

## **UPDATE ON THE DOHA ROUND NEGOTIATIONS**

### **September 2010**

The Doha Round Negotiations are coming to life again after a slow summer period. Negotiators are going to be active in several different forums in the coming months.

Chairman David Walker has scheduled a meeting for agriculture negotiators the week of September 27. The agenda for the meeting looks a lot like the agendas of meetings earlier this year – 1) the development of templates (formats) that would be used by member countries for the submission of schedules of concessions and commitments and necessary background data; and 2) a review outstanding issues in the negotiating text. Negotiators expect meetings to occur on a monthly basis between now and the end of the year.

At the same time, Geneva-based ambassadors from the G-5 countries (U.S., the EU, Brazil, China and India) are organising a series of small group meetings on various topics. The G-5 ambassadors will decide which countries to invite to the meetings, and the list will vary according to the topic. The first meeting will take place on October 4, and the topic will be agriculture. The G-5 meetings are for Geneva ambassadors only. Ag negotiators have not been invited to attend the October 4 meeting. Some countries – e.g., the EU and Japan (which has been invited to participate in the October 4 meeting) – are unhappy with that arrangement.

The U.S. is also ramping up its bilateral efforts. Ambassadors Punke and Siddiqui travelled to India for bilateral negotiations in August. They scheduled a meeting with the EU the week of September 6 in Geneva, but that meeting was cancelled by the EU. Members of the U.S. negotiating team are busy working on lists of market access priorities for a number of countries with which the U.S. plans to engage over the next few months.

It is too early to say whether the negotiations will build any real momentum. The biggest question is whether U.S. negotiators can convince their negotiating partners that the U.S. Administration is seriously seeking an agreement and capable of getting that agreement through a sceptical Congress. If they can, we could see a real push for concluding the Doha Round in the coming year.