



Statement by the ICC Chairmanship on the suspension of the WTO Doha Round

The Chairmanship of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) — an organization that represents thousands of enterprises of all sizes and sectors in 130 countries — is extremely disappointed by the suspension of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations announced by WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy on 24 July.

The lack of political will on the part of WTO members to resolve differences on agricultural subsidies and market access has put the entire round and the multilateral trading system in peril.

The suspension of negotiations means that the Doha Round will not be concluded by the end of 2006, as expected, and could take years to complete. Resumption of these negotiations will require changes in entrenched positions in order to make progress possible.

Until then, a major opportunity to generate economic growth, create jobs and raise living standards across the world has been put on hold. All WTO member countries will lose from this missed opportunity, especially developing countries that stood to benefit most from these negotiations.

Furthermore, the inability of WTO members to make the compromises necessary to successfully conclude the Doha Round this year means that the positive results already achieved in various areas of the negotiations stand to be lost.

Perhaps most importantly, failure to reach an agreement creates a systemic risk — opening the door to a greater number of bilateral trade agreements, more trade disputes and a resurgence in protectionism — weakening the effectiveness and authority of the WTO. ICC firmly believes there is no substitute for a strong rules-based, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system.

ICC and its leadership remain fully committed to the WTO system and to an ambitious, balanced and comprehensive outcome of the Doha Round that creates new and meaningful business opportunities through greater multilateral trade liberalization.

The ICC Chairmanship calls on WTO members to reaffirm in a concrete way their own commitment to the WTO system by avoiding new protectionist measures, and by seeking fresh approaches to resume the Doha Round negotiations as soon as possible and on the basis of the progress already achieved.

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