

## Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation

The past week's consultations mainly focus on trade facilitation. The group met on January 31<sup>st</sup> to discuss a proposal by the chair, Ambassador Eduardo Sperisen-Yurt, of Guatemala, for a "facilitator-led work" for the first half of 2012. This was approved once some Members requested more effort to the Special and Differential Treatment (S&D) component of the negotiation.

Trade facilitation is among the areas where quick progress could be made this year. Members plan to revise the draft consolidated text – that has still around 800 square brackets – by March 30. Australia, the EU and others are pushing for a deal in that area of the negotiations as no major divergences exist between developed and developing countries. The issue is said to be beneficial to both developed and developing countries alike.

The work this year will be carried out in two stages the chair said. The first stage will run from January to the middle of April, and the second will go from mid-April to July, with two major negotiating sessions – dubbed stock-taking sessions – scheduled to take place on April 16-18 and July 9-12.

In the meantime, facilitators will procure new proposed language to be incorporated into the Draft Consolidated Negotiating Text. All submission of proposed replacement texts are expected to be done by the end of March.

Meanwhile Trade officials from "the friends of services" met to prepare their February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting where they will explore how various commitments could be put together into a broader services plurilateral agreement. According to one official, the gathering was described as more procedural than substantive.

### Upcoming Events

- Friends of Services' Plurilateral Talks, February 13, 2012
- WTO General Council, February 14-15, May 1-2, July 25-26, October 3-4, December 19-20, 2012
- Trade Facilitation Negotiating Group, April 16–18 and July 9–12, 2012
- Regular Agriculture Committee, March 21-22; June 20-21, September 26-27, 2012
- G-20 Summit, June 2012, Los Cabos, Baja California Sur (Mexico)

Geneva Watch is published by Dairy Farmers of Canada, Chicken Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Canada, Turkey Farmers of Canada and Canadian Hatching Egg Producers to report on the various events occurring in Geneva, particularly on the WTO negotiations on agriculture.

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