

Geneva Watch

An overview of the WTO negotiations on agriculture

Debate Raging Over Next WTO Director General

While attending the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) semi-annual meeting in Tokyo, WTO Director General, Pascal Lamy, started a debate that was immediately picked up in Geneva. Lamy told Reuters that the next Director General shouldn't be selected based on which country he (or her) is from, i.e. that Members shouldn't be influenced by which region should be handed the helm of the organization, but rather to select his replacement based on his (or her) competences.

"I don't think this is a geographic rotation system. There is nothing in the rules of the WTO that say that if somebody came from this country, then the next one should come from this country. I think what really matters is that it's not a diplomatic game. It's a headhunting game."

In Geneva, emerging countries such as India, Brazil, and China have reiterated their wish to see a candidate from either Africa or Latin America succeeding Mr. Lamy whose term as WTO Director General will come to an end the 31st of August, 2013. They argued that both the IMF and the WB leaders have been elected based on geographical criteria (France's Christine Lagarde for the IMF and American, Jim Yong Kim for the WB).

The appointment process for the new Director General will officially start in December. Members will be given the entire month to nominate their candidates who in turn will be given three months (January to end of March) to campaign.

So far New Zealand's Trade Minister, Tim Groser and former Ghanaian Trade Minister, Alan Kyerematen, have declared themselves available for the job. Others names have also emerged as potential candidates: South African Trade Minister, Rob Davies, Mexican Ambassador to the WTO, Mr. Eduardo Perez Motta and Brazil's current ambassador to the WTO Roberto Azevedo or former Trade Minister, Celso Amorim, as well as other candidates from Kenya, Egypt.

The WTO's next Director General will be known three months prior to the expiry of Mr. Lamy's term, i.e. May 31, 2013.

Upcoming Events

- CETA Ministerial Meeting, November 22-23, 2012
- Services Plurilateral, November, 2012
- Agriculture Special Session, mid-November (TBC)
- Regular Agriculture Committee, November 14-15, 2012
- TPP Round XV, December 3-12, 2012, Auckland (New Zealand)
- WTO General Council, December 19-20, 2012
- MC9, December 2013

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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Legal Deposit: National Library of Canada, ISSN 1496-9254

