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**WTO/DOHA: "WE MUST MOVE AHEAD WITHOUT DELAY"
DECLARES UNICE**

"At this time of tragedy everything must be done to step up significantly international cooperation and governance in all areas. WTO is certainly one of the pillars of economic governance and needs to be strengthened" declared Baron Jacobs, UNICE's President today in Brussels, addressing Commissioner Lamy and representatives of civil society present at the conference organised by "Cercle européen de Confrontations", chaired by MEP Philippe Herzog, on the theme "Why launch a new round of multilateral trade negotiations?".

Less than six weeks before the 4th WTO Ministerial Conference, President Jacobs underlined that "the time for rhetoric has passed, we must now move forward and launch a comprehensive round of negotiations in Doha. To do nothing would be no more than to postpone the problems which have been identified. Everybody would stand to lose in such a situation, and developing countries in particular".

The objectives that UNICE pursues in a new round are simple: to obtain greater clarity and transparency for all, to limit protectionist tendencies and to eliminate unnecessary trade barriers. UNICE endorses the emphasis placed on better integration of developing countries in world trade. "It is intolerable that the inequalities between rich countries and poor countries should continue to widen" said President Jacobs.

He added that, if special and differentiated treatment, which UNICE supports, is genuinely to ensure a better division of the fruits of growth and benefit the least advantaged, it is essential to:

- distinguish between individual developing countries and sectors;

- encourage the countries concerned to take appropriate economic and governance flanking measures,
- ensure that unfair practices are combated with the same vigour in order to prevent circumvention of rules which jeopardises many jobs in Europe.

President Jacobs also stressed that a framework of multilateral WTO rules on investment would help to make countries currently excluded from the normal circuits more attractive.

On the other theme of the conference “Is it possible to regulate global trade in such a way as to encourage high social and environmental standards?”, the Chairman of UNICE’s “WTO” Working Group, Mr Jacques Desponts, reiterated UNICE’s attachment to sustainable development based on a balance between environmental, economic and societal objectives. He underlined the complexity of the questions raised and the importance of having an open debate which respects the positions of all sides. UNICE has made realistic and balanced specific proposals for each dossier.

In order to give these positions a wider airing and thereby to contribute more broadly to the debate under way, UNICE has today launched its new site devoted to WTO and the forthcoming round of negotiations. “The general interest will be better served by a constructive dialogue than by violent confrontations seeking to impose positions by force. Each of us must assume his or her responsibilities” concluded Mr Desponts.

For more information on UNICE’s priorities and positions concerning the new round of negotiations, please consult UNICE’s WTO website on: <http://wto.unice.org>

Note to the editor:

UNICE is the official voice of more than 16 million small, medium and large companies active in Europe, employing over 106 million people. Active in European affairs since 1958, UNICE’s members are 33 central industrial and employers federations from 26 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

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