



WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU  
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL

EHLM Division KB
Date received: 573 COMMERCE 30 JUL. 2006
Action/Attention: Jeremy

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Ms Hanne Inger Bjurstrøm  
Chair of the Meeting of the Parties  
Convention on Access to Information, Public  
Participation in Decision-Making and Access  
to Justice in Environmental Matters  
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30 JUN 2006

Dear Ms Bjurstrøm,

On behalf of the Director-General, I would like to thank you for your letter of 16 June informing him of the work of the UN/ECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) and, for the application of its principles, the Almaty Guidelines. We share with you the important principles of transparency and openness in decision-making.

Concerning your question on whether the WTO would be interested to take part in the Task Force established by the Convention to consult with international forums to obtain their views on the Guidelines, and more specifically, your invitation to the Director-General to inform WTO Members, and, *inter alia*, Members of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE), about the existence of the Guidelines and the consultation process, we would welcome representatives of your organization, when attending the relevant WTO meetings where UN/ECE is an observer, to convey this message. Since the UN/ECE is not an observer of the CTE, we would advise you to encourage one of the Parties of the Aarhus Convention, who is also a Member of the WTO, to bring forward such information to the Committee.

With respect to your kind invitation for the WTO to participate in a future workshop to exchange experiences on practices, the WTO Secretariat is not in a position, at this stage, to commit itself to attend such a meeting. A decision could be made at a later stage, when further information concerning this event is available.

We look forward to hearing from your organization on the ongoing work of the Almaty Guidelines, and to any future occasions when the WTO could cooperate with UN/ECE in our respective work.

Yours sincerely,

Willy Afaro  
Director  
External Relations Division