

STATEMENT OF UNICE

4th WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**Collective Political Leadership Must Ensure Success**

Doha, 9 November 2001 - UNICE, the Voice of Business in Europe, calls on all political leaders gathered in Doha (Qatar) from 9 – 13 November 2001 for the World Trade Organization's fourth Ministerial Conference to take the final step in launching a new comprehensive round of multilateral trade negotiations. Following months of consultations and preparatory negotiations, the time has come for collective political leadership to complete the home straight.

A UNICE delegation of close to 50 business and industry leaders, headed by Mr Jacques Desponts, Chairman of the UNICE WTO working group, including Mr Digby Jones, Director General of the Confederation of British Industry and Mrs Monique Julien, Director External Relations of UNICE, has come to Doha to establish a strong presence here and to press firmly for the launch of a new broad-based WTO round.

European business is convinced that a new comprehensive round is the only way to ensure that international trade be carried out in a fair and just manner, as free from restrictions as possible, and to the benefit of all. Only this option can spur the much-needed growth and employment opportunities in both developed and developing countries. UNICE's priorities in a comprehensive new round are:

- Development of a reference framework for foreign direct investments,
- Further opening up of service markets,
- Simplification and harmonisation of commercial and customs procedures,
- Reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers.

UNICE calls upon all WTO members to ensure that the final stretch prior to the launch of a new round of trade negotiations is a success. It is imperative that this opportunity be taken to launch a new round; another failure would let down the peoples of the developing nations. European governments should take the lead.

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 33 central industrial and employers federations from 26 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

For more information, please visit UNICE's WTO website on: <http://wto.unice.org>

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