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Siaran Pers

Badan Kerja Sama Antar-
Parlemen (BKSAP)
DPR RI

Sekretariat:

Ged. Nusantara III, Lt. 4
Jl. Jend. Gatot Subroto
Jakarta 10270
Indonesia

Website:

<http://ksap.dpr.go.id/>

Twitter:

[@bksapdpri](https://twitter.com/bksapdpri)

Instagram:

[@bksapdpri](https://www.instagram.com/bksapdpri)

YouTube:

[BKSAP DPR RI](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBKSAPDPRRI)

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021-5715814

biro_ksap@dpr.go.id

45th session of the Steering Committee – Parliamentary Conference on the WTO

The 45th session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO) will be held in Brussels, Belgium on February 20, 2020. The Indonesian Parliament will send a delegation led by the Chairperson of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation (BKSAP), Dr. Fadli Zon (F-PGERINDRA), along with one of the members of BKSAP, Andi Achmad Dara (F-PG) to attend the session.

Indonesia is a member of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO – and Dr. Fadli Zon will co-chair the 45th session of the meeting with a member of the European Parliament, Bernd Lange, who also serves as the Chairperson of the Committee on International Trade (INTA). The Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO is a forum consisting of around 27 representatives of parliaments and also international organizations. The Steering Committee is a platform for dialogue and exchange of views, and to discuss matters relating to international or multilateral trade. Previous meetings had discussed various subjects, including but not limited to, electronic commerce, and the development of multilateral trade negotiations.

Considering the important role of the WTO in regulating and overseeing international trade, the 45th session will focus on strategies to reform the WTO, in which the Parliaments play a pivotal role. The WTO Reform includes, among others, overcoming the challenges of appointing members of the Appellate Body. In addition, this session will also be the forum to exchange views regarding the ongoing fisheries subsidy negotiations.

Subsequently, the 45th session of the Steering Committee this year has an agenda to brief the Members about the latest developments in trade negotiations, and discuss preparations for the 12th Ministerial Conference, which will take place in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, from June 8 to 11, 2020. As well, the discussion will encompass technical preparations for the Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, which as usual, will be organized alongside the Ministerial Conference.

In addition, the delegates are invited to join the INTA meeting. As a committee of the European Parliament, INTA has a role in the formation, implementation and monitoring of EU's Common Commercial Policy and external economic relations, including but not limited to, financial, economic and trade relations; and relations with WTO and other relevant international organizations.

The BKSAP DPR RI delegates hope that the meetings in Belgium can be an opportunity for them to have a dialogue with other nations regarding palm oil, among other topics. It must be emphasized that palm oil production and export plays a crucial role in boosting the nation's economy.