

IOM – WORLD BANK – WTO SEMINAR ON TRADE AND MIGRATION

GENEVA, 5 OCTOBER 2004

SPEAKING POINTS FOR CARLO GAMBERALE

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

- The theme of this session (and a central one in this event) is the relationship between the international treaty obligations undertaken by states at the bilateral, regional and

bilateral and regional instruments, we do not see such a close relationship between Mode 4 and the shaping of domestic regulatory policies and frameworks.

- It is probably unrealistic, however, to expect that Mode 4 be used to shape directly the migratory policies and laws of almost 150 WTO Members, while it is understandable why bilateral and regional instruments are sometime used for this purpose, considering factors such as geographical vicinity, level of development, cultural and historical ties, and the fact that they deal with more than just trade matters.
- Indeed, the closeness between national regulatory frameworks and some bilateral and regional agreements makes sense in so far as we are dealing with the implementation of migratory and trade policies that are dictated by flows and concerns specific to a group of countries. Moreover, regional and especially bilateral agreements are generally much broader in their coverage than GATS Mode 4.
- First they generally cover temporary movement of workers, regardless of any distinction between services and manufacturing sectors.
- Second, they cover many aspects of migration which go beyond the trade concept of market access and the reach of GATS Mode 4 (although some of these measure may arguably provide a favorable backdrop for Mode 4 commitments). Among these: obligations on source and host countries concerning the management of migratory flows (controlling migratory flows; obligations to train workers prior to their movement abroad, measures to ensure the return of temporary workers), measures to offset labour shortages, the creation of cross-border labour markets, the protection of migrant rights, ect.
- The same cannot be said of Mode 4 implementation, which is limited to a set of access commitments. WTO Members agree to liberalize Mode 4 trade, but this is without prejudice to their unilateral, bilateral or regional migratory policies. After all, while Members may well have migratory policies in the back of their minds when negotiating Mode 4 commitments, Mode 4 is not about liberalizing migratory policies but about liberalizing the supply of services which involves the movement of natural persons.
- The GATS, in the case of Mode 4 as for all modes of supply, does not forces Members to deregulate nor it directly regulates (*e.g.*, through harmonization) Members' policy areas.

regulatory frameworks (also an indication of the fact that Mode 4 commitments almost always consist in the binding of the *status quo*), which only where strictly necessary are adapted to reflect the multilateral obligations.

- Moreover, Mode 4 commitments are confined to the movement of natural persons in connection with the supply of a service, while the vast majority of national regimes do not distinguish between workers in the services sector as opposed to those in the manufacturing sector.
- The main downside of this type of implementation is, therefore, represented by the difficulty of reconciling the Mode 4 movement liberalized under the GATS with categories and concepts used in national regulatory frameworks with resulting additional administrative and procedural obstacles to the Mode 4 movement of natural persons.
- In this respect, it should be noted that while a full reflection of GATS Mode 4 concepts into national regulatory frameworks on the temporary movement of natural persons is unrealistic and possibly unnecessary, a certain degree of Mode 4 specific national implementation is desirable and so is work in the WTO on common categories and definitions to facilitate national implementation.
- In this context, it should be pointed out that more clarity and precision in the definition of Mode 4 categories might also facilitate liberalization of Mode 4 insofar as it would reveal to regulators the limited reach of Mode 4 within the migratory field. Indeed, the absence of clear distinctions between Mode 4 and other types of temporary movement may constitute a drag factor in the liberalization of Mode 4.
- Two key approaches have thus far been suggested to improve Mode 4 commitments (and their national implementation): (1) multilateral work on common categories and definitions for Mode 4 that would facilitate national implementation.