

1 April 2003

**“STOP THE FOOT-DRAGGING AT THE WTO”  
EUROPEAN BUSINESS IS CONCERNED THAT DOHA DEVELOPMENT  
AGENDA NEGOTIATIONS ARE LOSING MOMENTUM**

In its 27 March 2003 position paper on WTO agriculture negotiations, UNICE reiterated its strong support for negotiations on further liberalisation of international trade through a reduction of trade-distorting support and protection for agriculture. On market access, there should be a continuation of the reduction in protection as agreed in the Uruguay Round. On export competition, UNICE would like the EU to work towards the elimination of all forms of export support, without compromising the competitive position of the EU food industry. On internal support, UNICE considers that internal support objectives should primarily be secured through measures that do not distort trade. With these recommendations, UNICE urges negotiators in the WTO to aim for a fairer and clearer set of rules for all WTO members. Considering the pivotal role agricultural negotiations play for the success of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), UNICE deeply regrets that the deadline for the modalities for agriculture negotiations has been missed.

At this time of great uncertainty and with the fragile state of the economy, it is more important than ever for governments to cooperate to overcome their differences in the general interest of the world economy. UNICE strongly urges all WTO members to adopt a more constructive approach to the DDA and to inject new momentum into the negotiations. The more progress is made in all areas of the negotiations simultaneously, the greater the chances of success at the Cancun Ministerial conference to take place in September.

Philippe de Buck, Secretary General of UNICE, said: *“For the success of the WTO negotiations within the Doha Development Agenda, further liberalisation of trade in agricultural goods by all countries is key. Agriculture negotiations must not block progress in DDA negotiations on other issues such as market access for non-agricultural goods, trade facilitation, services liberalisation and a substantial trade and investment agreement, which are very important issues for European business and for the overall competitiveness of the European economy.”*

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 35 central industrial and employers federations from 28 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

---

For further information, please contact:

Maria Fernanda Fau:  
Website :

+32(0)2 237.65.62  
[www.unice.org](http://www.unice.org)