

PRESS RELEASE

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MOORE PRAISES DRAFT TEXTS, URGES WTO GOVERNMENTS TO MOVE FORWARD

Director-General Mike Moore today described two draft negotiating documents produced by General Council Chairman Stuart Harbinson (Hong Kong, China) and himself as a basis for reaching consensus on an important future work programme for the 142 WTO Member Governments. He said these two documents have improved the chances for agreement among Ministers when they meet at the WTO's 4th Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar from 9-13 November.

The two documents, a 7-page draft Ministerial Declaration and an 11-page list of implementation proposals for adoption by governments, form the framework for negotiations among member governments through the Ministerial Conference. The draft Ministerial Declaration proposes expanded negotiations and additional work in some areas of WTO activity while the implementation text recommends measures to better meet the concerns of developing countries.

"These documents are the product of hundreds of hours of work by Chairman Harbinson and our team. I salute their efforts. These texts represent a good faith effort to bridge gaps that have existed for years and they are a sound basis for moving forward. I urge governments to engage constructively in their negotiations in the coming weeks so that we may find solutions to the problems facing the WTO, the multilateral trading system and the global economy. The development dimensions of trade are correctly at the center of our considerations as they should be, but there is more work to be done," Mr. Moore said.

Mr. Moore said the consultation process which led to the formulation of these texts had been inclusive and transparent. He said the atmosphere in Geneva was positive and that delegations were prepared to work hard to find consensus.

"I am under no illusions as to the difficulty we will face in finding agreement. But I have seen in recent days a spirit of co-operation and a realization of the importance of the task ahead. I am confident that with hard work and political will, we can reach consensus. We need to ensure that when Ministers assemble in Doha we have just a few areas of substantial difference between them. We need to reach agreement through our Geneva process on as many issues as possible, otherwise the situation in Doha could become more difficult. However, following my conversations with Ministers and ambassadors I am encouraged that our meeting will be a success."

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