negotiations in agriculture, services and intellectual property; electronic commerce; and technical cooperation.

The 28 WTO Members and 9 Observers participating in Geneva Week lack the resources to maintain permanent offices in Geneva. They have difficulty accessing all the available information on WTO's work and monitoring actions or issues they may need to consider. This information week therefore intends to help non-resident WTO Members and Observers inform themselves about the work going on in the WTO, and also expose them to the work of other relevant agencies in Geneva.

The 37 countries invited are: Andorra; Antigua & Barbuda; Armenia; Benin; Botswana; Burkina Faso; Cambodia; Central African Republic; Chad; Democratic Republic of Congo; Dominica; Republic of the Fiji Islands; Gambia; Grenada; Guinea Bissau; Guyana; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Macau, China; Malawi; Maldives; Mali; Namibia; Niger; Papua New Guinea; Samoa; St. Kitts & Nevis; St. Lucia; St. Vincent & the Grenadines; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; Solomon Islands; Suriname; Swaziland; Togo; Tonga; Uzbekistan and Vanuatu.

Agencies invited to make presentations at the Geneva Week are: the African Caribbean Pacific General Secretariat (ACP), the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation (AITIC), the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the Forum Secretariat, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the International Trade Center (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Bank and the World Tourism Organization (WTO).

MORE

"GENEVA WEEK" FOR NON GENEVA-BASED DELEGATIONS
21 - 27 October 2000

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Day	am (10.00-13.00)	pm (15.00-18.00)
Sat. 21/10	Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) Seminar on Small Economies (NB: 09.00-13.00)	CTD Seminar on Small Economies (NB: 14.00-18.00)
Mon. 23/ 10	<p>Opening Remarks by the Director General.</p> <p>Overview of WTO work in progress (Presentations by Chairman of General Council, Chairman of CTD, DDG Ouedraogo). Questions/Answers.</p>	<p>Presentations by Non-residents of their concerns and perceptions (continuation of morning session).</p> <p>Information available to Non-residents about WTO; presentation of support facilities for non-residents</p> <p>(Presentations by Secretariat, AITIC, Commonwealth Secretariat, ACP, Forum Secretariat). Questions/Answers.</p>
Tues. 24/ 10	<p><u>Agriculture:</u> Introduction by Chairman of Committee on Agriculture. Briefing by Secretariat. Presentations by FAO and World Bank</p> <p><u>Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary Measures</u> Briefing by Secretariat. Presentations by FAO and World Bank Questions/Answers.</p>	<p><u>TRIPS:</u> Introduction by Chairman of TRIPS Council. Briefing by Secretariat Presentation by WIPO. Questions/Answers.</p> <p><u>Competition Policy</u> Briefing by Secretariat Presentation by UNCTAD Questions/Answers.</p>
Wed. 25/ 10	<p><u>Services:</u> Introduction by Director of Services Division. Briefings by Secretariat. Presentations by ITU and World Tourism Organization Questions/Answers.</p>	<p><u>E-Commerce:</u> Briefing by Secretariat Presentations by ITU, UNCTAD, ITC, WIPO Questions/Answers.</p> <p>(NB: This will be an informal session of the CTD open to all Members and Observers of the CTD)</p>
Thurs 26/ 10	<p><u>Market access; Customs Valuation and Rules of Origin</u> Presentations by Secretariat, ITC Questions/Answers.</p> <p><u>Technical Cooperation and Capacity Building, including the Integrated Framework:</u> Briefing by Secretariat. Presentations by ITC and UNCTAD Questions/Answers.</p>	<p><u>"Trade and..." issues:</u> Briefings by Secretariat Presentations by international organisations:</p> <p>Environmental issues. (UNEP) Investment issues. (UNCTAD) Labour issues. (ILO) Questions/ Answers.</p> <p>Summing up and evaluation 14.30: PRESS CONFERENCE (at WTO)</p>
Fri. 27/10	31st Session of the CTD	31st Session of the CTD

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Seminar on Small Economies

The Geneva Week will begin on Saturday 21 October with a Seminar on Small Economies. The objective of the seminar is to explore issues related to the problems of small economies and possible linkages to WTO provisions. Participation is open to WTO Members and Observers and Inter-Governmental Organizations with observer status in the WTO Committee on Trade and Development.

A first session will enable participants to identify the issues related with small economies such as the particular features of the trade and production of small economies. The second session will hear from representatives of small economies or regional organizations on their perspective on the problems that they face. In the third session, participants will discuss how small economies can cope better. Finally, A fourth session will look into how the WTO and other institutions can respond to the needs of small economies.

MORE

Keeping non-resident delegations informed

Twenty eight WTO Members and nine WTO Observers do not have permanent delegations in Geneva. Eighteen of them are least-developed countries, many are small economies. Because it is vital for these Members and Observers to keep in touch with WTO matters, the WTO Secretariat has established several information links with them.

First, the WTO is implementing a program of "Reference Centers". Under this programme, the WTO provides computer equipment, an Internet connection and training for the operation of a WTO Reference Center within each trade ministry of the countries benefitting from the programme.

In practice, this means access to the WTO Internet site which contains up-to-date information on all WTO activities and access to the Document Dissemination Facility which features all WTO official documents. Reference Centres are also supplied with all WTO publications and training materials, both on paper and in CD-ROM format.

To date, equipment and/or training have been provided to 77 countries. The network of WTO Reference Centres now extends to 33 of the 37 Members and Observers without permanent delegations in Geneva. The establishment of Reference Centers was initiated in 1996 under the "Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme" (JITAP) operated by the WTO, UNCTAD and ITC.

Second, the WTO directly sends information to the European missions of the 37 WTO Members and Observers which do not have permanent delegations in Geneva. To keep them up-to-date on major trade developments, the WTO Secretariat sends missions outside Geneva daily trade news summaries using wire agencies. The WTO Secretariat also faxes them the WTO Daily Bulletin, a summary of all meetings. WTO publications are sent regularly to these missions.

Thirdly, in an effort to provide better and more focused information to non-residents, the secretariat prepares, on a periodic basis, a set of briefing notes on selected issues handled by the WTO.

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