

17 July 2003

**UNICE/CONFINDUSTRIA-ITALIAN PRESIDENCY MEETING
ON THE WTO DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA****CANCUN MUST SUCCEED**

On 17 July, a high-level joint UNICE-Confindustria delegation met Mr Adolfo Urso, Vice-Minister for Productive Activities, who will represent the Presidency of the Council of Ministers at the 5th WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun, Mexico (10-14 September 2003).

At the meeting, UNICE underlined the great importance of a successful Cancun Ministerial Conference for the European economy. Mr Jacques Desponts, Chairman of the UNICE WTO Working Group stated: "The world economy is in bad shape. A failure in Cancun would exacerbate the situation even further with all its negative consequences for jobs and investments. To expand their activities, companies need predictability and the perspective of new markets".

UNICE has **four main priorities** in the Doha Development Agenda, launched in Doha in November 2001:

- 1) **Increased market access for industrial goods** through significant reductions of tariffs and elimination of the many regulatory barriers which hinder flows of goods;
- 2) **Further liberalisation of services markets**. With 23.8% of the world market, the EU is the largest trader of commercial services;
- 3) **Harmonisation and reduction of the cost of trade procedures** which can represent 4-5% of overall transaction costs, through the launch of negotiations on trade facilitation in Cancun;
- 4) **A multilateral framework of rules for international investment** which would ensure investment protection and initiate a process for improving access in third-country markets. Here, too, negotiations should be launched in Cancun.

To achieve progress in these areas, in Cancun, WTO Members should overcome their differences and divisions and inject new momentum for the final phase of the negotiations, so that they can be concluded with success by the agreed deadline of December 2004. In particular, they should clear the way for all the items on the negotiating agenda by agreeing the specific modalities of negotiations, and notably for agriculture negotiations which are preventing progress in other areas of the negotiations that are promising for future economic growth. Transatlantic cooperation and leadership is also key to move the process forward.

UNICE called on Minister Urso to ensure close cooperation between the Member States, the Commission and the Parliament in Cancun. This is absolutely essential to promote European interests effectively in the negotiations. UNICE and Confindustria will continue their action, with determination, before, in and after Cancun to achieve balanced results which would fully benefit European companies.

Note to the editor

UNICE is the voice of business in Europe. It has 35 national member federations throughout Europe including Confindustria in Italy. Together, they represent 16 million companies that employ over 100 million people.

For more information on UNICE and the WTO, please visit the UNICE website dedicated to the WTO (<http://wto.unice.org>) or contact the UNICE External Relations Department (rex@unice.be)