

PRESS RELEASE

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DIRECTOR-GENERAL MIKE MOORE CONVENES FIRST INFORMAL DIALOGUE WITH HEADS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Revision

WTO Director-General Mike Moore will host an informal dialogue on the implementation of the Doha Development Agenda with the Heads and Representatives of six regional development banks, the World Bank, and the New Partnership for African Development, on Friday, 3 May 2002, at the WTO.

The participating Banks are the African Development Bank, the Arab Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Islamic Development Bank. The World Bank will participate as will the New Partnership for African Development.

"The explicit and coordinated involvement of Regional Development Banks in the implementation of the Doha Development Agenda is indispensable for success. I am also hoping that this first meeting will not be a one-off meeting, but that the Heads of vital Regional Development Banks will agree to meet on a periodic basis in light of mutually beneficial interests at stake," said Mr. Moore.

The meeting, which marks the first time the WTO has hosted heads of regional development banks at its headquarters, is part of a wider strategy of enhanced technical assistance and capacity building launched by Mr. Moore after the Doha Ministerial Conference in November. As part of the plan, WTO Member Governments have approved a 6.75% budget increase with much of the additional funding going to capacity building programmes. The Director-General also oversaw a pledging conference which attracted donations of CHF 30 million, a figure twice the original target. The establishment of the new Training Institute will enable the WTO to double (to about 400) the number of developing country officials it trains each year. Mr. Moore is also working to develop a programme of WTO Trade Policy courses in Africa, in which the WTO secretariat will work with university partners on the continent to assist in setting up the curriculum, in the selection of the trainees and in ensuring quality control.

The discussion with regional bank leaders on 3 May will include a private session and an informal dialogue between the Agency Heads, Representatives and WTO Members Governments. At the end of the morning, the WTO will sign Memoranda of Understanding with the Arab Monetary Fund.

*In English only.

The dialogue will explore ways and means of enhancing the cooperation between the WTO and the regional development banks and better coordinating the trade-related programmes, projects and other activities, for developing and least-developed countries. Attention will focus on how to provide beneficiary countries with concrete assistance to enhance their participation in the open, rules-based multilateral trading system. Issues to be discussed include, *trade mainstreaming*, grant and loan funding of trade-related technical assistance projects, trade financing, supporting coordinated policy dialogue amongst trade and finance ministers, as well as support for negotiating teams and intensive technical assistance, training and capacity building for the Doha negotiations.

BACKGROUND:

The invitation from Mr. Moore to the Heads of the regional development banks followed informal discussions held on the margins of a meeting of Trade and Finance Ministers organized by President Enrique Iglesias at the Inter-American Development (IDB), in Washington, in February, this year, and another meeting on the margins of the recent Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development. WTO Members in the agreed Organization Plan for Technical Assistance for 2002, had also requested the Secretariat to engage Regional Development Banks in a strategic partnership in order to seek a more effective implementation of the Doha trade and development agenda. Such a partnership would draw on the regional knowledge and assets of the Banks. Furthermore, the Heads of the Integrated Framework core Agencies¹, in a Joint Communiqué adopted, at the World Bank, in Washington, on 26 February, also agreed that Regional Development Banks, should be associated in the implementation of the Integrated Framework, focused on 49 Least Developed Countries.

ENDS

¹ IMF, ITC, UNCTAD, UNDP, World Bank, WTO.