



Resolution 1101 (1996)¹

World Trade Organisation and the implementation of the Uruguay Round

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly welcomes the creation, in 1995, of the new World Trade Organisation (WTO) and supports it in its mission to implement the Uruguay Round agreements and, more generally, to maintain an open, multilateral, worldwide trading system. The Assembly considers such a system a major vehicle for peace and prosperity among all nations, and in particular for allowing developing countries and countries which are in transition to partake of global economic growth.
2. The Assembly encourages the WTO to assure liberalisation in fields in which work has been started but not completed under the Uruguay Round, such as services, telecommunications, maritime transport services and agriculture; and to tackle resolutely new areas such as the relationship between trade and the environment, trade and investment, competition policy, and trade and social standards.
3. The Assembly considers the WTO ministerial meeting to be held in Singapore in December 1996 as being of great importance for the above purposes, and calls on the governments of Council of Europe member states to do their utmost to ensure its success.
4. Labour standards must be raised worldwide to protect the health and safety of workers and to reduce the current exploitation of, particularly, women and the young, in many countries. The Assembly in this context expresses its support for the efforts undertaken by the International Labour Organisation to ban child labour worldwide, notably by making national legislation conform to international standards for the minimum age of workers, and believes that these efforts should inspire the WTO's work. Nonetheless, labour standards should not be used as a pretext for protectionism.
5. Progress on trade which is responsible in relation to the environment is particularly important in order to protect the natural resources of poor countries and ensure sustainable development for the benefit of local populations.
6. The Assembly encourages member countries of the WTO to further expand its membership so as to include major countries still outside the organisations, among them Russia and other countries in central and eastern Europe, as well as the People's Republic of China, provided they meet the conditions for membership.
7. The Assembly in this context calls on those among its member states which are not yet members of the WTO to make every effort to join it as early as possible, in full respect of its principles.
8. The Assembly notes the increasing number of regional trade arrangements. It considers that such arrangements can be useful instruments under certain circumstances. It is, however, essential that such arrangements and links be fully compatible with, and helpful to, WTO principles and aims, in order to avoid a retreat into protectionism and a multitude of special arrangements.

1. Assembly debate on 25 September 1996 (29th Sitting) (see [Doc. 7618](#), report by the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteurs: Mr Demiralp and Mrs Verspaget). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 September 1996 (29th Sitting).



9. The Assembly calls on governments of Council of Europe member states belonging to OECD to conclude rapidly within that framework a new multilateral agreement on investment, to promote accession to it by all WTO member states and to include in this agreement social and environmental standards, as well as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.
10. The Assembly calls on the governments of Council of Europe member states:
 - 10.1. to work within the WTO in favour of greater participation in the world economy and trading system of, in particular, the less developed countries, which are hindered in their development by heavy debt, limited trading access to industrialised countries and excessive concentration on a few export commodities;
 - 10.2. to pay particular attention to the difficulties these countries may face as a result of higher food prices due to Uruguay Round trade liberalisation, and to their debt problem, and to alleviate these difficulties through appropriate economic policies and special aid measures;
 - 10.3. to ensure that in the realisation of its objectives, the WTO be guided by the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its European Social Charter, as well as other Council of Europe conventions in fields such as nature conservation and animal welfare;
 - 10.4. to consider, as provided for in Article 5 of the WTO Treaty, the participation of the relevant non-governmental organisations most directly concerned in the activities of this organisation, or at the very least, the activities of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE);
 - 10.5. to co-operate closely with each other in order to co-ordinate the activities of the WTO with those of other competent bodies such as OECD, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the International Labour Organisation and other United Nations specialised agencies;
 - 10.6. to respect strictly the WTO's disputes settlement mechanism in view of its central role in upholding the organisation's principles.