

BDRT: Joint Statement on the WTO

1. The BDRT has repeatedly and consistently expressed its strong support for the strengthening of the multilateral free trade system and the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), and has requested the European Commission and the Government of Japan to promote the conclusion of the agenda.

In view of the recent DDA negotiations, however, we are concerned about the slow progress, which could undermine the talks. Time is running out. The BDRT therefore reiterates its strong request to the European Union and the Government of Japan for their maximum efforts in the negotiation to reach an agreement by the end of 2006.

2. There is an increasing trend towards regional free trade agreements (FTAs). If the DDA negotiations fail to achieve a substantial success, it may become difficult to ensure consistency between various FTAs and the multilateral free trade system. A successful and ambitious DDA result would reduce the risks of creating many confusing bilateral agreements.
3. The BDRT has a strong interest in the ambitious reduction and where possible elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers against industrial products trade. In regard to the non-agricultural market access (NAMA), the BDRT supports the Swiss formula to eliminate tariff peaks and to harmonise tariff structures downwards among OECD and emerging countries. The BDRT welcomes the possibility for sectoral initiatives among willing industries that can further promote free trade while reducing or eliminating tariffs. While believing that special and differential treatment for developing countries is an integral part of the modalities, we are concerned that excessive flexibilities for the emerging countries might undermine the goal of achieving real market opening and south-south trade.
4. Services trade is one of the main pillars of the DDA. At the Hong Kong Ministerial Summit held in December 2005, WTO members agreed to pursue multilateral sector negotiations with a view to vastly improving GATS offers. More progress is needed in this field to achieve the BDRT's objective of real market opening for services trade among OECD and emerging countries. The services trade negotiations should aim at the level of ambition equivalent to those of other

negotiating areas. All WTO members hold an important stake in the negotiation of the Doha Round, and should provide substantial offers for the liberalisation of services trade. In view of the significance of the sector in industrialised economies, increasing access to the service market will provide new prospects to emerging economies, developing countries and developed countries alike.

5. Agriculture is a key to the successful conclusion of the DDA. Although significant progress has been made in the elimination of export subsidies, considerable differences in views between countries remain in the fields of market access and domestic support policies. The BDRT strongly requests further progress in the agriculture negotiations by all the major players.
6. The BDRT supports the progress made in the development of ambitious and specified rules on trade facilitation. Other rules issues such as anti-dumping are an integral and important part of the DDA negotiation and need to be effectively addressed. While the BDRT recognises that Singapore Issues (investment, competition, and transparency in government procurement) are not in the DDA talks, it underlines the importance that the WTO addresses these issues in the future.
7. The BDRT has stressed that, in order to reduce concerns of developing countries, developed countries must continue to make efforts to address capacity building in developing countries, to deliver results in various aspects including market access, and to facilitate the active participation of least developed countries in the DDA talks. We therefore repeat that it is of utmost importance that all member countries continue to seriously address the issue.
8. The BDRT has a high expectation for Mr. Pascal Lamy, WTO Director-General, as an individual of outstanding qualifications with a strong trade background, and hopes that he will exercise his excellent leadership for the successful negotiation of the DDA. However, it recognises that WTO members hold ultimate responsibility for achieving an ambitious and balanced compromise on all negotiating issues.
9. The current Round negotiation is extremely important as it would establish a new set of trade rules that conforms to the new era of the 21st century. The next six months are the last and the most critical period for a successful conclusion of the DDA. The BDRT encourages the EU and Japan to maintain strong contacts with each other and take a true initiative for the success of the DDA.