

Brussels, 11 September 2003

**NO NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE FOR BUSINESS**

Eleven leading business organisations, including UNICE, presented a Joint Business Charter in Cancun today. The organisations represent companies in Africa, Australia, Brazil, Chile, the European Union, Japan, Mexico, Egypt and Morocco. In the document, business states its full commitment to the multilateral trading system and its expectation that a successful Cancun Conference will send a confidence-boosting signal to investors, traders and consumers, bolster the rules-based multilateral trading system and foster international cooperation. The Conference must clear the way for the final phase of the DDA (Doha Development Agenda) negotiations. The Charter is still open to all national or regional representative organisations.

The WTO multilateral trading system offers the best platform for countries around the world seeking ways to expand and improve global trade. For business, the Doha Development Agenda agreed by WTO Members remains the winning formula for global economic growth, job creation and consumer choice in developed and developing countries.

Jacques Desponts, leader of the UNICE delegation in Cancun, stated: *"The Charter brings together business organisations from both sides of the so-called North-South divide, proving that the gap is not as wide as it seems. The Charter also proves that the WTO works because business wants to co-operate at the international level to achieve common goals"*.

The Charter calls for an agreement in Cancun on:

- The conditions to move agriculture negotiations forward
- Modalities for non-agriculture market access negotiations combining tariff and non-tariff measures
- The basis for starting negotiations, without prejudice to the eventual outcome, on the Singapore issues (trade facilitation, trade and investment, transparency in government procurement and trade and competition)
- Clear guidelines and significant progress on special and differential treatment for developing countries and least developed countries

Renewed commitment for further services liberalisation across the four modes of delivery.

Time is short but the promise of the DDA can still be achieved.

The full text of the Joint Business Charter for Cancun is attached. It includes the list of all the organisations supporting the Charter.

Note to the editor:

UNICE speaks on behalf of 16 million small, medium and large companies active in Europe. 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.