

PRESS RELEASE

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

WTO and the ACP group of countries sign agreement on technical assistance

WTO Director-General Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi and the Secretary General of the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) Group of Countries, Mr Jean-Robert Goulongana, signed Wednesday 10 September in Cancún, Mexico, a Memorandum of Understanding for closer cooperation between the two organizations on providing training and technical assistance for ACP countries.

The ACP Group comprises 79 members, forty of which are Least-Developed Countries, most of them from Africa, and its objectives are to contribute to the economic development and to the social progress of its member states.

The Memorandum of Understanding commits both organizations to cooperate more closely to provide training, technical assistance and support to negotiators of the ACP member states in their efforts to become more active members of the WTO by developing their capacity to negotiate more effectively and to monitor and implement WTO Agreements, especially in view of the heavy workload arising from the Doha Development Agenda.

Providing technical assistance and capacity building is part of the core mandate of the Doha Declaration, adopted at the 4th WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, in November 2001. According to the mandate, this technical assistance is designed to assist developing and least-developed countries and low-income countries in transition to adjust to WTO rules and disciplines, implement obligations and exercise their rights of membership, including drawing on the benefits of an open, rules-based multilateral trading system.

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