

to develop proposals for actual creation of a parliamentary forum, proposals which might be considered for adoption by governments at the next Ministerial Meeting.

A strategic alliance between progressive parliamentarians and NGOs will be essential if any progress is to be made on the kind of permanent forum for parliamentarians which can make the WTO more transparent and accountable. Parliamentarians meeting in Doha will need to make their case strongly if they want to advance prospects for a greater role in WTO affairs.

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Suggested NGO principles for an effective parliamentary oversight body for the WTO.

International meetings in April 2001 (under the auspices of the European Parliament) and June, 2001 (under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union) brought together parliamentarians from the major regions of the world to discuss parliamentary involvement in the work of the World Trade Organisation. Both meetings called for a subsequent meeting of parliamentarians, on the occasion of the WTO Ministerial Meeting, November 2001 in Qatar.

A decision by governments to mandate establishment of a permanent parliamentary assembly, or some other form of parliamentary oversight body for the WTO, is therefore a possible outcome at the Qatar Ministerial Meeting. This document sets forth suggested principles for the consideration of Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs).

NGO BENCHMARKS FOR AN EFFECTIVE WTO PA

1) SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE

A parliamentary assembly would allow oversight of the WTO by elected representatives of the world's citizens and would therefore make a positive contribution to enhancing the democratic legitimacy of the WTO. Civil Society Organisations should support the establishment of a parliamentary oversight body for the WTO which functions effectively and which contributes to international discourse on trade and trade-related issues.

2) WTO PA AS 'STANDING BODY'

The WTO PA should not ultimately be housed within a larger pre-existing inter-parliamentary organisation. To be effective, it must be a standing body for the WTO only.

3) WTO PA COMPLEMENTARY TO IMPROVED NGO ACCESS RIGHTS.

A parliamentary forum for the WTO would not obviate or diminish the need for other measures to increase WTO transparency and accountability, especially improvements in NGO rights and privileges at the WTO. The parliamentary assembly, and increasing NGO access, should be