

PRESS RELEASE

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WTO launches live broadcast to Latin America

The WTO Secretariat, in collaboration with Mexico's Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Studies, has launched a cycle of videoconferences broadcast live by satellite from Geneva to university centres in Latin America. Each videoconference features a WTO expert who will speak on trade subjects such as trade in services and dispute settlement, followed by a question-and-answer session.

WTO Director-General Mike Moore said the project highlights "our efforts to reach out to the public using every accessible modern technology, including the Internet". He noted that the organization is already keeping trade communities, especially in least-developed countries, up-to-date on WTO activities through its website (www.wto.org) and electronic mail.

The WTO videoconference cycle uses the Monterrey Institute's Virtual University Network, which has local centres in leading academic institutions in Latin America, including in Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama, Peru, El Salvador and Venezuela.

WTO Deputy Director-General Miguel Rodriguez opened the videoconference cycle on 30 August 2000. This inaugural broadcast, on "Basic Principles and General Overview of the WTO", was followed by more than 500 students, businessmen and trade officials in Mexico alone. It was also broadcast to other Latin American countries.

The next WTO videoconference will be held on 20 September 2000 with focus on trade in goods, including the WTO agreements on agriculture and on textiles. Other WTO subjects to be featured through 22 November 2000 are dispute settlement, trade in services, trade and environment and trade-related aspects of intellectual property.

The videoconferences take place on selected Wednesdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Mexico time (5:00-6:30 p.m. Geneva time). The full programme is available on the website (<http://www.ruv.itesm.mx/programas/uve>) of the Monterrey Institute (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey or ITESM).