

**SUMMARY**  
**Trade Committee Meeting, 23-24 April 2001**  
**131<sup>st</sup> Session**

The OECD Trade Committee affords the opportunity for a wide-ranging exchange among senior trade policy officials of OECD Member countries and several observer countries on key trade policy and trade developments. It held its 131<sup>st</sup> Session on 23-24 April 2001 in Paris.

In recognition of the importance of the links between trade and development, an informal brainstorming on Trade and Development Issues was organised between the Delegates to the OECD Trade Committee and the Development Assistance Committee under the co-chairmanship of their respective Chairs. The key objective of the informal meeting was to engage in a dialogue about how the different policy communities can share perspectives on the linkages between trade liberalisation, economic growth and poverty reduction and how they can better work together towards more concerted and effective policy responses. Mr. Mike Moore, Director-General of the WTO, presented the keynote address stressing the overwhelming and proven benefits in terms of poverty alleviation, faster economic growth and the building up of democratic institutions in countries that have effectively freed up their trading regimes. He also stressed that developing countries, which make up 80 per cent of the WTO membership, are more active than ever in the preparatory process for the launching of a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. Mr. Moore noted that no new round can be concluded without their needs being addressed. He stressed that the greatest threat to their economies is not globalisation but marginalisation. A new round will prevent further marginalisation of developing countries by addressing their concerns with current WTO agreements. Several Delegates highlighted the importance of better integrating trade and development policies and taking into account the diverging level of development among developing countries. Delegates noted the existence of various development funds, including the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance, to assist developing countries in their institutional and capacity building requirements for reaping the benefits of freer trade. A more efficient and well-targeted capacity building effort was perceived as a promising way to better respond to the legitimate needs of developing countries. Several suggestions were offered for future analytical work to be undertaken by the OECD in areas such as graduation criteria, an inventory of the use of anti-dumping measures in all countries, special and differentiated treatment, the links between growth and distribution, and the impact of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIP) on development. Delegations broadly felt that the policy dialogue between Delegates to the two committees was useful for achieving more concerted and effective policy responses.

An important focus of the 131<sup>st</sup> session of the Trade Committee was the preparation of the trade policy message to the upcoming annual OECD Council Meeting at Ministerial Level, scheduled for 16-17 May 2001. In that message, which shall be issued under the responsibility of the Chair of the Trade Committee, Delegates renew their commitment to the strengthening of the rules-based multilateral trading system and to work resolutely towards the launch of a broad-based round of multilateral trade negotiations at the upcoming WTO Ministerial Meeting in Doha, Qatar on 9-13 November 2001. Trade Delegates agree that developing countries' concerns must be effectively addressed in the new round, in order to stimulate their economic growth, alleviate poverty and promote developing countries' integration into the rules-based multilateral trading system. It is widely recognised that dialogue with civil society plays an increasing part in the bridge building effort underway.

In the context of the invitation made to Delegations to share information and discuss recent developments in policies that may significantly affect trade relations or the functioning of the multilateral trading system, the Canadian Delegation gave a summary of the key results achieved at the Summit of the Americas 2001, held in Québec City on 20-22 April. The Summit Ministers agreed to work towards the conclusion of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) no later than January 2005. Among the innovative dimensions of the Summit process, the strict respect for democratic values is recognised as an essential condition for the future of the Summit. Delegates were also informed that the current draft text of the FTAA Agreement would soon be released to the public in its four official languages.

Trade Delegates approved the declassification of the biannual report on the activities of the Joint Working Party on Trade and Environment. They also heard a presentation from representatives of the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate on the current state of preparation of a document on "Policy Coherence for Poverty Reduction" as called for by the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting of

2000.

Delegates also discussed adjustments envisaged to the programme of work and budget for 2002.

Finally, Delegates were informed of the current state of development in ongoing projects, in particular, the planning of a major outreach event: an OECD Global Forum for Trade: "Trade and Development Issues in Non-OECD Countries" which will be held in Santiago, Chile on 14-15 June 2001.

The Trade Committee will hold its next meeting on 24-25 October 2001.