

Trade Policy
Research

2004

John M. Curtis and Dan Ciuriak
Editors

© Minister of Public Works and Government Services
Canada 2004

Paper: Cat: IT1-1/2004E
 ISBN: 0-662-38916-6

PDF: Cat: IT1-1/2004E-PDF
 ISBN: 0-662-38917-4

HTML: Cat: IT1-1/2004E-HTML
 ISBN: 0-662-38918-2

(Publié également en français)

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Informal Political Engagement in the WTO: Are Mini-Ministerials a Good Idea?

Robert Wolfe*

Introduction

Can politicians contribute to the management of the trade regime, both at home and in the World Trade Organization (WTO)? Put differently, must national politicians play a role in developing a consensus among participants in the process of global governance? These questions have theoretical significance for students of negotiation and democracy as well as of international relations, but they also matter to practitioners. The Canadian Prime Minister in a major speech on global governance asserted that “The problem with many of today’s international organizations is that they are not designed to facilitate the kinds of informal political debates that must occur.”¹ Paul Martin stressed the dual importance of political leadership to the functioning of international organizations, and the requirement for politicians to lead the process of adaptation at home, a role they can only play if they understand what is happening abroad. The role of politicians may be especially important in the trade regime as WTO rules increasingly address matters once thought to be safely behind the border.

Occasions for “informal political debates” may now be more frequent than Paul Martin imagines, though perhaps less effective

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¹ “Prime Minister Paul Martin speaks at the World Economic Forum on “The Future of Global Interdependence”” Davos, Switzerland: January 23, 2004 <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news.asp?id=31> accessed January 27, 2004

than he might wish. At the June 2004 meeting of the WTO Trade Negotiations Committee, held to assess progress in getting the Doha Round back on track, the Director-General reported that he had recently attended the Third LDC Trade Ministers Meeting in Senegal, the OECD Ministerial meeting in Paris, the Conference of the African Union Ministers of Trade in Rwanda, the meeting of APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade in Chile, and UNCTAD XI in Brazil (WTO, 2004b). He did not mention his presence at a “mini-ministerial” in Paris, or at a ministerial meeting of the G-20 in Brazil where the trade minister of Guyana was also present in his capacity of coordinator of the G-90.² And this set of meetings covers just May and June 2004.

These proliferating meetings alarm critics who think that negotiations are the responsibility of officials in Geneva, that too many meetings become a distraction, that many of the meetings are not transparent, that some ministers are on a perpetual circuit of meetings, and that the smaller meetings constitute a self-selected ad hoc steering group with no legitimacy. Realists wonder, if the success of a trade round depends on objective interests alone, or on business lobbies, or on macroeconomic conditions, then what can politicians contribute, in large or small groups, especially if the power of the largest countries always trumps?

I explore these issues in the context of two inter-related sets of informal ministerial meetings centred on the WTO. The first comprises occasions when ministers responsible for trade have an *informal* discussion about matters affecting the trading system. I show that there are a great many such meetings at which discussions of the WTO are only loosely connected to the organization’s *formal* processes. The second comprises informal meetings of a small group of trade ministers held to provide leadership for the trading system. I show that such so-called “mini-ministerials” were once rare, but are now frequent. I then begin the process of asking whether all this activity makes a difference to the diplomatic task of finding a consensus in multilateral negotiations.

In the next section of this Chapter, I describe the evolution of ministerial engagement, informality, and small group meetings

² All acronyms are spelled out in the annexed Tables.

in the trading system in order to provide a context for the following section, in which I provide detailed empirical information on practices since the creation of the WTO in 1995, showing that the role of ministers is now extensive. I devote particular attention to the rise of cross-group “mini-ministerials”. In the fourth section, I assess the significance of these developments for the WTO. Do these meetings help the WTO contribute to transparency, legitimacy, or knowledge in the trade regime (Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986)? This paper is a descriptive attempt to delineate some political phenomena that seem interesting. Subsequent papers will explore the broader context of WTO reform (Wolfe, in progress), and the theoretical importance of “informal” meetings. I conclude for now that the emergence of new players and more complex issues means that the proliferation of informal ministerial conversations is likely to continue in some form.

The consensus puzzle

All WTO decisions are taken by consensus, an essential diplomatic practice given that virtually all WTO agreements form part of a Single Undertaking that Members must accept or reject in its entirety. The evolution and interpretation of WTO rules depends on diplomatic negotiation not majority vote or court dictate, which is why the search for consensus remains the central decision-making problem. Consensus as a decision rule in a large group places a high burden on the chair or the secretariat, who must find the zone of likeliest agreement (Kahler, 1993). In this Chapter, I focus on the consensus problem in negotiations for new rules, and not on the process of overseeing and implementing existing WTO obligations. The political issues on which such consensus is needed include whether to launch a new round, what issues the round should contain, and whether the draft agreements should be accepted in the end. I am especially interested in mini-ministerials as an attempt to contribute to the solution to the consensus puzzle. Three techniques often used to help build consensus in large complex organizations such as the WTO, which now comprises nearly 150 disparate Members, are embodied in mini-ministerials: they involve politicians, are limited to a small

group, and are held in an informal setting. In this section I briefly explore the evolution of these three inter-related techniques and the familiar tensions to which they give rise.

Political engagement

The GATT as an interim agreement drafted pending the entry into force of the Charter of the International Trade Organization (ITO) was not given any institutional structure—it simply evolved through practice, notably in its dispute settlement procedures (Winham, 1998). Early GATT rounds were mostly reciprocal tariff negotiations coordinated by officials. Ministers rarely met under the GATT's auspices from the Havana Conference of 1948 that approved the ITO charter until the launch of the Kennedy Round in 1964.³ They did not meet again until the Tokyo ministerial meeting that launched the Tokyo Round of multilateral trade negotiations in 1973. Fragmentation of the system was a major concern nine years later at the GATT ministerial of 1982. That meeting was the first held to provide general leadership for the system,⁴ although it failed in the attempt to move towards a

³ The GATT Contracting Parties met at ministerial level in 1957, a meeting noted for setting in motion the Haberler Report; and again in May 1963 to launch the Kennedy Round (the actual negotiations were initiated at the May 1964 GATT Ministerial). For background see WTO High Level Symposium on Trade and Development: Background document, Geneva, 17-18 March 1999; at pp 12-13. As well, it was not unknown for ministers to head delegations to sessions of the Contracting Parties; for example, Canada's Minister of Trade and Commerce, C.D. Howe, headed Canada's delegation to the Eighth Session of the Contracting Parties at Geneva in September 1953. See "Memorandum from Secretary of State for External Affairs to Cabinet", Ottawa, September 4th, 1953, Documents on Canadian External Relations, Volume #19 - 422.

⁴ The use of ministerial representation at sessions of the GATT Contracting Parties to give political impetus to the system was not, however, entirely unknown. It was, for example, already in evidence as early as 1956 as reflected in the rationale given for attendance by a Canadian minister at the Eleventh Session of the Contracting Parties in October 1956: "It has been suggested that a meeting of Ministerial representatives at this Session would serve to strengthen the prestige and effectiveness of the GATT." See *Note du secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures pour le Cabinet*, [Ottawa], le 2 octobre 1956, Documents on Canadian External Relations, Volume #23 - 810. My thanks to Dan Ciuriak for drawing these forms of ministerial engagement to my attention.

new negotiating agenda. At the Punta del Este ministerial of 1986 that launched the Uruguay Round, ministers agreed that the Round's Trade Negotiations Committee could meet at ministerial level "as appropriate." Full plenary ministerials have been held every two years since, with the exception of 1992.

Ministers launched the Kennedy and Tokyo Rounds, but those rounds were concluded by officials. Ministers not only launched the Uruguay Round, they pushed it along and then concluded it. But plenary meetings were insufficient on their own to sustain the negotiations: additional political engagement was necessary. The US Trade Representative and the EU trade commissioner were central political figures, as always. Leadership by the G-7 (now G-8) summit, which had been crucial in knocking its own members' heads together to provide sufficient leadership to bring the Tokyo Round to a conclusion, was again essential. The Quadrilateral Group of Trade Ministers (the Quad), established at the 1981 G-7 Summit, met regularly at ministerial level and frequently at officials' level to discuss the Round.⁵ Since the creation of the OECD in 1961, its annual ministerial has been an occasion for informal concertation on GATT and WTO matters among its members. Many other meetings of ministers played a role in the Uruguay Round negotiations, from UNCTAD and the G-77 through the Rio Group, the Group of 15, APEC, and ASEAN to the Commonwealth and la francophonie. Successive Directors-General of the GATT and WTO consciously made use of such meetings to foster political engagement, air the issues, and educate less-involved ministers. As we will see below, ministers continue to find a great many such occasions to discuss the WTO, but reaching consensus remains difficult.

Informal meetings

The WTO has an elaborate formal structure of committees of officials that report to supervisory bodies of ambassadors that in

⁵ Participants were the European Commission (which has EU competence for trade policy under Article 133 of the Treaty), the US, Japan, and Canada. At the time they were the world's four largest trading entities. The Quad has not met at ministerial level since 1999, but officials still meet.

turn report to the Ministerial Conference. This biennial ministerial is the ultimate decision-making body for all aspects of the WTO, and it is the ultimate authority for the conduct of new negotiations, but its decisions do not emerge from speeches made in plenary sessions. The second part of the solution to the consensus puzzle in the WTO is to hold “informal” meetings. Among the informal working methods used at the Ministerial Conference are the practices that first emerged in rough form at Punta del Este of having open-ended meetings of “Heads of Delegation” and of assigning a small number of contentious issues to “friends of the chair” for exploratory talks. These open-ended meetings chaired by ministers (now called “facilitators”) are attended by any Member with an interest.

These techniques are common in international organizations. Some informal meetings follow established rules of procedure, but others do not (for a discussion, see Lydon, 1998). Informal meetings of duly constituted bodies can be announced in advance with a firm agenda, as when the WTO General Council meets as Heads of Delegation. Other meetings may never be announced. Some meetings are open to the public, press, and civil society organizations, and some are open only to a select group of members of the international organization. Some can be private and unofficial meetings of a regular body that follow many of its normal procedural rules, but with no written record; others can be *ad hoc* and unscripted. (It is clear that Martin thinks that leaders need more of this last sort of meeting: “The most fruitful exchanges between leaders,” he said in Washington, “often take place in the corridors of great meetings, one on one, far removed from the actual agenda. When leaders do meet in international fora, it is difficult to break free of the “Briefing Book” syndrome and get down to brass tacks, to thinking outside the box.”⁶)

In the WTO, where the term is in common usage, “informal” means at a minimum that the meeting is unofficial, or “off

⁶ “Address by Prime Minister Paul Martin on the occasion of his visit to Washington, D.C.” April 29, 2004. <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news.asp?category=2&id=192>, accessed July 7, 2004.

the record”, unlike formal meetings, when all Members may attend, and minutes are taken. Formal meetings are held largely for the record, since much of the real work has already been done informally. (Many delegates note, therefore, that opening formal meetings to civil society organization observers could do no harm.) Chairs draw from a rich menu of informal techniques for building consensus, from open-ended consultations with all Members to one-on-one “confessionals” between the chair and ambassadors. Most formal meetings of officials in Geneva are now mirrored by a larger number of informal meetings. The nearly 400 formal, official, meetings of WTO bodies in 2001, for example, were easily exceeded by the 500 informal meetings of which the secretariat was aware.⁷

Talking off the record, often in private, is essential. After three days of informal meetings of the agriculture negotiating group at the end of June 2004, the chair provided an informal assessment to a formal session. Sources report that he said he was treading a delicate balance between the need to be transparent and to include everyone in the negotiations, and the need to let difficult ideas develop before exposing them more widely. “A newly planted, delicate flower could wilt and die if it is exposed to too much sunlight,” he said. The more intense the divergence of opinion, the more that compromise must be explored in private. In short, as the EU stressed in its contribution to the 2000 debate on internal transparency, WTO decisions should be made in accordance with the provisions of Article IX of the Treaty, but “informal consultations” are an essential part of developing consensus (WTO, 2000a). While some of these consultations are open-ended, many are limited.

⁷ Note: the WTO Conference Office calculates meetings on the basis of half-day units; accordingly, a full-day meeting counts as two meetings. In 2001, there were 67 official WTO bodies, including 34 standing bodies open to all Members, 28 accession working parties and five plurilateral bodies. The informal meeting total did not include 90 other meetings such as symposia, workshops and seminars organized under the auspices of WTO bodies. (WTO, 2002b)

Small group meetings

When the number of active participants in multilateral trade negotiations increased dramatically in the 1980s, experience confirmed the well-understood proposition that the legitimacy gained by involving large numbers of participants comes at the expense of the efficiency associated with small numbers (Kahler, 1993). The third part of the solution to the consensus puzzle, therefore, is the old technique of holding meetings in smaller groups. One former GATT official called it the “expanding-and-shrinking-concentric-circle-approach,” in which issues may be broached in a plenary, but smaller groups meeting in private do most of the work (Patterson, 1986).

During the Kennedy Round of the 1960s, GATT Contracting Parties developed a number of informal negotiating devices. One was the practice of negotiating market access bilaterally among “principal suppliers” and then extending the results to all participants through the “most favoured nation” principle (MFN). Given the large difference in economic weights of participants, some major deals began life in small meetings of the most significant participants—the so-called “bridge club” of the US, the EEC, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Canada. Even then, delegates from smaller Contracting Parties felt excluded (Winham, 1986). Trade rules and domestic policies began to come to the fore in the Tokyo Round, but the decision-making structure was still “pyramidal” (Winham, 1992), with the largest players still negotiating agreements among themselves, then discussing the results with others. This “minilateral” process conserves negotiating energy, but makes it impossible for smaller countries to influence the results. Not surprisingly, therefore, most developing countries did not sign the minilateral “codes” that came out of the Tokyo Round. (On the Tokyo Round agreements, see Winham, 1986.)

The other familiar manifestation of the “concentric circles” approach was the gradual emergence of “Green Room” meetings. (This term for small group meetings in a WTO context comes from the early days of the GATT when the Director-General would call a meeting of the most-interested parties to a negotia-

tion in his boardroom, known from its colour as the Green Room.) The Director-General still convenes Green Room meetings of ambassadors in advance of major meetings of the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) or the General Council to explore where consensus might be found on thorny issues. At the 1988 Montreal ministerial, contentious issues were first discussed by small groups of officials, continuing the Geneva Green Rooms, and then by similar limited groups of ministers (Croome, 1995).

The inner circle only became controversial after the first WTO ministerial in Singapore, when a Green Room of 34 countries left all the other ministers loudly wondering why they had come. Contrite promises to ensure it would never happen again led to no changes (Blackhurst, 2001; see also Blackhurst, 1998). The anger erupted at Seattle in 1999, where the conflict inside the hall was much more serious for the health of the WTO than anything that happened in the streets (Curtis and Wolfe, 2000). A lengthy debate on internal transparency led to new procedural understandings (see the chair's report in WTO, 2000b), but developing countries were still unhappy with how the 2001 Doha ministerial was subsequently prepared and conducted, when the final compromises were again hammered out in a Green Room, which led to further debates about WTO procedures before Cancún.

One persistent response to the institutional weaknesses of the trading system has been an attempt to regularize a small group forum:

- The ITO would have had an elaborate institutional structure, including an Executive Board designed to be representative of the Members of “chief economic importance” based on shares of international trade (Hart, 1995). A similar body was also envisaged in the 1955 draft “Organization for Trade Cooperation,” an unsuccessful attempt to remedy the GATT’s institutional defects (Jackson, 1990).
- A senior officials group was created in 1975 during the Tokyo Round as the *Consultative Group of Eighteen*, known

as CG-18.⁸ CG-18 was a fertile source of new trade policy ideas in the Tokyo Round, but during the 1980s it gradually fell into disuse. Some thought a group of 22 (as it was by 1987) too large to be effective or too small to be representative.

- In the 1980s, the group of eminent experts who provided some of the ideas that informed the preparations for the Uruguay Round recommended the creation of a ministerial body whose limited membership would be based on a constituency system (GATT, 1985). Developing countries wary of the “Security Council syndrome” resisted proposals to create a successor group to CG-18, whether of officials or of ministers.
- The American proposal of a Management Board, made before the WTO idea emerged in 1990, was seen as especially “hegemonic” by some developing countries (Croome, 1995; and see the chapter on the negotiating group on the Functioning of the GATT System in Stewart, 1993). Nevertheless, many observers of the new organization thought that some such group would be needed (Ostry, 1998; 2002; Jackson, 1990; Jackson, 1995; Schott and Watal, 2000; Blackhurst, 2001; Wolfe, 1996). European and Canadian officials have often returned to the idea of creating such a group at least at the level of capital-based senior officials, if not of ministers (WTO, 2000a; Lamy, 2004; Canada, 2000). Such a group has not been created.

What we observe in the WTO search for consensus is a tangled mix of ministers, capital-based officials, and ambassadors, meeting in formal and informal settings, both in plenary and small groups. In practice, there is no evident agreement on which combination is best. In the next section I look at one aspect of current practice, the apparently growing role for ministers in informal small groups.

⁸ CG-18 was established July 11, 1975 (GATT, BISD 22S/15); made permanent November 22, 1979 (GATT, BISD 26S/289); and has been in suspense since 1988 (GATT, BISD 35S/293). The last meeting was held 21-22 September 1987.

Informal ministerial engagement in the WTO

Political leaders in the era of globalization seem to spend much of their life going to international meetings. I first try to separate ministerial meetings related to the WTO from the general background noise of global collective life (Table 1). Next, focussing on the period between the Doha and Cancún Ministerial Conferences, I try to separate occasions for general informal political engagement in the trading system from occasions for a smaller group to exercise leadership (Table 2). I then describe which countries participate in the smaller groups, and I describe the demographic characteristics of such countries (Table 3).

When I began surveying the multitude of trade-related meetings, I established a number of boundary conditions in order to delimit a manageable set for analysis. I was looking for multilateral meetings (defined as three or more participants) at the level of ministers or vice-ministers where the WTO was an explicit topic. Table 1 includes the annual WTO Ministerial Conference as a landmark, but my interest is in meetings where the aim is either to prepare ministers to participate directly in the WTO, or where the purpose is to provide direction to officials in Geneva.⁹ That is, I looked for meetings of small groups (less than the full WTO membership) aimed at building consensus in the WTO where participation was political and the setting, with respect to the WTO, was informal. The ministerial meetings of interest fell in four groups.

- In the first group are meetings held for another formal purpose (like the Group of Rio, August 2001) where informal consideration of WTO matters is an explicit topic of discussion. Of course many of these meetings take place in part for just such a purpose—coordination of multilateral action is part of the *raison d'être* of the G-8 and the Commonwealth, to take just two examples. As mentioned above, such meetings have been used to discuss trade issues for a long time.
- The second group describes the newer phenomenon of meetings either of existing groups (SAARC commerce ministers

⁹ Note that I did not include UNCTAD meetings.

August 2001) or ad hoc groups (Making Trade Work for the Poor, May 2003) held to discuss WTO matters.

- A third group includes ministerial meetings of WTO sectoral coalitions, and regional groups, which often mirror meetings of ambassadors in Geneva.¹⁰ The Cairns Group has been meeting at ministerial level since Punta del Este, and since Cancún the G-20 has also begun to meet at ministerial level, but ministerial meetings are now increasingly popular with regional groups like the separate but overlapping groups of African countries; African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP); and Least-Developed Countries (LDCs). These three have begun to hold ministerial meetings before WTO Ministerial Conferences to establish their positions, often on the basis of sub-regional meetings of groups like CARICOM (Bernal, et al., 2004, p. 24). At Cancún, these three groups began to meet together as the G-90. (The origins and success of developing country coalitions during the Uruguay Round and early years of the WTO are analyzed in Narlikar, 2003.)
- A fourth group, meetings held to provide leadership for the WTO, includes informal meetings of ministers or senior capital-based officials where participation rather than being sectoral or regional is meant to be somehow representative of the full WTO Membership. These meetings, highlighted in **bold** on Table 1, have come to be called “mini-ministerials”, perhaps because in function and in their scaled-down membership they mirror the formal Ministerial Conference, although they also resemble the current Green Room meetings of ambassadors in Geneva.¹¹ The mini-ministerials between Doha and Cancún are considered separately in Table 2.

¹⁰ For a discussion that separates such developing country groupings into formal groups or alliances, informal issue-based groups, and “grand alliance” inter-group alliances, see (Bernal, et al., 2004pp. 12ff).

¹¹ The table does not include the Green Room meetings of ministers that were a central feature of the Singapore, Seattle, Doha and Cancún ministerials because lists of who participated are impossible to obtain. The lists probably resemble those for the mini-ministerials, however.

- In the spring of 2004, another form emerged, what some journalists called “micro-ministerials”—meetings of a handful of ministers representing differing regions and interests in the negotiations. What distinguishes this type of meeting is that the participants, rather than being like-minded, as in the Quad, for example, represent the central opposing interests in the negotiation. The only instance so far is the “Five Interested Parties” (FIPs).
- Finally, the last entry in Table 1 is even more unusual. At the end of July 2004, ministers from 25 countries, and a great many more capital-based senior officials, attended a regular meeting of the General Council where normally Members would have been represented by their ambassadors.

The *first observation* to be made on the data in Table 1 is that informal political engagement in the trading system is now extensive. Ministers from all regions have occasions every year for an informal discussion of WTO matters both in meetings called for that purpose, such as the meeting of LDC trade ministers in July 2001 in Zanzibar, which discussed an LDC position on the Doha agenda; and on the margins of meetings called for another purpose, such as the CARICOM meeting in Jamaica in July 2003 where WTO matters were discussed.

The *second observation* to be made is that the number of mini-ministerials is increasing rapidly.¹² I am not aware of any such meetings in 1993 or 1994 during the intense process of ending the Uruguay Round and creating the WTO. One such meeting took place before the WTO’s First Ministerial in Singapore, but none was held before the Second Ministerial in Geneva. There were three such meetings between Geneva and the Third Ministerial in Seattle, and three before the Fourth Ministerial in Doha in November 2001, for a total of seven “informal” meetings of ministers and/or senior officials during the first 6 years of the WTO. In the two years between Doha and Cancún, the focus of Table 2, there were eight such meetings,

¹² I am still trying to find information on the small number of such meetings during the Uruguay Round, and on the so-called “Invisibles Group” that met during the early years of the WTO.

including the sessions on the margins of the OECD ministerials. Only one has been held since Cancún, the third (annual?) meeting on the margins of the OECD ministerial council.

Small group meetings may be important for building consensus, but they are also contentious, not least with respect to the participation criteria. The criteria for sectoral coalitions and regional groups are generally self-evident, but civil society critics claim that the selection criteria for mini-ministerials are unknown (Kwa, 2002b), that the meetings comprise “unrepresentative groups of members, generally hand-picked by the major powers to promote their agendas.... A core group of about twenty to twenty-five members attend all the most critical meetings, in effect constituting a de facto executive council, to which members have not agreed, by the back door (Jawara and Kwa, 2003, p. 280).”

Having identified the set of mini-ministerials, the next question is whether participation is random or shows a pattern. Table 3 lists all the countries that attended at least one of the 15 meetings that meet the mini-ministerial criteria between the creation of the WTO on January 1, 1995 and the Fifth Ministerial Conference in Cancún in September 2003. I counted 32 Members that attended at least one of the first set of seven meetings, and 21 Members that attended at least three. Thirty-eight Members attended at least one of the second set, held between Doha and Cancún, and 24 Members attended at least four of those meetings. It seems that a core group of regular participants has emerged.

I then wanted to understand the characteristics of both frequent and occasional participants. Membership in a small group might be a function of a country’s weight in the world, or its capacity to influence others (Malnes, 1995). Relevant indicators might therefore be: Gross National Income (GNI) per capita; share of world trade; membership in regional trade agreements; membership in WTO coalitions; holder of WTO chairmanships or other leadership roles; and the size of the Member’s permanent delegation in Geneva. (The likeliest predictor of participation in informal meetings might be the relevance of the discussion to the national economy, which is certainly a factor for participants in sectoral coalitions. Here the issue is the trading system as a whole, which is why I picked the first two indicators.

The last two indicators suggest whether a country has the trade policy capacity to participate effectively at this level.) Table 3 describes what seem to be the relevant characteristics of the countries that attended at least one of the second set of meetings. Table 2, which focuses on the eight informal ministerial meetings held between Doha and Cancún, incorporates data from Table 3 to analyze participation on the basis of the regional groups and leadership roles of participants.

The *third observation* to be made is that participants in mini-ministerials are broadly representative of the regions of the world, of countries at different levels of development, and of relevant coalitions. All the participants have a mission in Geneva (many smaller Members do not) and most missions are sizeable, suggesting that most participants have the bureaucratic capacity to support the search for consensus. Table 2 omits data on the wealth and trade share of participants because the meetings tend to show a similar pattern in these respects. Of the participants at the November 2002 Sydney mini-ministerial, for example, ten were high income countries, three upper middle income, five lower middle income and six lower income, according to World Bank data. Looking at their share of world merchandise exports, four countries were in the top ten (taking EU members individually), six were in the top 20, and five more were in the top 30 world traders. Of the remaining nine countries, seven were below number 50 on the list.

The *fourth observation* to be made is that the core group of frequent participants tends to include the richest and largest traders, as one might expect. In a regime based on reciprocity, leadership must come from the biggest traders. Any agreement that the most significant traders would ignore is hardly worth having. But mini-ministerials should not be confused with the “minilateralism” of the Tokyo Round and before. The first set of informal meetings I describe involve all Members in varying combinations in a process of learning about the issues, and contributing to transparency about each other’s intentions with respect to different aspects of the agenda. Participants in the smaller group meetings are not crafting minilateral codes that will later be extended to other groups. Arguably it was just such an older negotiating

concept that led to the failure of the OECD's attempt to negotiate a Multilateral Agreement on Investment. The mini-ministerials are meant, in principle, to try to find a political consensus that will be acceptable to the full membership.

The *fifth observation* to be made is that additional small countries appear to be invited because they currently chair a WTO body, or coordinate a regional group—no consultation would now be held in Geneva without such participation. In effect, smaller participants seem to be selected as a kind of “contact group” responsible for keeping others informed. (This and other principles of delegation to small groups are canvassed in Kahler, 1993, p. 320.) Those involved are delighted; those left out are hurt. But, one LDC delegate confirmed in an interview, “we are consulted ahead of such meetings and debriefed after, so we sort of accept the process.”

The *sixth observation* is that all of these relatively objective criteria leave the participation of some countries mysterious—why is Lesotho invited, for example? Some ministers are invited, cynics suspect, because they or their country are a “darling of the west”, or of the leading ministers, or even of the host. Others are invited because a long-serving minister is seen as especially capable. Personalities count it seems, at the margin, even though overall the selection criteria for creating a broadly representative group seem clear and consistent.

The *final observation* is that the active engagement of ministers in informal meetings continued after Cancún, but only one mini-ministerial was held. And then many regular participants in mini-ministerials were represented by ministers at the July 2004 meeting of the General Council, although everyone insisted that meetings were not to be referred to as a “mini-ministerial”. It is worth pausing to ask if the events of July 2004 represent a new pattern or were a special case.

A special case of political engagement?

The reason for the intense political activity in the first half of 2004 was the need to repair the damage to the Doha Round. After the Cancún collapse in September 2003, most meetings of negotiating bodies in Geneva were cancelled. An attempt to complete the

Cancún agenda in December at a meeting of ambassadors in the General Council failed. That meeting had been preceded by intense informal consultations among officials in Geneva conducted by the Chair of the General Council. In its aftermath, ministers were active again, especially the EU and US ministers, who visited a great many colleagues individually and in groups. Ministers sent each other letters, they had corridor conversations at other meetings, they held special meetings of ad hoc groups (for example, in Mombassa), and they had a couple of *de facto* mini-ministerials. There was also an EU/G-20 meeting. This activity, which was not in any sense “inside” the WTO, created a situation in May 2004 where ministers began to see the possibility of completing a new framework for the Doha Round by the summer of 2004. As the outline of a possible package appeared, a consensus gradually emerged that a full-blown Ministerial Conference was not needed to accept the package. Rather, a decision of the General Council at its regular mid-year meeting would provide sufficient authority for a new framework for the negotiations.

Creating the package, however, was not straightforward. The central challenge was crafting a substantive framework for future negotiations on agricultural reforms. The key agriculture gap to be bridged was on market access, where the EU-US paper of August 2003 was blocked at Cancún by the creation of the G-20, but the G-20 had yet to offer a counter proposal because its two leading members (Brazil, an exporter, and India, an importer) have opposed interests. But market access is not the only issue, and those Members are not the only players. The complicated dance began when the EU, Kenyan, South African and Brazilian ministers met in London on May 1, 2004 at the invitation of their American colleague to consider how to break the deadlock in agriculture. Next, according to press reports, the EU, US Brazil, India and Australia (the NG-5 some said—NG for non-group because not like-minded) began meeting among officials to try to bridge the gap. This meeting of the Five Interested Parties (FIPs became the accepted informal description of a group that does not formally exist) then decided to meet at ministerial level in July, as did the Africa Group, the G-90 and the G-10. Officials met every few weeks in the agriculture ne-

gotiating group, but Ambassador Groser of New Zealand, the chair, had to wait to put out a compromise text until he had an idea of where the FIPs would come out, because no agreement would be possible without them. Despite consultations between FIPs members and the coordinators of other WTO negotiating groups, notably the G-10 and G-90, who unlike the Cairns Group are not represented in the FIPs, many delegates were decidedly unhappy with the possibility of a *fait accompli* emerging from this process. (For more details, see [Bridges](#), or [Inside U.S. Trade](#), and see the communiqué issued by G-10 ministers who met in Geneva on July 5, 2004.)

The Director-General and Ambassador Shotaro Oshima, the chair of the General Council, finally released a draft of the proposed decision by the General Council on July 16 based on texts developed by the chairs of the other aspects of the negotiations. The General Council was scheduled to begin meeting on July 27, but everyone knew that the meeting could extend until July 31. The chair of the General Council made it clear that this was a regular meeting, not a mini-ministerial yet ministers from 25 countries, and a great many more capital-based senior officials, attended the meeting where normally Members would have been represented by their ambassadors. Nevertheless, the chair and the Director-General did not convene any meetings restricted to ministers. Whatever delegates did, however, was up to them.

The meetings of the last week of July followed a familiar WTO pattern. The full General Council convened only for the record. Heads of Delegation meetings were convened to provide transparency about developments in more informal process and to see if there would be strong negative reaction to a text. Members met in a variety of informal, small group meetings, beginning with the FIPs who locked themselves away from Tuesday to Thursday on agriculture. Rumours about what they were doing on this central issue led to a good deal of discontent being voiced at a Thursday Heads of Delegation meeting. Developing country and civil society critics of informal WTO processes noted with amusement that Canada and Switzerland, regular participants in mini-ministerials and the Green Room, were especially vocal in their unhappiness with the FIPs.

In the event, when a Green Room meeting on agriculture finally began on Friday morning, run by Ambassador Groser, it was clear that he had kept control of the text. While the FIPs had sorted out their own differences, scope remained for others to ensure that the text was acceptable for them. The Green Room was a mixture of ministers, senior officials, and ambassadors. The Africa Group, LDCs, G-33, and G-90 spoke through their coordinators, responded to changes more quickly and effectively than before, and played a constructive role, although the G-90 was only cohesive on preference erosion. The only significant complaints afterwards came from some small Latin American countries, who not being ACP members, were not represented in the Green Room, and so were taken by surprise on some changes to the agriculture text.

Do these events represent a special case, or an example for the future? It is perhaps not surprising that the presence of the leading ministers was necessary. Members were trying to agree on what was not agreed at a Ministerial Conference. Without political engagement in the preparations, and then in the final bargaining in Geneva, it might not have been possible to reach agreement. The process was an ad hoc adaptation to exceptional circumstances, but one should be leery of drawing lessons because similar circumstances may not arise again.

Assessment

Ministers have more opportunity in the trade regime to meet informally in groups of varying sizes than Paul Martin might have imagined. But do these meetings make a difference, and are they legitimate? Making a difference might mean advancing a negotiation, or contributing to transparency about each actor's intentions, or contributing to the diffusion of knowledge in the trade regime (Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986). Legitimacy might be assessed by considering the merits of the criticisms.

The entry for each meeting in Table 1 contains brief information on what was discussed, often on the basis of a communiqué circulated to all Members as official WTO documents (for one example of many, see WTO, 2004c), but mini-ministerials are informal, and off the record, so much of the information in

Table 2 comes from press reports. As well as documents, therefore, this assessment is based on confidential interviews I conducted in Geneva in June 2004.¹³ Three separable questions arose when I started asking WTO officials and delegates about how all this political activity happens, and what difference it makes: 1) is informal political engagement useful in general? 2) do the proliferating meetings make a contribution? and 3) are mini-ministerials, as a particular manifestation of informal ministerial meetings in small groups, effective and legitimate?

Is informal political engagement useful in general?

The extensive debates among WTO Members about appropriate procedure, especially since Seattle, may mask a profound disagreement about democratic public administration. Leaving aside the difficult issues about how developing countries can participate in Geneva, the question is, should ministers be involved in the WTO at all, even at the formal Ministerial Conference, let alone in more informal ways? Some developing countries oppose involving trade ministers directly because ministers are already engaged in providing negotiating instructions for Geneva delegations. With WTO rules adding matters once safely behind the border to its agenda, however, Renato Ruggiero, the second Director-General, argued for more active and frequent political engagement, and for the WTO to develop a political constituency in member countries.¹⁴ The WTO's first Director-General implicitly disagrees: while agreeing with the critical view, Peter Sutherland recalls that "When I first became director-general of the GATT I made it quite clear that I wouldn't have any meeting of trade ministers until negotiations were completed and we had everything signed up. I didn't think there was much point in bringing 100 ministers together in Mar-

¹³ I interviewed WTO officials and a small but representative sample of delegates from rich, middle-income, and least developed countries, from the north as well as the south, in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. The sample included Members who are both frequent and rare participants in mini-ministerials, and regular participants in the G-20, G-33, G-90, Cairns Group, and the Like-Minded Group.

¹⁴ WTO Focus 9 (March-April 1996).

rakech to negotiate. They came to sign something that had already been agreed. The actual work had been done beforehand in Geneva.” (Sutherland, 2004) But Sutherland knows that that position is not sustainable—ministers now have a formal role in the Ministerial Conference. Perhaps it should formally be a rubber stamp, but it can only rubber stamp decisions participants understand. How can such understanding emerge?

WTO issues are complicated, and ministers have to know the issues if they are to take decisions. Delegates believe that ministerial meetings are educational for the participants—if the minister stays in the job. Some countries leave their trade minister in place for years, which allows the more experienced ones to brief their colleagues—ministers like anybody else learn better from their peers, and it helps when their counterparts in other regions educate them about the realities elsewhere. Participating ministers learn more about all the possibilities, about the causal connections between issues, and about the views of others, thereby helping the emergence of an eventual consensus at a formal meeting and their own ability to explain the necessary compromises to the public at home. The difficulty of actively involving less well-informed ministers in negotiations, however, is that when they do not know the issues, they may restrict their interventions to generalities and may be uncomfortable accepting offers or making concessions the value and implications of which they cannot assess intuitively, thereby impeding the process.

Ambassadors and experts have an opportunity to meet every day, one delegate observed, which is not the case for their political masters, some of whom only attend a Ministerial Conference every two years and even the more active have only a handful of other occasions annually to meet their fellow ministers. In this light, many delegates thought that changing to an annual Ministerial Conference would be a good idea. When they meet every two years, the agenda is over-loaded. Having a Ministerial Conference every year would allow for a smaller, more focused agenda. The Ministerial Conference could then contribute to building consensus on managing the organization and negotiating new rules—but the challenge of building consensus at the Ministerial Conference would still remain, and the resulting informality would still come at a price.

Critics allege that shifting the action away from formal decision-making is a shift away from a process of formal equality towards bilateral horse-trading (Jawara and Kwa, 2003, p. 181). It is then said that side deals can be used to coerce developing country agreement, fragmenting developing country coalitions. The often cited example is a change in Pakistan's WTO position around the time of the Singapore mini-ministerial of 2001, supposedly because of offers of financial support from the US and EU. It is at least plausible to suppose, however, that that money was proffered not to gain agreement at the WTO, but as part of enlisting Pakistan's support in the Bush Administration's newly-launched "war on terror". Power is often a factor affecting the positions countries adopt in the WTO (Jawara and Kwa, 2003, Chapter 6). This news disappoints people who think that rules and institutions are a shield from power, but power is always present, and the weak have few alternatives. Would small developing countries find it easier to deal with the US outside the WTO? Does anybody think that in a reciprocal bargain, opposing the interests of the largest players is cost-free? Is it surprising that developing countries get something they want (for example the ACP waiver at the Doha ministerial) in return for something that the developed countries want? Nevertheless, while it can be hard for developing country coalitions to resist coercive pressure (Narlikar and Odell, 2004), the G-20 showed at Cancún what they can do when they combine their forces to wield collective power. In any event, involving ministers does not alter the structural basis of the power in question—the US delegation will be powerful whatever the institutional setting.

A related critique is that by "by shifting the discussion from the ambassadorial to the ministerial level, they take it out of the hands of those closest to the issues, politicizing the process and opening the way to arm-twisting and pay-offs in fields unrelated to trade (Jawara and Kwa, 2003, p. 280)." Paul Martin might respond that that is precisely the point: politicians with their wider responsibilities are able to make cross-sectoral compromises not open to officials. Some developing country ambassadors think that it is not right that politicians should be pressured to undercut their officials—it is claimed that at the Doha Minis-

terial, certain developed countries attempted to drive a wedge between the bureaucrats and politicians from developing countries. As one ambassador is reported to have described Doha (Narlikar, 2004), “Some of the ministers didn’t even support the position that the ambassadors had taken up in Geneva.” But when I explored the question of a “wedge” with delegates in Geneva, most were skeptical that the problem was widespread. One said “My minister always briefs me on exchanges he has with other ministers.” Another asked, “How can you drive a wedge between ambassadors and ministers? We are on the phone all the time to [the capital]; there is no gap.”

Are all ambassadors in touch with their ministers? One delegate said that his country had good inter-departmental coordination mechanisms in the capital, with the results of regular meetings reported to the Geneva delegation so that they know the thinking at home. “We have a regular flow of information,” he said, “and we send reports back, that are circulated.” He was doubtful, however, that delegates from other countries in his region were always properly briefed for meetings. In a study of this problem, the OECD found that trade policy knowledge is limited in most LDCs and many other developing countries, both in trade ministries and among other government officials. Not surprisingly, therefore, “Trade policy co-ordination is weak in many countries. Responsibility for trade-related policies is often dispersed across different ministries. ... Ministries of foreign affairs usually take the lead in trade negotiations and staff WTO missions, but they often lack expertise on trade issues and have only limited roles in the formulation of trade policy back home (OECD, 2001, pp. 32, 34).” Many developing country ambassadors are not players on the substance of trade policy at home, lack good communications with their capital, and also have to cover meetings at UN international organizations in Geneva.¹⁵

¹⁵ Does “professional culture” affect WTO negotiations? Ahnlid did not find much impact of this variable on Uruguay Round services negotiations (Ahnlid, 2003), but is there a gap between trade and foreign ministry people, and between ambassadors who spend all their time at the WTO and those who must spend a great part of their effort on UN agencies? Put differently, does the trade policy community have an institutionalized way of thinking

The result, whether or not intended, is that informal meetings may well drive a wedge between ministers and their ambassadors. That is not good if it creates bad relations between ambassadors in Geneva, but it can be good if it encourages a closer alignment of the ambassador's thinking with that of the minister.

In sum, informal ministerial engagement is useful. The attendant difficulties for developing countries are ones of overall administrative capacity, which cannot be solved by making the WTO more rigid for all its Members. Indeed the capacity problem may actually be alleviated by fostering even more informal off-the-record occasions where ministers and senior officials can learn from each other without having to adopt public positions.

Do proliferating informal ministerial meetings make a contribution to the WTO?

What is the relation between the proliferating informal meetings of ministers and the formal WTO process? I had been surprised initially by the large number of meetings I found when I was constructing the universe for Table 1. As mentioned above, it was clear during the Uruguay Round that negotiators could use any occasion when ministers came together to help push the formation of a consensus in Geneva. The new dimension is the growing popularity of meetings held specifically for a WTO purpose, and especially the growth of such meetings among Africans and other LDCs. Some WTO coalitions, like the Cairns Group and the Quad, have long held ministerial meetings as well as meetings among senior officials and ambassadors, although Quad ministers have not met since 1999. Regional groups of developing countries, and the LDC group, now coordinate among Geneva ambassadors, they have ministerial meetings, and since Cancun they are working together at ministerial level as the G-90. But does all this activity make consensus any easier to achieve?

One difficulty is that the message does not always stay the same when countries meet in their regional groups, in coali-

(Douglas, 1986) that shapes how they understand the nature of the problems and the nature of negotiations? This mode is obvious to those who grew up professionally within it, but might be less obvious or even alien to others.

tions, or in mini-ministerials. One example cited was the differing position taken by Kenya at the February 2004 meeting in Mombassa with Pascal Lamy and Robert Zoellick, and in the May 2004 meeting in Kigali with their African Union colleagues. Another difficulty arises when the desire to adopt a joint position gets ahead of genuine ministerial engagement with the substance of the issues. Too often the ministers are asked to endorse a document largely written by their ambassadors in Geneva, which the ambassadors then wave in negotiations claiming an inability to move off the rigid position endorsed by ministers.

The interaction between a regular WTO meeting, an informal and ad hoc meeting of Geneva officials, and informal meetings of ministers can be seen in discussions of whether “trade facilitation”, one of the four so-called Singapore issues, would be moved from the work program to full negotiations. An informal “core group” of developing countries discussed the issue for months after Cancún, before reportedly taking it from Geneva to be “further fleshed out” at meetings of LDC ministers, African ministers, and G-90 ministers.¹⁶ It is known that much of the declaration for that May 2004 meeting of African ministers in Kigali was drafted in Geneva by experts, some of whom went to Kigali to work on the final text. Subsequently, Mauritius, speaking at a WTO meeting on behalf of the African group, stressed the conditions that African ministers wanted met, as signaled in the Kigali declaration, before their ambassadors would agree to negotiations on trade facilitation. And then Nigeria on behalf of the Africa Group laid down a formal marker for the preparation of the all-important July 2004 framework package meant to re-start the Doha process after Cancún (WTO, 2004d) stressing that “the political guidance and common African negotiating objectives are provided by the Kigali Declaration.... It is our expectation that this important contribution by the African Ministers will be appropriately reflected in the text of the July package.”

¹⁶ BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 8, Number 13 April 8, 2004.

One thing is clear: these meetings do not help if nobody is listening. At the LDC meeting in July 2003 in Dhaka, ministers said they did not want to negotiate the Singapore issues. Then ACP ministers in Brussels said the same thing.¹⁷ Then we get to Cancún where, as one delegate recalled, the EU was “shocked” by the rejection of the Singapore issues. What was it about “no” before Cancún that EU ministers did not understand?

This complicated interaction between ministers and officials is normal in the diplomatic culture of Europe and North America, but is relatively new for many developing countries. It can be sterile, if it is merely a device to obstruct or delay the WTO process. But it can also be enormously productive and exciting if it is the leading edge of a revolution in developing country engagement in the trading system. The process leading to the adoption of the July framework agreement on the Doha Round (WTO, 2004a) allows both interpretations.

Are mini-ministerials effective and legitimate?

If we accept that informal, political engagement in the system is valuable, can the mini-ministerials be defended as a legitimate and effective technique?

Start with legitimacy. Civil society and academic critics sympathetic to the LMG perspective make a number of claims about the mini-ministerials in addition to the criticism, discussed above, that they are unrepresentative. The meetings are said to play a critical role in determining the outcome of negotiations by allowing the EU and the US to extend their vision of a package beyond the Quad (Jawara and Kwa, 2003; see also Kwa, 2002a). In a widely circulated petition protesting the Sydney mini-ministerial in November 2002 (Kwa, 2002b), these informal meetings were said to be fundamentally flawed because “no written record is kept of the discussion; decisions are made that affect the entire membership and the agenda is set on their behalf and in their absence; and finally, an attempt is made to build consensus on critical WTO negotiations by a select

¹⁷ There were actually 11 developing country statements that touched on the Singapore issues prior to Cancún (Bernal, et al., 2004, p. 21).

group which de facto and illegally takes leadership of the organisation.” Smaller Members attending a mini-ministerial or a Green Room can allegedly be bought with side deals, allowing larger participants to present a package to the rest of the membership on a take it or leave it basis.

I think that this critique misses the mark; indeed the critique might be better founded if applied to Geneva Green Rooms, the subject of a different paper. Written records are not kept of most WTO meetings now, partly because the organization would collapse under the weight of paper, but more for the reasons advanced above: talking “off the record” is an essential technique for doing what the organization must do, which is build consensus. It is clear that no decisions are taken at these meetings. And if no decision is taken, nobody can have been coerced into accepting it. That said, if the key opposing players in a particular domain reach an agreement on the central points in contention, as arguably was the case with the FIPs process in July 2004, then other Members will face intense pressure if they resist the consensus—but that is a generic problem in multilateral negotiations, not something specific to small group meetings in the WTO.

A different critique might ask if mini-ministerials meet the criteria Sergio Marchi advanced in 2002 (WTO, 2002a) to ensure that small group consultations “contribute to the achievement of a durable consensus....” All Members know that a mini-ministerial will take place, but not officially, since Members do not wish to recognize them as a normal part of the WTO architecture. Officials do not even name the meetings—they merely refer when necessary to “recent meetings”. It follows that Members with an interest in the specific issue under consideration cannot be given the opportunity to make their views known; and that the results are not formally communicated to the full membership—one delegate said that you cannot stand up and announce the “results” of a meeting that officially did not happen, that took no decisions, and that was not meant to have results. The Singapore ambassador made the attempt after one mini-ministerial, I was told, and was pilloried for trying to “formalize” an informal WTO event. The obvious difficulty is that there will always be some “reinterpretation” after the meeting, and nobody can be held to anything they said when even

the participants do not necessarily have a shared understanding of the “results” of a meeting with no record. The Marchi guidelines to the contrary, there is an implicit assumption that some Members represent others, without their explicit agreement. Inevitably, then, instead of systematic debriefing of Africans by Africans and so on, which would be desirable, sophisticated diplomats not present at a meeting will call around to colleagues for information on “what happened”, but others will be frustrated by feeling left outside.

Turning from legitimacy to effectiveness, who decides to hold mini-ministerial meetings, and are some moments more useful than others? Critics think that the Director-General or the US decides when to hold a meeting, but delegates told me that the decision emerges from conversation in Geneva, although Mike Moore when he was Director-General occasionally encouraged ambassadors to think about whether a meeting would be useful. A Member considering holding a meeting will try out the idea on others, and is obviously more likely to meet with success if the big countries want a meeting. The result is sometimes a dynamic in which a mini-ministerial will be called, whether or not it is needed, though it is not helpful to have a meeting looking for an agenda rather than a problem looking for a solution.

The consensus view is that the two mini-ministerials before Doha contributed to the success of that meeting, and so mini-ministerials became popular, but the ones before Cancún did not work as well, or were tried too early, and so only one was held in the year after Cancún. Mini-ministerials seem to be more useful at some times than others, and the apparent need for the meeting influences what should be on the agenda. Some meetings, like the February 2003 senior officials meeting, are intended to energize the negotiations as a whole; others, like the Montreal meeting in July 2003 focus on particular sticking points. Ministerial engagement is said to be useful when the situation is still flexible and positions are not hard—yet on other occasions a crisis creates opportunity. There is no scientific answer let alone a settled diplomatic consensus on this question. Nobody can say whether the proliferating ministerials made the achievement of the framework package in July 2004 easier or harder. Whenever they are held, most delegates think that their

purpose should not be to provide broad direction. Ministers should have a small number of issues before them that politicians have to solve. No ministerial can succeed if ministers have a dozen things to decide—two or three tough items are enough. Ministers are less in control of detail, and do not have much time, so they cannot substitute for ambassadors in Geneva, but they can give guidance—and, if they get on well together, it can defuse conflicts among their officials in Geneva.

Two issues loom large in all assessments of mini-ministerials. The first is TRIPs and access to essential medicines, the focus of the Sydney mini-ministerial in November 2002. In one view of that meeting, Geneva negotiators received conflicting reports from Sydney that ministers had agreed to something, but they did not know what, so their talks stalled. What ministers eventually gave us, a delegate said, was not very useful for the negotiations, and it created confusion and hesitation. The other view of the Sydney meeting's role notes that the Mexican ambassador as chair of the TRIPs negotiating group had been present. He understood more about Members' positions as a result, which helped him to produce a draft. He felt he had a green light from ministers, which gave him the authority to insist on compromises from north and south.

The second issue is agriculture, the central sticking point in the round. The Montreal mini-ministerial is said to have served the purpose of bringing ministers together approximately six weeks prior to Cancún to inject political impetus to the preparatory process, notably on agriculture modalities. Ministers understood that agriculture was the key to Cancún, so they asked the EU and the US to produce a paper on market access. That seemed a helpful idea at the time, but their eventual proposal for a blended formula approach may have come too late for many developing countries to understand it—and some analysts thought that, in accommodating each other, the EU and the US ignored the needs of others, thereby providing the catalyst for the creation of the G-20, and the collapse of Cancún. In Paris in May 2004, ministers again understood that agriculture was the key sticking point, and they put the onus on the G-20: if market access is the heart of the matter, what do you propose? The G-

20 did eventually produce a paper, but all it contained was principles, with no indication of how they proposed even to bridge their internal divisions on market access let alone find a compromise with all the other participants. Delegates conclude that Paris provided positive energy to the negotiations, but no substantive breakthrough. Negotiations do need positive energy of course, yet, one delegate said, you had all the ministers who matter to world trade there in Paris, and they did not deliver. Ministers gave political direction to be “flexible” but they gave no hints on how to do it. Still, without this political pressure, would the G-20 have moved at all? On the other hand, as one delegate asked, would the EU have moved at all, since the agriculture and trade commissioners have shown much more flexibility than EU officials, who have been rigid.

The answer to my first question at the start of this assessment section is that ministers have to be involved. Ministers must defend tough decisions at home, and they contribute to making tough decisions in Geneva. Their ability to contribute, however, requires learning about the issues, and the positions of trading partners, which can best be done in informal meetings with colleagues from their own and other regions.

Is informality a good thing? Martin says yes; critics no. But since informality is rife, the real issue is transparency and inclusion, not more rigid rules. With respect to preparing for a minister’s participation in WTO Ministerial Conferences, it can be helpful to caucus with like-minded colleagues either regionally or sectorally, but it can also be helpful to participate in such meetings as a means of providing direction to negotiators in Geneva. Such political direction, of course, is best preceded by detailed work among officials, as is the case when sherpas prepare for meetings of the G-8 Summit, or vice-ministers prepare meetings of the G-20 Finance Ministers. The answer to my second question, it follows, is that informal ministerial meetings can be valuable.

The group system is one way to coordinate the views of large numbers of Members, but as sticking points emerge in the WTO, it can be helpful to have cross-regional meetings—that is, meetings of ministers who are “like-minded” only with respect to the need to find a compromise. The answer to my third question,

therefore, is that if Members will not agree to set up some sort of successor to CG-18, and there is no chance that they will, then something like the mini-ministerials will continue to be needed. Such meetings work when ministers are asked to give political guidance on a small number of tough issues. Some mini-ministerials, however, may actually have been harmful, because the meeting did not serve a purpose, or slowed the Geneva process as negotiators waited for the “results”, or because there was no clarity on what anybody understood to have happened.

Conclusion

Politicians are clearly engaged in the trade regime, but does the nature of this engagement make a difference? Do ministers help or hinder the WTO in the search for consensus in an organization with nearly 150 formally equal Members? Do ministers need to meet more or less frequently, informally or on the record, and in larger or smaller groups?

Some say having a biennial Ministerial Conference was a mistake. That position is not sustainable when issues go behind the border and when ministers even in developing countries can come under intense pressure from their public over WTO issues.¹⁸ The general demands for, and practices of, public participation in leading countries, north and south, now make it impossible to restrict negotiations to a professional core. Ministers are intermediaries between the domestic public and international organizations; they are central to how citizens understand what an international organization does, and how more than just the technocratic concerns of officials can be brought to bear (Keohane and Nye, 2001). Now ministers have to be involved formally, so they have to be involved informally, in consultations, in learning.

Informal political engagement does help the negotiations—to a point. After the April meeting of the TNC, the first held

¹⁸ One delegate told me about the pressures a developing country minister faced at home in the summer of 2003 when civil society was getting faster reports from Geneva than the minister about the progress of negotiations on access to essential medicines. The absence of effective machinery to keep people informed, and to interpret what was going on, limited that country’s ability to be an effective participant.

since July 2003, the Director-General reported to the General Council that “The political impetus given to the Round in recent weeks has been absolutely vital.” And yet at the June 2004 TNC meeting mentioned in the introduction, where the Director-General reported on the strong political commitment apparent from all his consultation with ministers, he stressed that only the negotiators could bridge the remaining gaps. “Let me be frank here,” he said. “The political guidance and direction which we need to be able to move ahead is there. The onus is now fairly and squarely on negotiators in Geneva to do the deals that our political leaders clearly want us to achieve (WTO, 2004b).” He was implicitly suggesting that further ministerial meetings might not be either necessary or helpful. In the event, I think he might have been wrong. Intensive ministerial engagement appears to have been essential to the process of developing and then gaining acceptance for the July 2004 framework, although one should be leery of drawing lessons because similar exceptional circumstances may not arise again.

Another reason for being leery of lessons in recent events is that one explanation for the proliferation of mini-ministerials and micro-ministerials is the personal preference of certain leading ministers. Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim is a former WTO ambassador. EU trade commissioner Pascal Lamy and US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick had also been senior officials, which is perhaps why Lamy and Zoellick act more like chief negotiators than ministers. Pure politicians, it is said, would let officials do the work—former US Trade Representatives Robert Strauss (who concluded the Tokyo Round) and Mickey Kantor (who concluded the Uruguay Round) did not want to be so actively involved. But Lamy and Zoellick want to be engaged, and they like small informal meetings of their peers. The first problem with the Lamy and Zoellick role is that most of their ministerial peers do not have the same background and so do not bring the same things to the table. One delegate told me that when Zoellick talked about “water” in the tariff at one mini-ministerial, he confused many ministers. (“Water” here refers to the difference between bound and applied tariff rates.)

The second problem is that the active engagement of ministers may be limiting the ability of capital-based senior officials to negotiate. For example, after the Montreal breakdown, it was senior officials who finished the texts in Geneva in April 1989. In the Uruguay Round, the US had a chief negotiator and a deputy, as did many other countries. Some officials believe that negotiations might be easier with that old network of senior officials who had a substantive grasp of detail and of political context, who were able to learn what will work, who could figure out how to narrow the gaps. Now the Americans and the Europeans have no real chief negotiator because the ministers want to make the deals. For the same reason, their ambassadors in Geneva have little authority, unlike many developing country ambassadors who are their respective country's *de facto* chief negotiator. There is considerable misplaced pique in the claim of disgruntled developing country ambassadors that they should not be prevented from speaking at ministerial meetings—but they are often the ones who are the real counterparts, at a technical level, of the EU and US ministers. Or some of them are—a large number of developing country ambassadors have little capacity or authority, and lack well-developed coordination and consultation mechanisms at home, which weakens the ability of Geneva negotiators to make deals, and creates the need for ministers to engage.

The Doha Round of WTO negotiations has been marked from the first by increased developing country engagement because they were unhappy with their half of the Uruguay Round bargain. Developing countries were more active participants at all stages of the latter Round than they had been in the Tokyo Round, but participation was structured by coalitions. The result was an intricate series of cross-sectoral and cross-regional tradeoffs that everyone had to accept as a package. Now that the trading system operates on the basis of the Single Undertaking, it is apparent that without substantial engagement, ministers will not understand the need for and the substance of the tradeoffs that only they can make. It is also now a part of the new reality that the EU and the US are no more able to dominate the WTO than they are able to dominate the global economy. They are essential players, but they cannot set the rules alone. They must involve

other large economic powers, now including China, India, and Brazil as well as Japan. The large economies must also involve smaller players because structural change in the global economy and the evolution of the trading system has shifted attention to rules and domestic regulation as the focus of negotiations. These changes in regime tasks have institutional design implications. The need for a wider and more complex consensus involving more domestic actors is part of the explanation for the rise of informal political engagement. Civil society will hold ministers accountable at home, even in developing countries, so ministers must understand the compromises struck in Geneva. Mini-ministerials may not be a good idea, but no-one has a better idea. In the absence of an alternative way to develop consensus, such informal small group meetings will continue.

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APPENDIX

Tables 1-3 set out summary information on formal and informal meetings of WTO members since the formation of the organization. The information has been compiled from public sources, usually the *Bridges* newsletter or *Inside U.S. Trade*. On occasion, the information comes from the host government's website, or from a document circulated to WTO Members. In Table 1, place names in bold designate meetings counted in the list of informal ministerials or mini-ministerials.

Table 1 Formal and informal meetings of WTO Members

Participants	Results
1995.11.23-24 at Vancouver: Informal ministerial meeting convened by Canadian Trade Minister Roy MacLaren	
"Select middle-size economies" with an interest in trade liberalization: Australia, Hong Kong, Hungary, Indonesia, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Africa and Thailand and senior representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Switzerland	Clash over inclusion of trade and labour standards on the agenda for the 1st WTO ministerial in Singapore. Group said economic and political trends point to need to begin discussion of such new topics as trade and competition, investment and the potential impact of regulatory reform programs on trade. Did not formally endorse Quad idea of a working group on regionalism
1996.12.9-13 at SINGAPORE: 1st MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE	
All Members and observers	Consolidates built-in agenda left over from the Uruguay Round
1998.05.18-20 at GENEVA: 2nd MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE	
All Members and observers	Fiftieth anniversary of the GATT Began to structure the built-in agenda into the basis for a ninth round of negotiations.
1998.11. 28 at Hong Kong: Informal ministerial meeting	
Hong Kong (China), Argentina, Australia, Chile, Czech Republic, Hungary, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Korea, Switzerland, Thailand and Uruguay	Focused on the scope of a proposed new round of global trade talks. Stressed need for US leadership for a broad-based round. Hong Kong (China) pushed for the rapid WTO accession of China.

Participants	Results
1999.5. 11-12 at Tokyo: 33rd Quadrilateral Trade Ministers Meeting	
Canada, the European Union, Japan and the United States	Last meeting of Quad Trade Ministers discussed preparations for Seattle but deferred agriculture to the Quint meeting. Also discussed use of ministerials, as at Budapest (below)
1999.05.28 at Budapest: Budapest Ministerial Conference: "Friends of the New Round"	
Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, the European Union, Hong Kong (China), Hungary, India, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, the United States and Uruguay	Discussed how Seattle preparatory process could be more efficient; how to create a balanced agenda to respond to the range of interests of all Members. In addition to mandated negotiations on agriculture and services, industrial tariffs should be covered. Some Ministers argued for the inclusion of investment, competition policy and trade facilitation in negotiations. Ministers discussed how political level meetings (APEC, ASEM and G7/G8) could best be used to induce public support for the WTO and the new round. Ministerial meeting of the "Friends of a New Round" in October could contribute to preparation for Seattle; Switzerland offered to host.
1999.10.25-26 at Lausanne, Switzerland: Ministerial group informally known as the "Friends of the New Round"	
Ministers and senior officials from: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Hong Kong (China), Hungary, Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand (NB: no EU, Japan or US; Canada represented by senior official)	Sought to identify issues on which consensus could be reached in Seattle but struggled to find a consensus on a wide range of key issues, particularly agriculture.
1999.11.30-12.03 at SEATTLE, US: 3rd MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE	
All Members and observers	Failed to launch the new round, foundering on the concerns of developing countries that new negotiations were not possible until the Uruguay Round agreements had been implemented.

Participants	Results
2001.1.24 at Frankfurt , Germany: informal meeting of officials at the vice ministerial level	
Japan, South Africa, Egypt, Brazil, Australia, Hong Kong (China), Korea, Thailand and Switzerland, and the WTO Secretariat	Discussed (a) built-in agenda on agriculture and services as integral part of the new round; (b) non-agricultural products; (c) revision, clarification or improvement of existing WTO rules, including improving and strengthening rules on anti-dumping; (d) Singapore issues, including possibility of a plurilateral approach; (e) other issues such as environment and electronic commerce. Agreement that relationship between trade and labor should be examined outside the WTO negotiations. Consensus that informal process and consultations on major negotiating issues should be encouraged, with maximum transparency vis-à-vis all WTO members.
2001.07.22-24 at Zanzibar, Tanzania: LDC Trade Ministers' Meeting	
Ministers responsible for trade of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).	Met with a view to adopting a common position on the LDC agenda prior to the 4th WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha. Decided to institutionalize the LDC Trade Ministers' Meeting to take place at least once every two years to precede the WTO Ministerial Conference.
2001.08. 17-18 at Santiago, Chile: Group of Rio 15 th Presidential Summit	
Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.	Paragraphs 19 and 20 of the Declaration set out the Rio Group's vision of trade, the WTO and the holding of the forthcoming Ministerial Conference in Doha.
2001.08.23 at New Delhi: Commerce Ministers of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC)	
Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.	Joint Statement on forthcoming 4th WTO Ministerial in Doha, Qatar, continuing practice prior to Geneva & Seattle Ministerials.

Participants	Results
2001.08.31 - 09.01 at Mexico City: Informal ministerial	
Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, European Union, Egypt, Hong Kong (China), India, Jamaica, Japan, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, United States and Uruguay. Malaysia represented by its WTO Ambassador as Minister not available. Qatar invited but could not attend.	Assessments mixed. Some progress on environment. India reaffirmed its position that "no new issues should be included in the negotiating agenda of the WTO, unless there is an explicit consensus on the subject, and that implementation concerns of the developing countries arising out of the non-fulfilment of the promises made in the Uruguay Round by the developed countries are addressed up front, before the Fourth Ministerial in Doha."
2001.09.22-23 Abuja, Nigeria: OAU/AEC Ministers of Trade: Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration	
Ministers of Trade of the Member States of the Organization of African Unity/African Economic Community.	Considered development issues important to Africa, including coordination of positions at the 4th WTO Ministerial Meeting in Doha
2001.10.13-14 at Singapore: Informal meeting of ministers	
Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Egypt, European Union, Gabon, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Qatar, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania and the US.	On trade and environment, US proposed ministers only discuss relevant issues; Members to decide by consensus at next ministerial whether to negotiate. More than a work program but not quite a negotiation. US Trade Representative Zoellick emphasized importance of the environmental issue; EU Trade Commissioner Lamy explained how difficult it would be for US to commit to negotiate antidumping given opposition in Congress. Singapore issues discussed. On agriculture, Lamy stressed need to balance trade and nontrade concerns, objected to draft language on phase-out of export subsidies. Meeting did not advance key development issues, such as TRIPs/health or implementation of existing agreements.
2001.11.09-14 at DOHA, QATAR: 4th MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE	
All Members and observers	Launches the Doha Development Agenda

Participants	Results
2002.05.15-16 at Paris: Informal Briefing by WTO DG	on margins of OECD Ministerial
OECD members plus Colombia, Egypt, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Russia, Singapore	(1) Moore called meeting to “get countries’ ministers engaged early on in the round”. (2) Controversy over whether this meeting was to be considered a mini-ministerial or a briefing. (3) Discussed how many informal ministerials should be held before Cancún (2 or 3? On margins of regional meetings?). (4) Pre-Doha differences remain; lack of consensus obvious.
2002.06. 14 at Rome (hosted by Japan): Ministerial Meeting	on non-trade concerns
Albania, Angola, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Estonia, Ethiopia, European Community, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Norway, People's Republic of China, Poland, Russia, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Chinese Taipei, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Suriname, Switzerland, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, Yugoslavia	Main conclusions were: Doha Declaration provides that non-trade concerns be addressed in the WTO negotiations on agriculture. Participants stressed their determination that this commitment will be fully honoured. Every country has a legitimate right to pursue non-trade objectives such as strengthening the socio-economic viability and development of rural areas, food security and environmental protection. These objectives cannot be achieved by market forces alone. In the modalities for further commitments that will be established next March in the WTO Agricultural Negotiations, non-trade concerns of both developing and developed countries are elements of vital importance to be duly taken into account in order to establish an agricultural trading system which is fair as well as market oriented. Each country must therefore be able to accommodate such concerns through a variety of instruments
2002.07.17 at Geneva (hosted by US) : Informal meeting of senior officials	
25 countries, including US, EU, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Switzerland, India, China, Hungary, Brazil, Hong Kong (China), Kenya and Nigeria	In advance of July 18-19 Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC); likely focus on timeline for agricultural market access negotiations, developing country demands for more benefits under existing trade agreements; and mini-ministerials

Participants	Results
2002.07. 26 at Nara, Japan : Quint informal ministerial	
Agriculture ministers of US, EU, Japan, Canada and Australia	US tables agriculture proposal to be unveiled in Geneva the following week
2002.10.18-21 at Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia : Cairns Group Ministerial Meeting	
Australia, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, Paraguay, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Uruguay and special guests from US, Uganda, China, and WTO DG	Discussion of next phase of agriculture negotiations including modalities/negotiating guidelines.
2002.10.23-24 at Los Cabos, Mexico: APEC Ministerial Meeting	
Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, US, Vietnam	Ministers committed to working together in the lead up to Cancún.
2002.11.14-15 at Sydney, Australia: Sydney mini-Ministerial	
Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Egypt, EU, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, US	(1) TRIPs/health dominated discussion; most agreed that TRIPs Council Chair's paper is a "good basis to finalize an agreement" (DFAIT). (2) Developing countries signalled willingness to accept concessions on development issues, and support was expressed for a monitoring mechanism in the Committee on Trade and Development. (3) Little was achieved on market access. (4) Other issues discussed include geographical indications, rules and the Singapore issues.

Participants	Results
2003.02.05-06 at Geneva (co-hosts Canada and Costa Rica): Capital-based senior officials meeting	
Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, EU, Egypt, Hong Kong (China), India, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, US, Uruguay, Zambia	Discussed agriculture, NAMA, TRTA and services. Discussion of dispute settlement reform squeezed out by extended debate on agriculture plus recap of progress on NAMA and services negotiations and discussion of usefulness of meetings of select senior officials and trade ministers. Some said Members better served if Ministerials focus on political level decisions. That meant that senior officials should be available at short notice, some officials said.
2003.02.14-16 at Tokyo: Tokyo mini-Ministerial	
Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, EU, Egypt, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Senegal, Singapore, Switzerland, US, Uruguay; plus agriculture ministers from EC, Japan, Korea, Brazil, India, Switzerland, Canada, WTO DG Supachai and General Council Chair del Castillo.	(1) Japan presented a Feb. 5 statement of the "friends of antidumping group". (2) Canada led the discussion on the Singapore issues. (3) Discussions dominated by agriculture; focus on Harbinson modalities text—US and Cairns Group supported more ambition; EC and Japan more balance. (4) Kenya, Nigeria, Lesotho and Senegal indicated that TRIPs/health was their key issue. (5) Little progress on market access, which US claimed was their main motive for the Round.
2003.04.28-29 at Paris Host: New Zealand: Informal Dinner on margins of OECD ministerial	
OECD members plus Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Singapore, South Africa	US Trade Representative Zoellick wanted to use the OECD ministerial to "ensure that the Cancún ministerial will be a success"
2003.05.27 at Copenhagen, Denmark: Making Trade Work for the Poor	
Ministers plus IMF, World Bank & WTO, including DG Supachai Panitchpakdi	(1) Held in "anticipation of the fifth WTO Ministerial in Cancún" (Bridges). (2) Focused on the relationship between trade and development

Participants	Results
2003.05.28-29 at Nairobi, Kenya: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Ministerial	
Ministers of Trade from Eastern and Southern Africa: Angola, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	(1) Meeting sought agreement on common strategy for Cancún. (2) Deep concern expressed over limited progress on Doha Round. (3) Discussed agriculture, S&D, NAMA, implementation, TRIPs and health. (4) Result: "Nairobi Declaration on Preparation for EPA negotiations and the 5 th WTO Ministerial Conference" (WT/L/519)
2003.05.31-06.02 at Dhaka, Bangladesh: LDC Meeting of Trade Ministers	
49 LDCs	Adopted Dhaka Declaration (WT/L/521) which formed common stance for Cancún focusing on: (1) unrestricted market access; (2) freer labour movement; (3) end agricultural subsidies and restrictions on food imports; (4) expansion of special and differential treatment
2003.06. 01-03 at Evian, France: Annual G-8 Summit	
G-8 countries plus representatives from Algeria, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, UN, World Bank, IMF, WTO	Pledged commitment to ensure that Cancún would take all decisions necessary to ensure that goals set out in Doha agenda will be reached on time.
2003.06.02-03 at Khon Kaen, Thailand: Meeting of APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade	
Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, US, Vietnam	Cancún meeting was one of the major issues on the agenda; ministers stressed "the need for a successful Cancún ministerial".
2003.06.06-07 at Lusaka, Zambia: Special Meeting of Ministers of Trade & Industry of Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)	
Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia	Participants expressed concern on limited progress made in the Doha Round. Issues addressed include TRIPs and health, S&D, non-agricultural market access, agriculture and services.

Participants	Results
2003.06. 19-20 at Grand Baie, Mauritius: African Union Trade Ministers Meeting	
40 countries	Objective to find a common position for Cancún. Ministers adopted Declaration (WT/L/522) that, <i>inter alia</i> : (1) expressed “serious concerns at the general lack of progress in the current round of multilateral trade negotiations”; (2) claimed agriculture is of critical importance; (3) suggested that Members should be able to regulate trade in services based on national policy objectives; (4) suggested WTO should focus on development concerns such as agriculture, elimination of cotton subsidies, intellectual property, S&D, implementation, industrial products rather than Singapore issues; (5) criticized lack of transparency and inclusiveness at WTO. Conclusions later endorsed in “Maputo Declaration on the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the WTO” adopted by Heads of State and Government of African Union, Maputo, Mozambique.
2003.06.20-21 at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt: Egypt mini-Ministerial	
Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Korea, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Mauritius, New Zealand, Nigeria, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, US, EU	(1) Agriculture discussed, but no progress. (2) Little progress was made on TRIPs and health. (3) Progress made on S&D. (4) India stated opposition to Singapore issues being on agenda, while Costa Rica, Japan and Switzerland promoted their importance. (5) Little progress made on NAMA. (6) On services, many stressed need to focus on Mode 4.
2003.07.02-05 at Montego Bay, Jamaica: 24 th Meeting of Conference of Heads of Government of the CARICOM, Ministers	
Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Suriname, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, US and WTO DG	Raised concern over need for S&D provisions in WTO. Other priorities for this group include agriculture, implementation issues and access to low cost medicines. Document issued 2003.08.06 in the name of the ministers of these countries: <i>The Caribbean Declaration on the 5th Ministerial Conference of the WTO</i> (WT/MIN(03/6)).

Participants	Results
2003.07. 05-07 at London, UK: Commonwealth Trade Forum and Lunch for Commonwealth Ministers at Lancaster House	
UK, Tanzania, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Malawi, Bangladesh, Fiji, Namibia, Papua New Guinea,	Much discussion of Singapore issues, especially investment, with divided views on merits. Many developing countries stressed importance of agriculture.
2003.07.06-07 at Palermo, Italy: 3rd EuroMed Trade Ministerial and Informal EU Trade Ministerial	
EU plus Israel, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Palestinian Authority, Malta and Cyprus	Ministers exchanged views on preparations for Cancún: (1) Discussed agriculture and need to get US, Canada, Australia to make concessions in response to CAP reform. (3) Discussed services and developing country access to medicines. (4) NGOs delivered statement on opposition to inclusion of Singapore issues in Cancún agenda.
2003.07.24-25 at Beirut, Lebanon : United Nations-backed Arab Ministerial Meeting	
Ministers from Qatar, Syria, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Yemen, Algeria, Sudan, and Lebanon plus representatives from many international organizations including: League of Arab States (LAS), WIPO, UNCTAD, WTO. Ministers from Bahrain, Kuwait, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Oman also participated.	(1) Goal was to form a common position for Cancún and discuss WTO issues of concern to the region. (2) Agreed to “take a slow-down on Singapore issues” (ECSWA). (3) Agreed that agriculture, services and pharmaceutical agreements are very important to the region. (4) Discussed trade, debt and finance linkages as well as technology transfer. (WT/L/537)
2003.07. 28-30 at Montreal Canada : Informal Ministerial Meeting in Montreal	
Canada, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, EU, Guyana, Hong Kong (China), India, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Lesotho, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, US. Attended by trade ministers, some agriculture ministers, senior officials, WTO DG and WTO General Council Chair.	(1) Extensive discussion of agriculture. (2) Discussions on NAMA focused on the level of ambition and the need for flexibility. (3) The discussions on development seemed not to go far.

Participants	Results
2003.07.31– 08.01 at Brussels Belgium: African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Meeting	
States from Africa, Caribbean and Pacific	(1) Opposition to Singapore issues. (2) “The ACP trade ministers also took the calls for transparency and democracy in the WTO contained in the Dhaka and Mauritius declarations one step further”. (3) Reiterated need to improve agricultural market access. (4) Also discussed: S&D, implementation, NAMA, TRIPs/health.
2003.08.28-30 Nairobi, Kenya : Global Coalition for Africa	
Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda. Attended by trade ministers, Parliamentarians, NGOs	(1) Focused on agriculture and particularly on need for agreement on cotton and sugar in Cancún. (2) Agreed to form a single negotiating team and have a united position. (3) Discussed TRIPs.
2003.09.03-04 at Georgetown, Guyana: The Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	
Ministers and Senior Officials of CARICOM member countries; Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago	Confirming their issues for Cancun ministerial meeting in accordance with the document issued in the name of the ministers of these countries: Caribbean Declaration on the 5 th Ministerial Conference of the WTO (WT/MIN(03)/6)
2003.09.10-14 at CANCÚN MEXICO: 5th MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE	
All Members and observers of the WTO	Fails to advance the Doha Development Agenda
2003.10.10 Buenos Aires : ministers	
Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Mexico, Paraguay, South Africa, Venezuela	Examined perspectives on trade negotiations after Cancún; pre General Council meeting slated for Geneva by 15 December 2003.

Participants	Results
2003.10.17-18 at Bangkok, Thailand: 15 th APEC Ministerial Meeting	
APEC members and Secretariat; ASEAN Secretariat. Pacific Economic Cooperation Council and Pacific Islands Forum attended as observers	Supported WTO General Council Chair leading talks at the General Council on key issues (agriculture, NAMA, Singapore issues) to set work programs for negotiations no later than 15 December 2003.
2003.11.13-14 at Cairo, Egypt: Informal African ministerial meeting	
Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Egypt; plus WTO DG and Trade Commissioner of the Economic and Monetary Union for West Africa	Supachai notes that meeting expressed its support for efforts to ensure that negotiations regain momentum.
2003.11.27-28 at Brussels : ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) Council of Ministers 78th session	
79 ACP countries	Discussed post-Cancún WTO positions, EU-ACP Cotonou Agreement and agriculture. Encouraged G-90 co-ordination as at Cancún.
2003.12.11-12 at Brasilia : G-20 group ministerial	
G-20 member states, EU (Lamy), WTO DG	“Urgent” meeting in advance of the December 15 deadline in Geneva
2004.01.21-25 at Davos, Switzerland : “meeting on the sidelines” at the World Economic Forum	
Representatives from 20 countries, including ministers from Brazil, India, Canada, Switzerland and others.	Issues discussed included cross-border investment, competition, high tariffs on exports, and farm subsidies.
2004.01.30-31 at Tagaytay, Philippines : Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC)	
Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Guatemala, Nicaragua	(1) Agreed on necessity for agricultural reform and improved market access for goods and services. (2) Agreed that improvement of inter-regional dialogue needed. (3) Need to ensure that the results of the Doha Round contribute to fairer and more equitable trading system. Attended by Foreign Ministers and “Senior Officials”

Participants	Results
2004.02.18-19 at Mombasa, Kenya : Informal meeting	
Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mali, South Africa, Senegal, Egypt, Benin, Ghana, Morocco, Benin, Nigeria, DR Congo, Rwanda, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Mauritius, US, EU	Hosted by Kenya in an effort to bridge differences after the collapse of world trade negotiations in Cancún.
2004.02.23-25 at Costa Rica : Cairns Group Meeting Agriculture Ministers	
Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Indonesia, Paraguay, Philippines. Guests: USTR Zoellick, Mexico FM Derbez, WTO DG Supachai and Ambassador Groser, Chair of the WTO Committee on Agriculture Special Sessions	(1) Decided to collaborate more closely and draft a new negotiating position. (2) Agreed to continue pushing for cuts in domestic and export subsidies, but that developing countries should receive special treatment.
2004.03.04-05 at New Delhi: India-Brazil-South Africa Trilateral Ministerial Forum	
Brazil, India, South Africa Foreign Ministers	Agreed to jointly develop “alternative perspective on world affairs”
2004.05.01 at London, UK : “Micro-Ministerial”	
EC , Kenya, South Africa, Brazil, US Trade/Foreign Ministers	(1) Attempted to develop a package of proposals with broad appeal before U.S. Presidential election in November and change in EU leadership in October closed window of opportunity. (2) Main sticking point to negotiations was agricultural market access, followed by the Singapore issues.
2004.05.04-05 at Dakar, Senegal : Third LDC Trade Ministers Conference	
49 LDC member states. Guests: WTO DG Supachai; EU Trade Commissioner Lamy	(1) Took stock of developments since Cancún. (2) Adopted the Dakar Declaration, calling for the phase-out of export subsidies in developed countries. (3) WTO DG urged greater flexibility on Singapore issues from LDCs if they wished to gain on issues of greater importance to them. (4) Main issues addressed were agriculture, cotton, and NAMA.

Participants	Results
2004.05.04-05 at Gaborone Botswana: 79 th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers	
All ACP Members	Confirmed G-90 meetings for June and July, 2004; prepared for immediately following 29 th Session of ACP-EU Council of Ministers.
2004.05.12-13 at Paris, France : Five Interested Parties	
US, EC, Australia, Brazil, India Trade Ministers	Informal meeting to find common ground at political level on key issues, especially agriculture. Participants, not being “like-minded”, referred to as NG-5 (for non-group) or FIPs (five interested parties)
2004.05.13-14 at Paris, France : Mini-ministerial	
All OECD countries, plus ministers from Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, China, Guyana, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Kenya, Russia, Singapore, and South Africa	(1) Agriculture was main focus; all welcomed EC promise to eliminate export subsidies. (2) G-20 and Cairns Group agreed to work together to develop an alternative to EC/US formula on agricultural tariff cuts. (3) EC expressed willingness to separate Singapore issues. (4) EC and US requested G-20 to develop alternative agricultural reduction formula.
2004.05.27-28 at Kigali, Rwanda : African Union-organized conference	
AU member states : Trade, Customs, and Immigration Ministers	(1) “Kigali Consensus” primarily concerned with Singapore issues; all save trade facilitation should be dropped. (2) Agricultural tariff reduction formula should take into account Africa’s development concerns. (3) Called for elimination of all cotton subsidies within 3 years.
2004.06.03-04 at Georgetown, Guyana : G-90 Mini-ministerial	
18 member states : Trade ministers and Ministerial Representatives	(1) Decided to further develop working documents on agriculture, cotton, commodities, and treatment of small economies for the G-90 Ministerial in July. (2) Steering Committee established to facilitate cooperation between G-90 member states on WTO issues. (3) Georgetown Consensus draws heavily on Kigali Consensus.

Participants	Results
2004.06.04-05 at Pucon, Chile : 10 th Meeting of APEC Trade Ministers	
21 APEC member states	(1) Called on WTO Members to meet framework negotiations deadline by the end of July. (2) Urged focus on areas of contention, specifically agriculture, NAMA, and trade facilitation.
2004.06.08-10 at Sea Island, Georgia, USA : G-8 Annual Summit	
Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom, US, Italy, Japan, and Russia; Guests: Algeria, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda	(1) Reaffirmed commitment to Doha Round and to finish framework negotiations by end-July. (2) Priorities included agricultural market access & subsidies, improved NAMA, better opportunities in services, advance development goals, and encourage South-South trade.
2004.06.11-12 Sao Paulo, Brazil : G-77 Special Ministerial Meeting	
G-77 Group of Developing Nations and China	Called for developed countries to provide assistance to developing countries so that they are able to take full advantage of the multilateral trading system. Demanded that developed countries fulfill the development commitments they made at Doha and called for facilitation of accession to the WTO of developing countries.
2004.06.13 at Sao Paulo, Brazil : Five Interested Parties	
US, EU, Brazil, India, Australia, and Ambassador Groser, Chair of agriculture negotiations	Mostly concerned with agricultural market access and formula for tariff reductions. Discussions included how to implement concept of “parallelism” and “blue box” for domestic support.
2004.07.05 at Geneva : G-10 ministerial of agriculture ministers and senior officials	
Bulgaria, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Norway, Switzerland and Chinese Taipei. Ambassador Groser (New Zealand) as Chair of agriculture negotiations	Communiqué recognised that negotiations on a framework for modalities in agriculture under the Doha Development Agenda were at a genuinely critical juncture. Ministers also reaffirmed their commitment to contribute to a substantial and balanced July Package.

Participants	Results
2004.07.06-08 at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia : African Union Summit 2004	
AU member states: 53	The third Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly.
2004.07.10-11 at Paris; hosted by Brazil : Five Interested Parties	
US, EU, Brazil, India, Australia, WTO DG, and Ambassador Groser (New Zealand) as Chair of agriculture negotiations	Discussed July Framework proposals.
2004.07.13 at Mauritius : G-90 Trade Ministers	
Alliance of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, the African Union (AU) and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), commonly known as the G-90	Discussed progress of WTO negotiations and sought elements for agreement for a G-90 Consensus on the Doha Development Agenda. Top trade officials from the US, the EU, Brazil and India urged G-90 to back the drive to agree on a negotiating framework for the Round.
2004.07.21 at Istanbul, Turkey: 4 th Euromed Trade Ministerial Conference	
EU plus Israel, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Palestinian Authority	Focused on Barcelona Process for regional free trade, including GATS-consistent services free trade. Ministers reiterated commitment to successful Doha Round, including on market access and rules.
2004.07.27-29 at Geneva : Five Interested Parties	
US, EU, Brazil, India, Australia, and Ambassador Groser (New Zealand) as Chair of agriculture negotiations	The FIP met in the US delegation to the WTO during the last week of July to try to break the deadlock on the agriculture framework
2004.07.30-31 at Geneva : WTO General Council	
30 ministers from 25 countries (only some of whom were regular participants in mini-ministerials) were in Geneva in the days before and during the meeting of the General Council called to agree on the framework package originally proposed at Cancún.	Ministers were involved in Green Room meetings and at the General Council, but these meetings were not a “mini-ministerial” and the General Council was a regular meeting—many countries, therefore, were represented by senior officials or ambassadors

Table 2: Mini-ministerials between Doha and Cancun

Attendees	Coalitions and RTAs (from table 3)	Chairs (from Table 3)
2002.05.15-16 Paris France : Informal Briefing by WTO DG on margins of OECD ministerial		
OECD members plus Colombia, Egypt, Hong Kong (China), India, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, China, Indonesia, Russia, Singapore	<u>Virtually all RTAs represented;</u> <u>Main Coalitions</u> Cairns = 7; EU = 5; G-20W = 7; AU = 6; ACP = 5	<u>Kenya</u> : Trade Policy Review Body, “Development Issues” Facilitator; <u>Mexico</u> : Council for TRIPs; <u>Singapore</u> “Agricultural Issues” Facilitator
2002.07.17 at Geneva (hosted by US) : Informal meeting of senior officials		
25 countries, including US, EU, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Switzerland, India, China, Hungary, Brazil, Hong Kong (China), Kenya and Nigeria	<u>Main RTAs</u> : COMESA = 1; EFTA = 1; GSTP = 5; LAIA = 2; PTN = 3; NAFTA = 3; <u>Main Coalitions</u> : Cairns = 2; G-20W = 5; G-10 = 3; AU = 2; ACP = 2	<u>Canada</u> : General Council, “Singapore Issues” Facilitator; <u>Kenya</u> : Trade Policy Review Body, “Development Issues” Facilitator; <u>Mexico</u> : Council for TRIPs; <u>Singapore</u> “Agricultural Issues” Facilitator
2002.11.14-15 : Sydney, Australia : Sydney mini-Ministerial		
Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Egypt, EU, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, US	<u>Main RTAs</u> : GSTP = 13; PTN = 5; NAFTA = 3; AFTA = 4; ASEAN = 4 <u>Main Coalitions</u> : Cairns = 9; G-20W = 8 AU = 6; ACP = 6	<u>Canada</u> : General Council, “Singapore Issues” Facilitator; <u>Hong Kong (China)</u> : Com. On Agriculture, Special Session, “NAMA Issues” Facilitator; <u>Kenya</u> : Trade Policy Review Body, “Development Issues” Facilitator; <u>Korea</u> : Council for TRIPs, Special Session; <u>Malaysia</u> : Council for Trade in Goods; <u>Mexico</u> : Council for TRIPs; <u>New Zealand</u> : Negotiating Group on Rules; <u>Singapore</u> : “Agriculture Issues” Facilitator; <u>Switzerland</u> : Negotiating Group on Market Access

Attendees	Coalitions and RTAs (from table 3)	Chairs (from Table 3)
2003.02.05-06 Geneva, co-hosts Canada and Costa Rica : Capital-based senior officials meeting		
Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, EU, Egypt, Hong Kong (China), India, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, US, Uruguay, Zambia	<u>Main RTAs:</u> GSTP = 8 LAIA = 4; PTN = 6 NAFTA = 3 COMESA = 3 <u>Main Coalitions:</u> Cairns = 9 G-20W = 5 AU = 5 ACP = 5	<u>Brazil:</u> WG on Trade and Investment; <u>Canada:</u> “Singapore Issues” Facilitator; <u>Chile:</u> Council for Trade in Services, Special Session; <u>Costa Rica:</u> WG on Transparency in Government Procurement; <u>Hong Kong (China):</u> Com. On Budget, Finance, and Administration, Com. On Agriculture, Special Session, “NAMA issues” Facilitator; <u>Japan:</u> Dispute Settlement Body; <u>Kenya:</u> “Development Issues” Facilitator; <u>Korea:</u> Council for TRIPS, Special Session; <u>New Zealand:</u> Negotiating Group on Rules; <u>Singapore:</u> Council for TRIPS, “Agricultural Issues” Facilitator; <u>Switzerland:</u> NG on Market Access; <u>Uruguay:</u> General Council.
2003.02.14-16 at Tokyo, Japan : Tokyo mini-Ministerial		
Australia, Brazil*, Canada*, Chile, Costa Rica, EU*, Egypt, Hong Kong (China), India*, Indonesia, Japan*, Kenya, Korea*, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Senegal, Singapore, Switzerland*, US, Uruguay *also agriculture ministers	<u>Main RTAs:</u> GSTP = 7 LAIA = 4 PTN = 6 NAFTA = 3 COMESA = 3 <u>Main Coalitions:</u> Cairns = 8 G-20W = 4	<u>Brazil:</u> WG on Trade and Investment; <u>Canada:</u> “Singapore Issues” Facilitator; <u>Chile:</u> Council for Trade in Services, Special Session; <u>Costa Rica:</u> WG on Transparency in Government Procurement; <u>Hong Kong (China):</u> Com. On Budget, Finance, and Administration, Com. On Agriculture, Special Session, “NAMA issues” Facilitator; <u>Japan:</u> Dispute Settlement Body; <u>Kenya:</u> “Development Issues” Facilitator; <u>Korea:</u> Council for TRIPS, Special Session; <u>New Zealand:</u> Negotiating Group on Rules; <u>Senegal:</u> Council for Trade in Services; <u>Singapore:</u> Council for TRIPS, “Agricultural Issues” Facilitator; <u>Switzerland:</u> NG on Market Access; <u>Uruguay:</u> General Council.

Attendees	Coalitions and RTAs (from table 3)	Chairs (from Table 3)
2003.04.28-29 Paris, France : Informal Dinner Hosted by New Zealand on the margins of the OECD ministerial		
OECD member countries; participants at the informal meeting included: Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Singapore, South Africa	<u>Main RTAs:</u> EC = 16; EEA = 18 NAFTA = 2; EFTA = 3 <u>Main Coalitions:</u> Cairns = 3; EU = 16 G-10 = 5	<u>Singapore:</u> Council for TRIPS, “Agricultural Issues” Facilitator; <u>Brazil:</u> WG on Trade and Investment; <u>Chile:</u> Council for Trade in Services, Special Session;
2003.06.20-21 Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt : mini- Ministerial		
Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Korea, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Mauritius, New Zealand, Nigeria, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, US, EU	<u>Main RTAs:</u> GSTP = 14 PTN = 7 NAFTA = 3 AFTA = 4 ASEAN = 4 <u>Main Coalitions:</u> Cairns = 10 G-20W = 8 AU = 8 ACP = 6	<u>Brazil:</u> WG on Relationship between Trade and Investment; <u>Canada:</u> “Singapore Issues” Facilitator; <u>Chile:</u> Council for Trade in Services, Special Session; <u>Costa Rica:</u> WG on Transparency in Government Procurement; <u>Hong Kong (China):</u> Com. On Budget, Finance, and Administration, Com. On Agriculture, Special Session, “NAMA Issues” Facilitator; <u>Japan:</u> Dispute Settlement Body; <u>Kenya:</u> “Development Issues” Facilitator; <u>Korea:</u> Council for TRIPS, Special Session; <u>Mauritius:</u> Com. On RTAs; <u>New Zealand:</u> Negotiating Group on Rules; <u>Senegal:</u> Council for Trade in Services; <u>Singapore:</u> Council for TRIPS, “Agricultural Issues” Facilitator; <u>Switzerland:</u> Negotiating Group on Market Access

Attendees	Coalitions and RTAs (from table 3)	Chairs (from Table 3)
2003.07.28-30 at Montreal, Canada : Informal Ministerial Meeting in Montreal		
<p>Canada, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, EU, Guyana, Hong Kong (China), India, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Lesotho, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, US.</p> <p>Trade ministers, some agriculture ministers, senior officials and WTO DG Supachai and WTO General Council Chair Perez Del Castillo</p>	<p><u>Main RTAs:</u> GSTP = 17 PTN = 8 LAIA = 4 NAFTA = 3 AFTA = 2 ASEAN = 2</p> <p><u>Main Coalitions:</u> Cairns = 10 G-20W = 8 AU = 7 ACP = 6</p>	<p><u>Canada:</u> “Singapore Issues” Facilitator; <u>Brazil:</u> WG on Relationship between Trade and Investment; <u>Chile:</u> Council for Trade in Services, Special Session; <u>Colombia:</u> WG on Trade, Debt, and Finance; <u>Costa Rica:</u> WG on Transparency in Government Procurement; <u>Guyana:</u> “Other Issues” Facilitator; <u>Hong Kong (China):</u> Com. On Budget, Finance, and Administration, Com. On Agriculture, Special Session, “NAMA Issues” Facilitator; <u>Japan:</u> Dispute Settlement Body; <u>Kenya:</u> “Development Issues” Facilitator; <u>Korea:</u> Council for TRIPS, Special Session; <u>New Zealand:</u> Negotiating Group on Rules; <u>Pakistan:</u> Com. On Balance of Payments Restrictions; <u>Singapore:</u> Council for TRIPS, “Agricultural Issues” <u>Switzerland:</u> Negotiating Group on Market Access</p>

Table 3: Country Information

Country ¹	Mtgs ²	GNI (PPP)	Trade Rank ³	Dels ⁴	RTAs ⁵	Coalitions ⁶	Chair(s) ⁷
Argentina	1	9,930	6	9	GSTP, LAIA, MERCOSUR	Cairns Group, G-20W, G-20F	
Australia	7	26,960	13	9	CER, SPARTECA	Cairns Group, G-20F	
Bangladesh	2	1,720		5	Bangkok Agreement, GSTP, PTN, SAPTA	LDC	2002: Com. On Trade & Development 2003 Coordinator of the LDC Group
Brazil	7	7,250	14	11	GSTP, LAIA, MERCOSUR, PTN	Cairns Group, G-20W, G-20F	2003: WG on Relationship between Trade and Investment
Canada	8	8,070	5	11	NAFTA	Cairns Group, G-8, G-20F	Cancun: "Singapore Issues" 2002: General Council
Chile	5	9,180		5	GSTP, LAIA, PTN	Cairns Group, G-20W	2003 Special Session of the Council for Trade in Services
China	6	4,390	4	13	Bangkok Agreement	G-20W, G-33, G-20F	
Colombia	3	5,870		5	CAN, GSTP, LAIA	Cairns Group,	2003: WG on Trade, Debt, and Finance
Costa Rica	4	8,260		4	CACM, CAFTA	Cairns Group	2003: WG on Government Procurement

Country ¹	Mtgs ²	GNI (PPP)	Trade Rank ³	Dels ⁴	RTAs ⁵	Coalitions ⁶	Chair(s) ⁷
Egypt	6	,710		7	COMESA, GSTP, PTN, TRIPARTITE	AU, G-20W, LMG	
EU	7	-----		13	EEA	G-8, G-20F	
Guyana	1	3,780		3	CARICOM, GSTP	ACP	Cancun: "Other Issues, i.e. TRIPS registry"
Hong Kong (China)	8	26,810	6	7			2003: Com. on Budget, Finance, & Administration 2003: Com. on Agriculture, Special Session Cancun: NAMA
Hungary	2	12,810		4	CEFTA	EU (accession)	2003 Special Session of DSB
India	8	2,570	17	8	Bangkok Agreement, GSTP, SAPTA, TRIPARTITE	G-20W, G-20F, LMG	
Indonesia	5	2,990	16	6	AFTA, ASEAN, GSTP, LMG	Cairns Group, G-20W, G-20F, G-33	
Japan	8	26,070	3	21		G-10, G-8, G-20F	2003: Dispute Settlement Body
Jordan	1	4,070		2			

Country ¹	Mtgs ²	GNI (PPP)	Trade Rank ³	Dels ⁴	RTAs ⁵	Coalitions ⁶	Chair(s) ⁷
Kenya	7	990		3	COMESA, EAC	AU, ACP, G-6, G-33, LMG	Cancun: Development Issues 2002: Trade Policy Review Body
Korea	8	16,480	7	19	Bangkok Agreement, GSTP, PTN	G-10, G-33, G-20F	2003 Special Session of the TRIPs Council
Lesotho	5	2,710		4		AU, ACP, LDC	
Malaysia	5	8,280	10	4	AFTA, ASEAN, GSTP	Cairns Group, LMG	2002: Council for Trade in Goods
Mauritius	1	10,530		6	COMESA	AU, ACP, G-10, G-33, LMG	2003: Com. On RTAs Chair AU trade ministers, 2003-2004 (WT/L/522)
Mexico	8	8,540	8	10	GSTP, LAIA, NAFTA, PTN	G-20W, G-20F	2003: Cancun chair 2002: TRIPs Council
Morocco	3	3,690		7	GSTP	AU	
New Zealand	7	20,020		6	CER, SPARTECA	Cairns Group	2003 Negotiating Group on Rules
Nigeria	5	780		7	GSTP	AU, ACP, G-20W, G-33	Until 2003: Chair AU trade ministers? Africa Group coordinator in 2002?
Pakistan	1	1,940		4	ECO, GSTP, PTN, SAPTA	G-20W, G-33, LMG	2003: Com. on Balance of Payments
Senegal	4	1,510		5	UEMOA/ WAEMU	AU, ACP, LDC, G-33	2003: Council for Trade in Services

Country ¹	Mtgs ²	GNI (PPP)	Trade Rank ³	Dels ⁴	RTAs ⁵	Coalitions ⁶	Chair(s) ⁷
Singapore	7	23,090	9	8	AFTA, ASEAN, GSTP		2003: TRIPs Council Cancun: Agriculture
South Africa	6	,870	23	4		AU, ACP, Cairns Group, G-20W, G-20F	
Switzerland	8	31,250	11	8	EFTA	G-10	2003 Negotiating Group NAMA
Thailand	2	6,680	12	14	AFTA, ASEAN, GSTP	Cairns Group, G-20W?	
Trinidad and Tobago	2	8,680		5	GSTP	ACP, G-33	
Uganda	1	1,320		5	COMESA, EAC	AU, ACP, G-33, LMG	
Uruguay	2	12,010		7	LAIA, MERCOSUR, PTN	Cairns Group	2003: General Council 2002: Dispute Settlement Body
USA	8	35,060	2	16	NAFTA, CAFTA	G-8, G-20F	
Zambia	1	770		7	COMESA	AU, ACP, LDC, G-33	

¹ Attended at least one WTO-related informal meeting of senior officials or Ministers since the creation of the WTO. List does not include Member states of the EU. Exceptions are Barbados and Iceland, which hold a 2004 chair.

² Meetings after Doha/Before Cancun

³ Rank in top 26 WTO Members as a share of world merchandise exports, 2002. If the cell is blank, the country represents less than 0.5% of world merchandise export. Source: Appendix Table IA.2 Leading exporters in world merchandise trade (excluding intra-EU trade), 2002 (WTO, 2003)

⁴ Number of delegates in Geneva, based on the diplomatic list notified to the secretariat. NB the counts may occasionally be high because some delegations appear to notify officials who work mostly or exclusively on non-WTO matters.

⁵ Source: WTO list of regional trade agreements

⁶ **G-20W** is the new WTO coalition that emerged in Cancun. Membership stabilized slowly; this table is based on the list in the December 2003 communique. Current members Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Tanzania, Venezuela, Zimbabwe

G-20F indicates members of the G-20 group of Finance Ministers created in 1999. This table is based on the list of participants at the 2003 meeting in Mexico, which includes non-Members of the WTO: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, México, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.

G-33 The Alliance for Special Products (SPs) and a Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM), or G-33, was formed shortly before and during the Cancun Ministerial Conference. The current membership has not been listed in G-33 documents circulated in the WTO. Among the countries that have identified themselves as G-33 members are: Barbados, Botswana, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Korea, Republic of, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe

G-10 Bulgaria, Chinese Taipei, Rep of Korea, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Norway and Switzerland.

G-90 (African, Acp And Least-Developed Countries) (currently 63 members of the WTO): Angola, Antigua-Barbuda, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea (Conakry), Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, Tanzania, The Gambia, Togo, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

LMG "Like-Minded Group" Cuba, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe

Cairns Group Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Paraguay, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Uruguay

⁷ Chairmanships are designated as such: Any year followed by a title indicates that country was (or is) the WTO body chair; any year + "TNC" followed by a title indicates that country was (or is) the Trade Negotiating Committee chair, instituted specially for the Doha Development Agenda; "Cancun" followed by a title indicates that country was the facilitator for that particular group of issues at the Cancun ministerial.