

PRESS RELEASE

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Netherlands donates 1.4 million euro to WTO technical assistance

The Netherlands Government pledged, on 19 November 2003, a contribution of 1.4 million euro (1.8 million Swiss francs) to the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund.

WTO Director General Supachai Panitchpakdi and the Netherlands Ambassador Ian de Jong signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the contribution by the Netherlands on 19 November 2003.

The donation by the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation will be used for negotiating capacity building and trade capacity building.

"I am extremely grateful to the Netherlands for contributing again to the Doha Development Fund," said WTO Director General Supachai Panitchpakdi. "We can only reach a successful outcome to the Doha round of negotiations with the full participation of all WTO Members. Increasingly, developing countries are expressing the desire to contribute more actively to the WTO debate. We can help them, through technical assistance, equip themselves with the right tools to do so."

Minister for Development Cooperation Agnes van Ardenne afterwards issued the following statement in the Hague: "Technical assistance is urgently needed to provide developing countries with sufficient knowledge on the multilateral negotiation process and related issues. The failed Cancun negotiations have taught us this. We have to enable developing countries to bargain efficiently in the world trade process and to comply with the WTO agreements."

The contribution will be made to the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund. This Fund was set up following the WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha in November 2001 which launched a new round of negotiations. Developing countries indicated more technical capacity was needed in order to negotiate on an equal level with other countries. They also asked for more assistance in order to comply with WTO obligations.

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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