

PRESS RELEASE

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

France donates 1.5 million Swiss Francs to WTO technical assistance

On 17 April 2003, the French Government made a contribution of one million euros (1.5 million Swiss francs) to the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund. France had undertaken to donate this amount at the Pledging Conference held on 11 March 2002.

"France has made a very generous contribution to the Doha Development Trust Fund," stated WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi, "and I am extremely grateful. It is imperative to continue feeding the Doha Trust Fund because it is thanks to this technical assistance - which covers all issues on the Doha agenda - that developing countries can play an active role in the negotiations and will be able to make their voices heard at the forthcoming Ministerial Conference in Cancún in September 2003."

"With this donation," said Philippe Gros, the Permanent Delegate of France to the WTO, "France is honouring a previous commitment to the WTO with a view to helping developing countries to take their rightful place in the multilateral trading system - and, in particular, in the negotiations currently under way - by supporting the Doha Development Trust Fund."

The Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund was set up following the WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha in November 2001 which launched a new round of negotiations. In December 2002, the General Council approved a target amount of 24 million Swiss francs for the Doha Trust Fund for 2003.

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