

Brussels, 2 September 2002

**EU PRESIDENT MEETS EUROPEAN BUSINESS
AT THE JOHANESBURG SUMMIT**

The European Business met EU President, Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, on Sunday 1 September. The UNICE delegation, led by Johan Schroeder, Chairman of the Confederation of Danish Industries, presented its views on how European companies contribute to sustainable development. Later on the same day UNICE encountered EU Development Commissioner Poul Nielson.

At a press conference after the meeting Mr Rasmussen said that business plays an important role in creating development. *"We need business engagement in many of the problems that face the world such as the need for clean water, sanitation and sustainable energy. Therefore I'm happy to see, that business is so well represented here at the Summit"*.

In his opening remarks, Mr Schroeder pointed out the increasingly positive role private investment plays in financing of the current development process *"That is also true in relation to technology: it is private companies that develop, utilise and spread the technology essential to economic development"*.

"You cannot have a healthy business climate without good governance. And therefore business finds it important that good governance is among the predominant themes in the discussions here in Johannesburg" he added.

Making a major effort to improving business conditions in developing countries is key to fighting poverty and giving access to technology. Therefore there is an urgent need to link business more closely to environmental development aid and increase focus on concrete environment improvements.

UNICE has identified five priorities for action concerning sustainable development: focus on economic growth, producing more with less, implementation of the Doha Development Agenda, good governance at all levels, and business capacity-building. Decisions at the Johannesburg summit must be inspired on those principles.

The UNICE delegation will meet Danish Environmental Minister, Hans Christian Schmidt on 2 September.

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 34 central industrial and employers federations from 27 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

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