Council

DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR THE SPECIAL DIALOGUE WITH NON-MEMBERS
(7-8 JUNE 2000)

Issues for Discussion: Draft
The Multilateral System: Issues for Development, Trade and Governance

1. In the run-up to, and aftermath of Seattle, the current process and impact of trade and investment liberalisation, and their role in fully meeting development needs and goals, have been increasingly questioned. Differences of view exist among both developed and developing countries. How would participants describe these differences, and point to ways to bridge them? In which areas is crucial mutual understanding lacking, and how can these gaps be filled? How best can OECD contribute?

2. The importance of framing the right WTO negotiating agenda for the successful launch of a new Round is undoubted. What do participants, inside and outside the WTO, see as the essential elements of that agenda? How far can that agenda reach into areas beyond traditional market access issues -- e.g., trade and labour standards, trade and the environment, trade and competition? How do participants see the relation between these issues and development policy?

3. The importance of “governance” as key for economic prosperity, has gained widespread acceptance. Trade and investment liberalisation should go hand-in-hand with “good governance”. Governance has both domestic and international dimensions that increasingly interact in the process of globalisation. How do participants see the relation between domestic governance (in both the public and private sector) and the ability to promote and sustain successful trade and investment liberalisation? What are the key domestic governance challenges in this context? What are the key international governance challenges, and what should be the role of international or multilateral institutions, including OECD, in helping the international community respond to them? What are the governance issues most relevant to development co-operation? What are the lessons to be learned from the 1997-98 financial crises?

Civil society -- to be taken over lunch

4. There are increasing pressures on the multilateral system from beyond the circles of government, witness most vividly OECD’s MAI negotiations, the WTO Seattle Ministerial, UNCTAD X in Bangkok, and the recent IMF/World Bank spring meetings in Washington. The range of “civil society” interests worldwide is hugely diverse. For example, NGOs in developing and developed countries differ widely in their objectives. How do participants view this new “player” or “players” on the international stage? How should governments respond, domestically and internationally? How should international organisations, including the OECD, respond? What new tools and mechanisms are needed to achieve fuller involvement of civil society in policy development and implementation?