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NEW WTO DIRECTOR GENERAL WILL HAVE TO ACT WITH URGENCY

Thanks to his strong commitment and dedication to the multilateral process, Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi leaves the WTO with a solid basis for Pascal Lamy, the incoming Director General, to move the DDA negotiations forward.

With only three months to go before the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference and many issues still pending, there is no time to lose. WTO Members must adopt a constructive and forward-looking approach to the key negotiating issues (Agriculture, NAMA, Services, Trade Facilitation and Anti-dumping) to ensure that Hong Kong can pave the way for the final leg of the DDA negotiations.

UNICE looks for ambitious progress in the DDA to reduce industrial tariffs and non-tariff barriers, to open new markets for trade in services and to improve customs and border procedures to facilitate trade flows. To achieve those aims, UNICE will work with its business counterparts throughout the world to facilitate a successful and ambitious Hong Kong Ministerial Conference.

"I look forward to working with the new WTO Director General, Pascal Lamy, in support of a successful Hong Kong Ministerial and to push the Doha Development Agenda to the final phase of negotiations in 2006." said UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière.

NOTE TO THE EDITOR

UNICE is the voice of more than 20 million small, medium and large companies. Active in European affairs since 1958, UNICE's members are 39 central industrial and employers federations from 33 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

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