



WTO Pre-Ministerial Preparatory Committee Simulation Exercise

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Introduction

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the principal organization which makes and enforces rules governing international trade. The main route to develop and determine these rules is through successive rounds of multilateral negotiations among its members. The current round of multilateral negotiations is called Doha Round, which was launched at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Meeting in Doha, Qatar, in 2001, with the results known as “Doha Development Agenda”.

This simulation exercise is developed for countries’ delegates of WTO with the aim of strengthening their negotiation knowledge and techniques in general and of familiarizing them with the ongoing trade issues of WTO Doha Round. Other institutions (including private sectors, academic institutions, etc.) who are interested in commercial diplomacy and international trade would find this exercise useful, too.

This simulation was first used with trade officials from 25 countries at the WTO Trade Policy Course in March 2003.

Synopsis

This negotiation exercise simulates a complex and ongoing multilateral negotiation situation of Doha Agenda in the context of WTO. Participants will play the role of WTO member delegates and engage in a hypothetical Pre-Ministerial Preparatory Committee meeting within the Doha Round negotiations. This Committee meeting takes place before the critical stage of Doha Round, the Fifth Ministerial Conference scheduled to take place in September 2003 in Cancun, Mexico.

The goal of the simulated Pre-Ministerial Preparatory Committee meeting is to find solutions to the following negotiation issues¹, namely:

Eight areas of immediate negotiations

- Agriculture
- Service (GATS)
- Industrial tariffs
- Environment
- Implementation issues (Included with others)
- Intellectual property rights
- Dispute settlement
- WTO rules

¹ The simulation exercise does not cover all areas of the Doha Round nor does it claim to reflect the complexities of the full range of the negotiation of the Doha Round. Instead, it offers a select focus on key areas of negotiation for teaching purpose only.

Work program for potential negotiations on the Singapore Issues

- Investment
- Competition policy
- Transparency in government procurement
- Trade facilitation

Preliminary discussions on

- Electronic commerce
- Small economies
- The relationship of trade, debt and finance
- Trade and transfer of technology
- Technical cooperation and capacity building

Other issues on

- Least Developed Countries
- Special and differential treatment

Learning Objectives

- To facilitate the acquisition of multilateral negotiation techniques and relevant analytical tools (e.g. internal consensus building and coordination, interest identification and position analysis of each party, generation of multiple options to reach agreement, coalition building, making trade-off, etc.)
- To practice negotiation techniques in the application to multilateral trade WTO scenarios, in particular the ongoing negotiations/talks of the Doha Agenda
- To gain updated insight of the Doha issues, especially the positions of major players in the real life WTO negotiations

Roles

Participants will be grouped into country teams of seven fictitious WTO members countries, including three developed OECD countries, two leading members of the Group 77, one developing country, and one Least Developed Country, who represent various perspective and influence in the current multilateral trade negotiations.

Procedures

Participants of these fictitious countries are asked to negotiate on initial communiqué in support of the coming Cancun Ministerial. They need to develop their own negotiation positions based on the publicly known and communicated positions of the other countries and their own country, and also the confidential instruction sent to them by their respective capitals. These countries are free to form negotiating groups or working groups on issues mentioned above in light of their national interests. There will be three plenary meetings to be organized for discussion, and in between participants can take the opportunity of consultation and informal negotiations to bridge gaps and build coalition. The final product will be a communiqué, which will be presented to all countries for final approval.

Duration

Duration of the simulation will be approximately 3-5 days, which includes a brief introduction of multilateral negotiation techniques and experimental exercises. The actual time required for it depends on participants' knowledge level regarding the negotiation strategies and trade issues.

Participants

The design of the simulation exercise can accommodate various numbers of participants, depending on the knowledge level of participants, the number of trainers, the space and timeline available for the exercise. The minimum participants of this exercise are 15 persons.

Target Audience

Members of the government, corporations and non-governmental organisations (NGO) who are interested in being better informed of the Cancun Round and its negotiation issues, and who would like to have the opportunity in testing different negotiation scenarios in a learning setting.

ABOUT CSEND

CSEND

The Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND) is an independent, project-financed, non-profit foundation, registered with the Geneva (Switzerland) Chamber of Commerce. Recent CSEND projects have been funded by international organisations, such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), as well as by bilateral development co-operation agencies, for example Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) of Switzerland, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) .

CSEND specialises in the various fields of organisational reform and institutional development, project start-up and team building, management development and training seminar, international negotiations and mediation, quality management (ISO10015), and cultural exchanges. CSEND works to strengthen public administrations and public-sector enterprises through the use of an interdisciplinary, socio-economic approach.

In the field of *international negotiations*, CSEND designs and conducts seminars for government officials, diplomats and others on international trade, diplomatic, environmental negotiations. Participants are provided with concepts and techniques needed for an effective mastery of diverse negotiation situations with different contexts.