

19 October 2001

STATEMENT OF UNICE EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**4th WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE****MINISTERS MUST HAVE THE COURAGE TO MOVE FORWARD WITHOUT DELAY**

Meeting on 18 October in Brussels, UNICE's External Relations Committee, chaired by Mr Lars Anell, Senior Vice-President Volvo AB, discussed the preparation of the 4th WTO Ministerial Conference.

On this occasion, UNICE met Mr Konrad Schwaiger, Member of the European Parliament and Rapporteur for the WTO. During the exchange of views, Mr Anell stated: "With the risks of economic recession in the United States, Japan and Europe, European companies are worried by protectionist and inward-looking pressures which are developing around the world. Giving in to these pressures would increase even further the problems which have started to hit business head-on. The only way to find sustainable and fair solutions to these problems is to reinforce dialogue and co-operation at multilateral level."

"In this context," Mr Anell added, "It is more necessary and more urgent than ever that the 4th WTO Ministerial Conference takes place, as planned, on 9-13 November, and that Ministers launch, in the general interest, a new comprehensive round of negotiations. It is essential that this decision is taken in a totally transparent way and that the arrangements planned to associate civil society to the conference are maintained."

UNICE is confident that, with strong political will and some flexibility on the measures to be taken to achieve the set objectives, progress made over the past few weeks will lead to a broad consensus of WTO Members on the launch of new negotiations. These aim to respond in a constructive, transparent and open way, to the challenges and concerns which globalisation entails. "Ministers must have the courage to move forward without delay," stated L. Anell.

Regarding its priorities for the new round, UNICE is encouraged by the proposed general guidelines for services, simplification and harmonisation of trade and customs procedures and market access. It calls on Community negotiators to continue their efforts regarding investment to get negotiations launched. It also expects future negotiations to contribute to reducing and preventing further misguided attempts at discrimination and protectionism. In

the context of a new round, UNICE therefore calls for clarification of some of the provisions of the existing WTO agreements (anti-dumping) and clarification on the application of some others (trade and environment). It also calls on Community negotiators to resist pressures which would put at risk the current balance of the agreement on intellectual property and thus hinder innovation, research and technology transfers.

UNICE is determined to pursue its action vigorously to ensure that the 4th WTO Ministerial Conference is a success. It calls on all the stakeholders concerned – governmental and non-governmental – to assume fully their responsibilities.

For more information on UNICE's priorities and positions concerning the WTO and 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.

For further information, please contact:

Monique Julien :	+32(0)2 237.65.22
Susanne Klunkert:	+32(0)2 237 65 62
GSM:	+32(0)477 277 963
Website :	www.unice.org