

**Workshop I: *What might be the outcomes of the current GATS negotiations on trade in educational services***

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At the beginning of the workshop, remarks were made by the facilitators about the previous sessions of the Forum:

- There was general agreement in the previous sessions that discussions on quality assurance of education and recognition of credits and degrees are best pursued outside of the WTO framework.
- Up to now, the education community has been mainly focused on mode 2 trade, and less consideration was given to modes 1 and 3. Now the education community has realized that GATS covers all modes 1, 2, 3 and 4. However, we do not know the size of trade in these modes.

Discussion

- It was agreed that there are issues such as quality assurance that cannot be addressed through GATS.
- Questions were raised about the outcomes of GATS. There were different opinions about the possible scenario of GATS negotiation and its impact on education. Some saw the role of GATS limited to a complementary framework role, others expressed concerns about the negative impact of GATS on education, especially about the possibility that GATS will affect the authority of national governments to make decisions about their own education policy.
- Concerns were expressed about the ambiguity of GATS, especially the wording of article I.3 (“public service” carve out). It was mentioned that the ambiguity of the wording of GATS might cause unexpected decisions by WTO dispute panels. However, it was noted that so far no GATS disputes had been taken to the WTO and that very few commitments were scheduled under the GATS in education.
- Many of the concerns that were raised about GATS related to problems arising in goods trade. Explanations about the difference between GATS and GATT were given by the facilitators.
- Some people in the education sector felt that their concerns were being somewhat dismissed by those saying that GATS could only have a limited impact on education.