

Udenrigsudvalget
URU alm. del - Bilag 7
Offentlig



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION
CHEMIN DU POMMIER 5, CASE POSTALE 330
CH-1218 LE GRAND-SACONNEX/GENEVA, SWITZERLAND



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

RUE WIERTZ, B-1047, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Geneva/Brussels, 1 October 2004

BRUSSELS SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

As you have already been informed (see advance information letter of the IPU Secretary General dated 9 July 2004), the next session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO will take place from **24 to 26 November 2004** on the **premises of the European Parliament in Brussels**. We are pleased to extend an invitation to your Parliament to send a delegation to this important event which will follow up on the two highly successful sessions of the Conference held in Geneva and Cancún in February and September 2003 respectively.

In conformity with past practice, the Brussels session will be co-organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament. Practical preparation of the session is carried out by the Conference Steering Committee, which met in Geneva on 6 and 7 September and established the session's provisional **agenda** and **programme**, copies of which you will find enclosed.

As you will see from the proposed agenda, the Steering Committee took stock of the WTO General Council's breakthrough decision of 1 August 2004 which provided a roadmap for the continuation of the process started in Doha. Now that WTO negotiations are back on track, parliamentarians should redouble their efforts to strengthen democracy at the international level by bringing a parliamentary dimension to multilateral cooperation on trade issues.

We wish to emphasize that the forthcoming session is intended primarily for **parliamentarians who specialise in matters of international trade** in their respective parliaments. Participation in the session will provide them with an opportunity to obtain first-hand information on the state of play in the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, to exchange views and experiences with colleagues in other parliaments and to interact with government officers directly involved in WTO talks.

Practical information about the organization of the Brussels session - including its registration and hotel reservation forms - was forwarded to you together with the advance information letter. This information is also posted on the IPU Web site at <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/trade04.htm>. May we take this opportunity to remind you that the deadline for booking hotel rooms in Brussels through the European Parliament's Travel Office expires on **13 October 2004**.

We very much hope that your Parliament will participate in the Brussels session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Sergio Pérez Verdugo
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Josep Fontelles Borrell
President of the European Parliament

BRUSSELS SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

24-26 November 2004

Organised jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. **Adoption of the agenda**
2. **Interactive panel discussion: The significance of the WTO General Council decision of 1 August 2004 for the future of the Doha Round**

Following marathon negotiations, on 1 August 2004 the WTO General Council adopted a package of decisions providing a roadmap for moving forward the process started in Doha. The group of five (Australia, Brazil, European Union, India, United States of America) played an important role in this breakthrough, as did others including the WTO Director-General and the Chairman of the WTO General Council. By way of introduction, participants in the Parliamentary Conference will have an opportunity to listen to the views of top WTO negotiators on the future of the Doha Round and will be able to pose direct questions in this regard.

3. **Debate on substantive themes:**

The Brussels session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO is taking place when, notwithstanding renewed momentum in the negotiations, some important differences remain between the positions of WTO Members. Concentrated political will is required to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion. Conference delegates are invited to focus, from a parliamentary perspective, on some of the key areas of current WTO negotiations.

(a) Agriculture

Agriculture is of critical importance to economic development and growth prospects of many developing countries and is equally essential for developed countries. This is why one of the major merits of the WTO General Council's decision of 1 August 2004 was the adoption of a framework for establishing negotiating modalities in agriculture. For the first time, WTO Members have agreed to abolish all forms of agricultural export subsidies by an end date to be determined, substantially reduce trade-distorting domestic support in agriculture, and expand market access for agricultural goods through significant reduction in tariffs and non-tariff barriers. Members have also undertaken to address "ambitiously, expeditiously and specifically" the issue of cotton subsidies. Conference delegates are invited to discuss how parliamentarians can contribute to the materialization of this compromise sketched in the 1 August 2004 decision, recognizing the development imperatives of developing countries.

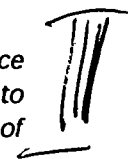
(b) Trade in services from a development perspective

In many countries, including least developed ones, services play an important role in the domestic economy but generate only a fraction of export earnings. To advance the negotiations on trade in services in line with the Doha mandate, WTO Members have committed to achieve progressively higher levels of liberalization with no a priori exclusion of any service sector or mode of supply, while giving special attention to the interests of

developing countries. Under this item, Conference delegates are invited to discuss how parliaments can facilitate progress in the services negotiations and to come up with specific recommendations in this regard.

4. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO

At the Cancún session, it was decided to establish the Rules of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO. The Steering Committee has prepared a draft of such Rules which it submits to the Conference for adoption. The Rules would be applied as from the following session of the Conference.



5. Adoption of the outcome document

At the end of the session, the participants will be invited to consider and adopt an outcome document, the draft of which will be prepared by the Conference Steering Committee.

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Optional side event: Practical aspects of trade-related capacity-building with special focus on the needs of parliaments

Technical assistance and capacity-building programmes adjusted to the needs of developing countries are vital for advancing the Doha Development Agenda. The growing role of parliaments in overseeing governments' action in multilateral trade negotiations requires capacity-building measures focused on the unique oversight functions of parliaments. On the other hand, such measures should be seen as an integral part of the commitment efforts to enhance the developing countries' overall capacity to negotiate and effectively implement agreements.

During this one-hour optional event, to be held during the lunch pause on the second day of the Conference, delegates will be briefed on current programmes carried out by UNDP and UNCTAD in this field and will have an opportunity to put forward their suggestions for strengthening capacity-building measures, in particular those focused on the needs of parliamentarians specializing in international trade.

BRUSSELS SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

24-26 November 2004

Organised jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME OF THE SESSION

Tuesday, 23 November

3 - 6 p.m. *Registration of participants*

Wednesday, 24 November

8 a.m. - 6 p.m. *Registration of participants*

9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. *Pre-Conference session of the Steering Committee (in camera meeting)*

3 - 3.30 p.m. *Inaugural ceremony*

3.30 - 6.30 p.m. *Plenary session*

Adoption of the agenda and other organisational issues

3.45 p.m. **Interactive panel discussion with the participation of top WTO negotiators: The significance of the WTO General Council decision of 1 August 2004 for the future of the Doha Round**

6.30 p.m. *Reception hosted by the European Parliament*

Thursday, 25 November

9 a.m. - 6 p.m. *Registration of participants*

9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. *Continuation of the plenary session*

Substantive theme (a) Agriculture

Discussants

- Mr. Boureima Gado, MP (Niger)
- Mr. Joseph Daul, Member of the European Parliament
- MP (Chile)
- MP (Japan)

12.30 - 3 p.m. *Lunch break*

2 - 3 p.m. **Optional side event on practical aspects of trade-related capacity-building with special focus on the needs of parliaments**

3 - 6.30 p.m. *Continuation of the plenary session*

Substantive theme (b) Trade in services from a development perspective

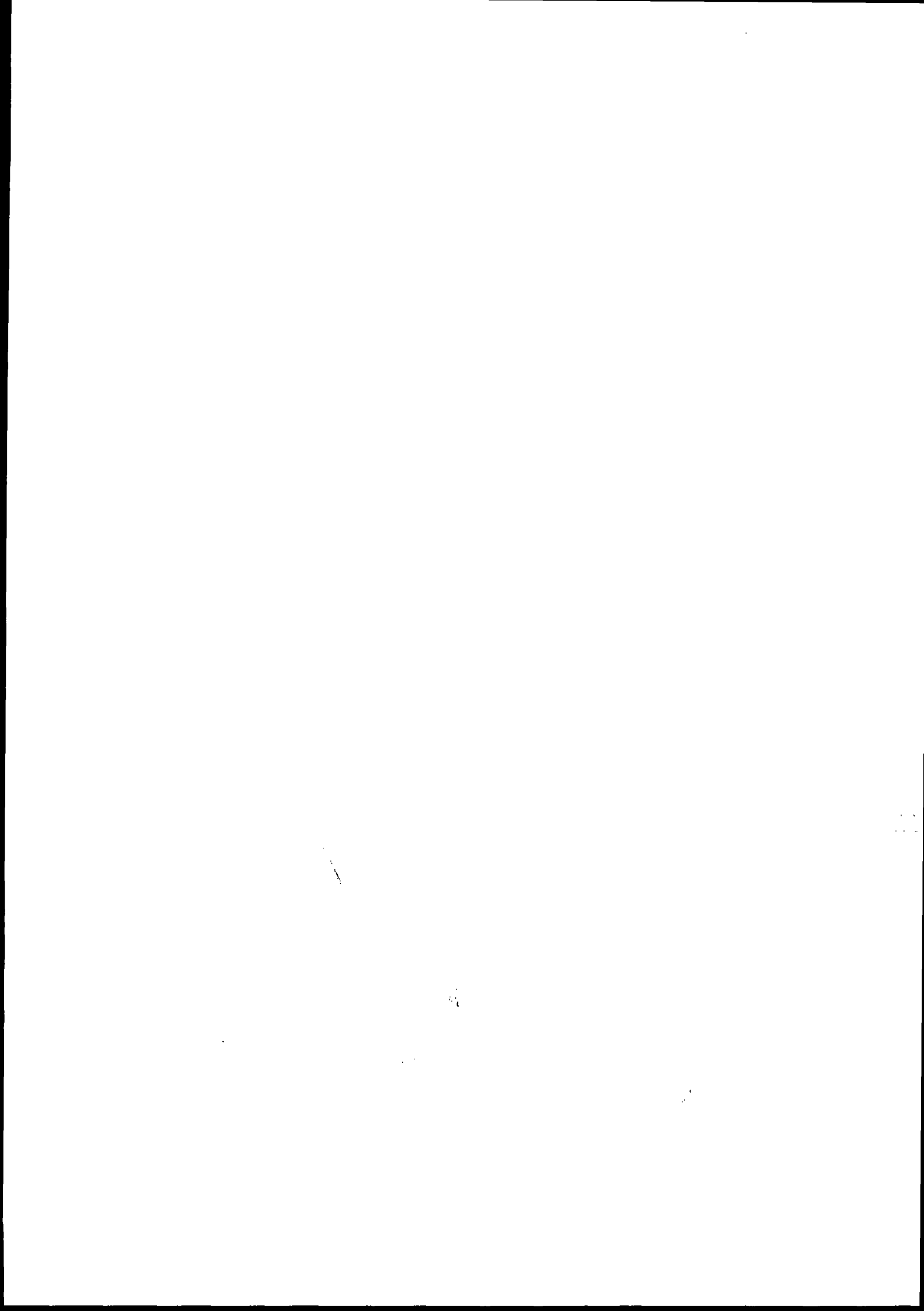
Discussants

- Ms. Paddy Torsney, MP (Canada)
- Mr. Rupchand Pal, MP (India)
- Senator Ibikunle Amosun (Nigeria)
- Ms. Ann McKechin, MP (United Kingdom)

7 - 9 p.m. *Drafting Committee (in camera meeting)*

Friday, 26 November

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| 9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. | <i>Continuation of the plenary session</i> Adoption of the draft Rules of Procedure of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO (to be applied as from the following session of the Conference) |
| 10 - 11.30 a.m. | Interactive session with the participation of the WTO Director-General, Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi |
| 11.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. | <i>Adoption of the outcome document and closure of the session</i> |



RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE WTO

*Approved by the Steering Committee at its 7th session
(Geneva, 7 September 2004)*

The days when foreign policy, and more specifically trade policy was the exclusive domain of the executive branch are over. The WTO is rapidly becoming more than a trade organisation, having an ever growing impact on domestic policies and the daily life of citizens.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament are therefore jointly organising a Parliamentary Conference on the WTO (hereinafter the Conference) that will meet at least once a year and on the occasion of WTO Ministerial Conferences. The Conference is an official parliamentary event that is open to the public.

ARTICLE 1 - Objectives

1.1 The Conference is a forum for the exchange of opinions, information and experience, as well as for the promotion of common action on topics related to the role of parliaments and the organisation of parliamentary functions in the area of international trade issues.

1.2 The Conference seeks to promote free and fair trade that benefits people everywhere, enhances development and reduces poverty.

1.3 The Conference will provide a parliamentary dimension to the WTO by:

- (a) overseeing WTO activities and promoting their effectiveness and fairness – keeping in mind the original objectives of the WTO set in Marrakech;
- (b) promoting the transparency of WTO procedures and improving the dialogue between governments, parliaments and civil society; and
- (c) building capacity in parliaments in matters of international trade and exerting influence on the direction of discussions within the WTO.

ARTICLE 2 - Composition

2.1 Participants in the Conference are

- delegations designated by parliaments of sovereign States that are members of the WTO;
- delegations designated by IPU Member Parliaments from countries that are not represented in the WTO; and
- delegations designated by the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie.

2.2 Observers to the Conference will be

- Representatives of international organisations and others who are concerned by issues of international trade and specifically invited by the Steering Committee on the basis of a list that has been approved jointly by the co-organisers; and
- representatives of governments of sovereign States that are members of the WTO.

2.3 The event will also be open to other persons with a specific interest in international trade questions. These persons may follow the work of the Conference without intervening in its proceedings and will have no speaking rights. They will be issued a security badge bearing their name only. They will not receive an official invitation or be accredited to the event.

ARTICLE 3 - Presidency

3.1 The Conference is presided over jointly by the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the President of the European Parliament, or their substitutes.

3.2 The Presidents shall open, suspend and close the sittings, direct the work of the Conference, see that the Rules are observed, call upon speakers, put questions for decision, make known the results of decisions and declare the Conference closed. The decisions of the Presidents on these matters shall be final and shall be accepted without debate.

3.3 The Presidents shall decide on all matters not covered by these Rules, if necessary after having taken the advice of the Steering Committee.

ARTICLE 4 - Steering Committee and Secretariat

4.1 The Steering Committee is jointly established by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament.

4.2 The Steering Committee is responsible for all matters relating to the organisation of the Conference and shall take decisions on the basis of consensus. All decisions taken by the Steering Committee shall, as appropriate, be circulated in writing and approved before the end of each meeting.

4.3 The Conference and the Steering Committee are assisted in their activities by the secretariats of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament.

ARTICLE 5 - Agenda

5.1 The Conference decides on its agenda on the basis of a proposal from the Steering Committee, which shall be communicated to the participants at least one month before the opening of each plenary session.

ARTICLE 6 - Speaking rights and decisions

- 6.1 Participants and observers have the same speaking rights.
- 6.2 Priority to speak shall be given to participants wishing to make a procedural motion which shall have priority over the substantive questions.
- 6.3 The Conference shall take all decisions by consensus of the delegations of participants. Conference decisions shall be taken after due notice has been given by the President.

ARTICLE 7 - Outcome of the Conference

- 7.1 The draft outcome document of the Conference shall be prepared by the Steering Committee with the assistance of one or more rapporteurs and communicated to the participants sufficiently in advance.
- 7.2 Amendments to the draft outcome document shall be presented by the delegations as defined in Article 2.1 or by rapporteurs in English or in French with the amended parts clearly marked. Amendments shall relate directly to the text which they seek to amend. They may only call for an addition, a deletion or an alteration with regard to the initial draft, without having the effect of changing its scope or nature. Amendments shall be submitted before the deadline set by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall decide on the admissibility of amendments.

ARTICLE 8 – Adoption and amendment to the rules

- 8.1 The Conference shall adopt and amend the Rules.
- 8.2 Any proposal to amend the Rules of the Conference shall be formulated in writing and sent to the Secretariat of the Conference at least three months before the next meeting of the Conference. The Secretariat shall immediately communicate such proposals to the members of the Steering Committee as well as to the delegations of the Conference. It shall also communicate any proposal for sub-amendments at least one month before the next meeting of the Conference.
- 8.3 The Conference shall decide on any proposal to amend the Rules after hearing the opinion of the Steering Committee, including on their admissibility.

