



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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# Abu Dhabi Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE)  
25 February 2024

*Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament, with the support of the Federal National Council of the UAE, in connection with the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13)*

## Outcome document

***Adopted on 25 February 2024***

We, legislators meeting in Abu Dhabi on 25 February 2024 for our statutory Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, on the occasion of the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference,

1. *Restate* the importance of parliamentary engagement, and the inclusion of a parliamentary dimension, in the future of multilateral cooperation on trade issues, considering the determining contribution of trade to the global economy;
2. *Emphasize* the significance of the WTO as a key institution for improving peoples' lives, negotiating trade rules, overseeing agreements, settling disputes and maintaining rules-based, open and fair trade for the benefit of all, none of which can be achieved without parliamentary engagement;
3. *Assert* the need, in light of this critical role, to conduct necessary reform of the WTO to strengthen and improve all its functions, including having a fully and well-functioning dispute-settlement system with a binding, two-tier and independent process, so that the Organization can be better equipped to address the challenges of the 21st century and meet the growing expectations of the people, while taking into account development needs and environmental and social sustainability;
4. *Urge* all WTO members that have not yet done so to swiftly ratify all WTO agreements and in particular the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, in order for it to enter into force as soon as possible, for which ratification by two-thirds of the membership is required; and *stress* the crucial importance of also reaching an agreement on disciplines on fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, in order to avoid depleting marine biological resources and allow for their sustainable management, while respecting the need for special and differential treatment in line with SDG 14.6;
5. *Stress* the need to mainstream the development dimension of the WTO, including through the WTO reform process and through making the special and differential treatment principle better meet the needs of developing countries; *regret* that the WTO has not yet fully delivered on its Doha Development Agenda; and *welcome* the decision already taken on the extension of support measures to assist least-developed countries (LDCs) on the path to graduation from LDC status in order to provide a smooth and sustainable transitional period for the withdrawal of trade preferences;
6. *Reiterate* our shared sense of responsibility to establish mechanisms for parliamentary oversight and involvement in trade negotiations and agreements, both upstream and downstream of the process, ensuring transparency and democratic accountability through monitoring and evaluation of the impact of such agreements on our citizens, people and societies;

7. *Affirm* that “re-globalization” or increased trade cooperation is a source of security and peace, a driver of economic prosperity and poverty reduction, and a critical tool for addressing climate change;
8. *Highlight* the importance of multilateral and plurilateral rules on digital trade and the role of parliamentarians and the WTO in improving regulations to maintain free, inclusive, non-discriminatory, transparent, resilient, open and fair digital trade, while promoting interoperable digital systems that respect human rights and unleash the potential of digital trade; *strongly encourage* efforts to find an appropriate and sustainable solution for electronic transmissions in relation to the e-commerce moratorium; and *stress* the need to bridge the digital divide by sharing best practices and enhancing capacity-building;
9. *Also highlight* the importance, considering the constant change in our societies and the need to adapt to the times, of transitioning to stable, open, sustainable, eco-friendly and resilient global industrial and supply chains and production methods as part of future trade agreements and policies, through cooperation under the auspices of the WTO;
10. *Reiterate* the role of parliamentarians in creating legislation that encourages the adoption of green trade practices that will be consistent with multilateral agreements, while maximizing the benefit of trade on the environment and vulnerable communities and ensuring that environment-related trade measures do not constitute unjustifiable discrimination;
11. *Believe* that the outcome of MC13 should provide an action-based agenda for trade policy supporting the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement; *strongly encourage* WTO members to consider all possible measures to contribute to limiting greenhouse gas emissions in line with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, progress made in the UAE Consensus and the conclusions of COP28, to reinforce alignment with the Paris Agreement and climate neutrality, and enhance cooperation in the WTO on measures adopted domestically; *welcome* the first ever “trade day” at COP28 and the historic agreement to transition away from fossil fuels; and *expect* the COP decisions to be reflected in the work of the WTO;
12. *Underline* the need to reinvigorate discussions on industrial subsidies within the WTO, including a potential update of the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, and *take the view* that MC13 should launch a discussion on industrial subsidies in order to provide recommendations in due time for future Ministerial Conferences;
13. *Emphasize* the role of parliamentarians in ratifying and overseeing bilateral and multilateral trade agreements that further facilitate global trade in all industries, through appropriate mechanisms;
14. *Stress* the role of parliamentary oversight of trade in modernizing the health-care sector for the 21st century, while ensuring equitable access to critical medicines, vaccines and medical technologies, as well as supporting innovation by protecting intellectual property rights that enable their creation;
15. *Acknowledge* that WTO members have agreed to discuss the scope of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) decision to cover COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics; *call on* WTO members to take a decision on this matter by MC13, while keeping the incentives to innovate in mind; and *call on* WTO members to review their national laws and policies to ensure full incorporation of all relevant intellectual property flexibilities protecting access to medical products;
16. *Emphasize* the importance of trade in regulating and finding a permanent solution for public food stockholding, while promoting a legislative framework to improve global food security by ensuring resilient and secure food supply chains, encouraging sustainable agricultural practices and reducing food waste;
17. *Underline* the need for an outcome on food security, including concrete actions to increase the resilience of LDCs and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries in their response to acute food instability;

18. *Acknowledge* the growing inequalities between countries; and *stress* the importance of inclusive trade agreements that support developing countries and LDCs and help them achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;
19. *Call on* parliaments and governments to ensure that trade and environment policies are mutually supportive and consistent with WTO and other multilateral environmental agreements;
20. *Call on* parliamentarians and governments to join hands in leveraging the positive use of technology and efficient and properly regulated artificial intelligence in trade negotiations, capacity-building and technology transfer to developing countries and LDCs;
21. *Call on* parliaments and governments to promote sustainable measures and inclusive approaches to engage in trade, support vulnerable communities, and ensure no one is left behind, and *call on* the Steering Committee of the PCWTO to regularly review the implementation of our shared commitments and report on progress made;
22. *Call on* governments to more systematically include legislators, including women and youth, in their official Ministerial Conference delegations to ensure inclusivity and foster the contribution of all components of society;
23. *Express* our belief that the WTO needs a strong and effective parliamentary dimension and as such *commit* to equipping the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO with the tools it needs to deliver its mandate and ensure more robust parliamentary engagement with the WTO;
24. *Extend* our sincere gratitude to the United Arab Emirates and the Federal National Council for hosting this parliamentary meeting and *express* our commitment to continue this constructive dialogue to discuss critical trade challenges and be part of the solution through continuous engagement and effective support.