

# WTO Public Forum 2010

The Forces Shaping World Trade

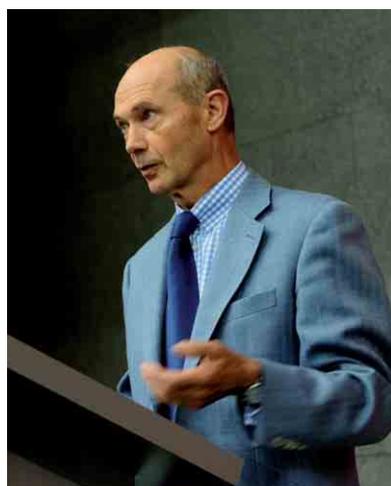
Geneva, 15-17 September 2010

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The 2010 Public Forum on “The forces shaping world trade” will be an opportunity for the public at large to take stock of the latest developments at the global level that are having an impact on the multilateral trading system and identify steps that will contribute towards bolstering international trade flows and strengthening the WTO. The discussion will be guided by four core themes that will structure the analysis of the main issues with an eye to the future of the multilateral trading system.

**“Growing interdependence requires that our laws, our social norms and values, our mechanisms for framing human behaviour be examined, debated, understood and operated together as coherently as possible”**

**Pascal Lamy,  
9 November 2009**



## Core themes

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### I. The WTO and the players that influence the multilateral trading system

**Objectives:** To discuss the shift of power in international politics, the role of the main actors influencing the multilateral trading system and public attitudes towards the WTO.

During fifteen years of WTO, the world has undergone major geopolitical changes and has witnessed the rise of new state actors, who, alongside the traditional players, are asserting their own role in shaping the world's economic and political environment. There is a growing awareness of the ascendancy of developing and least developed countries, which now constitute two thirds of the WTO's membership. The G-8, as a forum for exercising global governance, has given ground to a more comprehensive G-20. Civil society organizations, business groups,

trade unions and other relevant non-state actors (NSAs) are also affirming their role in shaping the world's economic and political environment, including at the WTO. They have become increasingly important interlocutors and partners for governments, especially in the developing world.

In view of all of the above, has the geopolitical shift of power in international politics influenced the decision-making process at the WTO? Is the G-20 really representative and is the G-192 feasible? What are NSAs preferred channels of engagement for seeking to influence the on-going discussions at the WTO? What are the effects of the economic crisis on public attitudes towards the WTO?

### II. The economic, political and technological factors shaping world trade and the role of the rules-based multilateral trading system in contributing to the global economic recovery



Objectives: To examine the factors that are determining international trade - particularly in the wake of the global economic crisis - and the role of the WTO multilateral rules-based system, including the Doha Round, in contributing towards mitigating the effects of the crisis.

The development of new technologies has also contributed towards shaping international trade by changing the way business is conducted and the way people interact. The rapid development of technology has generated both new challenges and new opportunities for economic agents worldwide. What are the main economic, political and technological factors shaping world trade? What is the potential of technological progress and innovation for improving the trading position of the poorest countries? What is the role of the WTO rules-based multilateral system in contributing to the global economic recovery?

### III. Coherence between the WTO and other areas of global governance

Objectives: To identify how the WTO can promote coherence at the international level to better address world problems and contribute towards improved global governance.

Human rights protection, labour standards, environmental concerns, gender equality, public health issues, climate change, scarcities in food, energy and natural resources, and new private standards are only some of the areas that the WTO is often called upon to consider in the context of its daily activities, and in some cases to incorporate in negotiations. To what extent should the WTO coordinate its work with that of other intergovernmental organizations? Is there a greater need for transparency and accountability at the international level? How can the WTO address issues that are likely to confront the world economy in the future, such

as social standards or climate change, without spreading itself too thin or undermining support for open trade?

### IV. Looking to the future: What post-crisis agenda for the WTO in a shifting-power scenario?

Objectives: To reflect on what the post-crisis agenda for the WTO should be in a shifting-power scenario and identify steps that will contribute towards bolstering international trade flows and strengthening the multilateral trading system.

The global economic crisis has led to a considerable decrease in trade flows. Although protectionist measures were largely held in check, protectionism remains a potential threat to the global economy and sustained recovery. A conclusion of the Doha Round would contribute towards enhancing market access and strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading system. The crisis has also prompted reflections on the post-crisis agenda for the WTO, including discussions on issues that are not part of the current talks, such as trade and investment and trade and competition policy among others. What steps can governments take that will contribute towards reviving international trade flows? What is the role of the Doha Round of negotiations in strengthening the multilateral trading system? Will the risks of backtracking increase if the necessary political will to conclude the negotiations remains absent in 2010? What should the



WTO post-crisis agenda look like? Multilateral or sectoral - the future of trade negotiations?

## Frequently asked questions

### Who can participate?

Representatives of governments, civil society organizations, businesses, trade unions, as well as legislators, academics, students and the public at large. All are welcome to contribute and enhance the dialogue on the multilateral trading system.

### Who organizes the sessions?

In the past, sessions at the Public Forum have been organized by interested stakeholders, in-

cluding non-governmental organizations, business groups and law firms, universities and research institutes, trade unions and members of parliaments as well as other inter-governmental organizations.

### Where does the Public Forum take place?

All sessions of the WTO Public Forum take place at the WTO premises at the Centre William Rappard, Rue de Lausanne 154, Geneva, Switzerland.

### What are the working languages of the meetings?

The meetings are held in the three working languages of the WTO: English, French and Spanish. Interpretation will be available in all three languages.

### How and when can I register?

Those wishing to attend the WTO Public Forum can register online at: <https://meetings.wto.org/Forums/Registrant/SymposiumRegistration.aspx?Language=E>

### Where can I find additional information about the programme?

Additional information about the programme can be found on the WTO Public Forum website: <http://www.wto.org/publicforum>

### Do I need a visa?

If you are planning to travel to Geneva to participate

to the WTO Public Forum, please, check well in advance of your journey for visa requirements with the Swiss embassy or consulate nearest to you. Please, note that the WTO does not organise visa arrangements.

### Who pays for my journey?

Participation at the Forum is free of charge. Travel and accommodation costs are to be borne by participants.

### Useful links

Getting around Geneva:  
<http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch/>

Accommodation:  
[www.genevashotels.com](http://www.genevashotels.com)

Weather  
<http://www.meteoschweiz.admin.ch/web/en/weather.html>

Bus Schedule:  
<http://www.tpg.ch>

Train Schedule:  
<http://mct.sbb.ch/mct/en/reisen.htm>

Geneva Airport:  
[www.gva.ch](http://www.gva.ch)

For more information please contact

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## Programme in brief

### Wednesday 15 September

#### **7h30 – 10h**

Registration of Participants/  
Badge collection

#### **10h – 10h30**

Opening ceremony

#### **10h30 – 12h30**

High-level panel

#### **12h30 – 14h**

Lunch break

#### **14h – 16h**

4 Working sessions in parallel

#### **16h15 – 18h15**

3 Working sessions in parallel

#### **18h15 – 20h15**

Dinner reception

### Thursday 16 September

#### **7h30 – 10h**

Registration of Participants/  
Badge collection

#### **10h – 12h**

High-level panel

#### **9h – 11h**

3 Working sessions in parallel

#### **11h15 – 13h15**

3 Working sessions in parallel

#### **12h30 – 14h**

Lunch break

#### **14h15 – 16h15**

4 Working sessions in parallel

#### **16h30 – 18h30**

3 Working sessions in parallel

### Friday 17 September

#### **7h30 – 19h**

Registration of Participants/  
Badge collection

#### **9h – 11h**

5 Working sessions in parallel

#### **11h15 – 13h15**

5 Working sessions in parallel

#### **13h15 – 14h15**

Lunch break

#### **14h15 – 16h15**

5 Working sessions in parallel

#### **16h30 – 18h30**

5 Working sessions in parallel

High-level panels are organized by the WTO Secretariat and are designed to address broad issues and to set the tone for fur-

ther discussions. They feature prominent personalities on the international scene, who share their views on the most pressing issues debated.

Working sessions provide a more specific insight into a particular issue. The discussion can be more technical and may involve experts, professionals and opinion leaders. The panellists introduce the issue and offer their point of view to the audience, while the moderator engages the participants in a free and open discussion.

The dinner reception is open to all registered participants. It represents an occasion for organizers, panellists and the public to meet in an informal get-together and engage in a more relaxed exchange of views and opinions. It is also a good opportunity to network and to create long-lasting contacts.