

PRESS RELEASE

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Italy to contribute 1.55 million Swiss francs to WTO technical assistance

The Government of Italy pledged today one million euros (1.55 million Swiss Francs) for 2003 to the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund. Italy pledged this new donation to WTO technical assistance activities on the eve of the fifth WTO Ministerial Conference which will take place in Cancún from 10 to 14 September 2003.

"We are engaged in a tremendous negotiating effort to ensure a positive outcome at Cancún," said Italian Ambassador Paolo Bruni. "Italy, as a current holder of the European Union Presidency, shares a particular sense of responsibility in this collective process. With this contribution, we reaffirm our support for the Doha Development Agenda, especially as the crucial meeting in Cancún draws near. The role of the Global Trust Fund in strengthening the participation of developing and least developed countries in the international trade round is key."

"I thank Italy for its great generosity," said WTO Director-General Dr. Supachai. "Thanks to such contributions, we have been able to greatly improve WTO technical assistance activities. While the participation of developing and least developed countries in the work of the WTO has significantly increased, there is still much that can be done to help them truly benefit from the Multilateral Trading System."

The Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund was created following the WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, in November 2001, which launched a new round of negotiations. In December 2002, the General Council approved a target amount of CHF 24 million for 2003 for the Doha Trust Fund. This new donation brings the total contributions pledged by Italy to the Doha Trust Fund to more than CHF 3 million.

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