

PRESS RELEASE

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MOORE STRESSES DEVELOPMENT ROLE AT WTO

Following is a speech delivered today (29 April) by Mike Moore, Director-General of the World Trade Organization, to the Public Symposium on Doha Development Agenda and Beyond in Geneva.

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Allow me to warmly welcome you to this public symposium. This is not an official WTO event and the opinions offered are the responsibility of the speakers. I am pleased to see so many of you here today. Nearly 700 people have registered to attend this symposium. That is certainly a sign that dialogue and debate with the public at the WTO is not only possible but desired. I am also impressed that so many of you are interested in the subject of the Doha Development Agenda. The work programme has been discussed in many inter-governmental meetings since November last year but has not yet been given the public hearing it deserves. That is your job. As representatives of civil society, academia, the business community, governments and the media it is your responsibility - as the end users of the system - to come to grips with the reality behind the difficult but very real issues which confront not only international trade, but the prospects for improving people's welfare across the globe.

During the next two and half days, I expect tough debate and discussion on everything from market access issues and whether or not we need investment and competition rules, to the trade and environment interface and what more needs to be done to help developing countries build trade capacity.

The importance of clearing the air on what is at stake in the current negotiations is obvious. The decisions which will be taken in the next few years will have long term repercussions the world over. These decisions require courage and keen, focused vision. And at the end of the day, no one will get everything they hoped for. But all countries taking part in these negotiations should get something. We will never conclude an agreement if they do not. Nor will we get the support of many of you in the room, if you do not feel that your views are being heard, understood and incorporated into national positions. There are many who call for more representation and some who openly criticize the decision making processes of the WTO because decisions are made by trade officials appointed mainly by elected governments. Critics say this is not good enough. I can agree with that, but we have not yet found a better option. Perhaps someone here will have some ideas they'd like to share on this subject of legitimacy. It needs more thinking and we have only just scratched the surface. That's why I was so keen on having two sessions included in this symposium. The first concerns the role of elected representatives - the parliamentarians - the WTO and trade negotiations in general. Parliamentarians are not only stakeholders, they are legislators. At the end of the day, they are the ones who have to ratify the agreements and adapt their national laws to any new international treaty obligations. They should be informed as to what kind of progress is being made or isn't being made on issues of interest to them. I think it is high time that we have a discussion on their role and am only too pleased that this session on the WTO and the role of Parliamentarians - a first at the WTO itself - will take place.

The second work session will deal with the "Functioning and Financing of the WTO" and will include seasoned trade negotiators and former WTO General Council Chairmen. We now have 144 governments as WTO Members. Another 28 countries want to join. How are we going to respect the "consensus principle" in about five years time when the organization will account for more than 170 Member governments? How will this work and shouldn't we soon start to discuss the need for some sort of managerial structure capable of taking care of the day-to-day business of the WTO? And how will we continue to finance the increasing and infinite demand for more technical assistance and cooperation for developing and least-developed countries in the system? I am very pleased that this session includes some very experienced trade negotiators, including Arthur Dunkel, the former Director-General of the GATT.

Allow me to speak briefly about how this year's symposium is organized. This morning we will hear from six distinguished speakers each recognized for his leadership in government, politics, science or humanitarian affairs. The speakers represent the issues which go to the heart of today's multilateral trading system. First we will hear from Jeremy Hobbs, Executive Director of Oxfam International. He will be followed by Ernesto Zedillo, the former President of Mexico. After Mr.

Zedillo, we will hear from a newcomer to the WTO, His Excellency Sun Zhenyu, the WTO Ambassador for the People's Republic of China. After Ambassador Sun's intervention, I propose to open the floor for some comments or questions. I kindly ask that you not all raise your hands at once and please do not be offended if I do not ask you to speak. In the 16 work sessions which follow this morning's interventions, there will be ample time for you to interact and address your key concerns. As a matter of fact many of this morning's speakers are taking part in the work sessions this afternoon and tomorrow so you will have plenty of time to state your concerns.

Afterwards, we will hear from the Mexican WTO Ambassador Eduardo Perez Motta who will be conveying a message from his Minister of Economy, Luis Ernesto Derbez Bautista. As many of you know already, Mexico will host the next Ministerial Conference in 2003. Many believe that the hardship we encountered and overcame in Doha last year was just a foretaste of the difficult negotiations which await us in Mexico next year. The upcoming Ministerial will provide a major challenge to the WTO's Membership but also for the Mexican authorities who are trying to assure as much participation as possible for representatives of civil society.

After Minister Derbez's intervention I will give the floor to Dr. Bjorn Lomborg, who will present his recent research on the state of the world today. Dr. Lomborg will be followed by Professor Jagdish Bhagwati a renowned economist who has done much to propound the benefits of an open multilateral trading system. The last (but certainly not least speaker) this morning will be Mr. Tony Juniper, of Friends of the Earth. Following Mr. Juniper's intervention, it is my hope that we will still have enough time to again open the floor for a few more comments and questions related to the interventions made in the second half of this morning's programme. Again, I ask you for your understanding and reiterate that time will be allotted in the individual work sessions to state your concerns. This afternoon and all day Tuesday has been devoted to the various work sessions related to the Doha Development Agenda. Many of the sessions have been organized by non-governmental organizations. These sessions will continue on Wednesday morning, followed by a one-hour closing session. The moderators of the various sessions have been asked to write up summary reports of the main points raised in their session. These will be posted on the WTO's website. The moderators from Wednesday morning's sessions will be asked to make short oral reports at the closing session on the main issues raised in their meetings.

Before handing over to today's speakers, I'd like to say something about where the WTO is today and how important it is for governments to work on many different fronts simultaneously to achieve their goals. Many institutions now have a renewed focus on development issues and providing financial assistance for developing countries. The WTO launched a Development Round of trade negotiations in Doha last year while the UN Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey last month was a huge success with new commitments to pay for government's goals of reducing by half extreme poverty by 2015. Open trade will play a role in these ambitious plans. Successful liberalisation of trade could boost the world economy by \$2.5 trillion and lift 320 million people out of extreme poverty during the same 13-year period. The gains to developing countries from fewer subsidies and less protection in agriculture alone would return about five times all the overseas developed assistance combined and eight times more than all the debt relief granted thus far.

The Doha Development Agenda and trade will also play an important role in the upcoming Johannesburg conference on Sustainable Development or what is often referred to as "Rio plus 10". At Doha, governments committed themselves to negotiations on the relationships between MEAs (Multilateral Environment Agreements) and the WTO Agreements to ensure there are no legal contradictions. The aim of the WTO negotiations is to enhance the mutual supportiveness of trade and the environment. That is why negotiations will also cover trade barriers to environmental goods and services. Governments also agreed to give priority to the effect of environmental measures on market access, and those situations in which the elimination or reduction of trade restrictions and distortions would benefit trade, the environment and development, the so-called triple win scenario. Governments will also address labelling requirements for environmental purposes, because many fear unilateral decisions on such issues as labelling could become disguised, even targeted, protectionism. What has been apparent for several years already is that, unless there is global action, there will be

local reaction, which could damage poorer countries. The best way to move forward on these thorny issues is to do so in a negotiation.

Many developing countries are deeply suspicious of developed countries because they fear protectionist motives and point out that agricultural subsidies in OECD countries cost \$1 billion a day and result in job losses for poor countries, as well as pollution in rich countries due to intensive, subsidised farming inputs. Fish subsidies by rich countries have a similar impact on the environment, another area of deep differences between governments that will be addressed in the negotiations.

All serious research shows that poverty is the greatest threat to the environment. People don't live in polluted squalor by choice, nor do they trek miles to strip trees for charcoal by choice. There is a direct connection with rising living standards and better environmental outcomes. Higher education and living standards reduce birth rates. The same is true of the environment. Rich cities are cleaner than poor cities. Every time we lift people from poverty, we lift environmental outcomes.

All this shows the wisdom of Kofi Annan's sequence of conferences to tackle poverty at Monterrey, then sustainable development. These are two sides of the same coin. Let us hope that those who seek freedom to choose win, and not those who seek central controls to get desired results. History shows that the most polluted places and poorest people are those which have suffered from governments that tried to plan outcomes by central and government control. The best environmental outcomes have come as a result of democracy, open markets, an active civil society and a free media to keep politicians and businesspeople honest, accountable and responsive.

I thank you for your attention. Allow me now please to give the floor to our first invited speaker, Mr. Jeremy Hobbs, Executive Director of Oxfam International. Mr. Hobbs, you have the floor.

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