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**WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE: MORE EFFORT NEEDED
ON MARKET ACCESS AND INVESTMENT**

The WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun continues talks about major trade issues for European companies. The UNICE delegation is present and active in Cancun. On 13 September, the WTO produced a revised draft Ministerial Declaration. At this stage in the negotiations, UNICE expects improvements on market access, investment, services and agriculture

On industrial market access, European business wants a single, simple non-linear formula that will reduce tariffs appropriately in all countries. Major economic gains can be made for all countries if tariffs are brought down significantly. Industry is also concerned about certain exceptions in the draft that will allow countries with high tariffs to escape from tariff reduction commitments. There is no reason why the WTO should reward countries with high tariffs while the rest of the WTO membership – including many developing countries – is asked to make substantial tariff reductions.

Cancun cannot end without launching negotiations for the four Singapore Issues. Investment and trade facilitation are priorities for European companies. UNICE disagrees with the proposed postponement of negotiations on investment and expects the EU negotiators to push for the launch of negotiations in Cancun. All countries need investment for future growth. A rules-based trade and investment system is essential.

European companies need more effort on services to make it possible for business to gain access to new markets. The offers currently on the table are not enough so we need a firm deadline for improved offers from all WTO members (including the EU). Services are a fast growing sector for employment and for world trade.

With regards to agriculture, the WTO proposal has not improved. European business' main concern is about export competition. All WTO Members need to make balanced commitments.

Time is short, but further progress for substantial trade and investment liberalisation are still possible in Cancun.

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.

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