

United States-European Union Summit Statement on the World Trade Organization

December 17, 1999

The United States and the European Union consider the multilateral trading system one of the world's principal bulwarks of peace, sustainable development, and economic growth; and a primary engine for rising living standards and broad-based prosperity in the future. As we approach the new century, we must ensure that the trading system retains its dynamism and ability to respond to changing needs of an increasingly diverse membership.

Accordingly, both sides note their disappointment at the failure to reach agreement on a new Round of trade negotiations at Seattle, but they agree it is now important to find a way forward. In this context, the EU and the US both pledge continued readiness to work with Director General Mike Moore and our partners to launch an inclusive new Round as soon as possible. A new Round has to be definitively different from its predecessors. It should encompass the built in agenda of agriculture and services, further and effective market access liberalization, support our efforts to harness globalization by strengthening and extending WTO rules, and address the concerns of both developing countries and civil society.

With the Director General and all other members of the WTO, we need to take full account of the lessons of Seattle. In particular, work should be directed towards a set of measures that will: provide better opportunities for wider participation by all members (including developing countries) in the decisionmaking processes of the WTO; offer greater transparency (both within the organization and vis a vis the outside world); and improve public access, including through broader access to WTO documents and enhanced consultation procedures with civil society. This work should also consider measures to improve the efficiency of the WTO, and to boost overall public support for the organization. We should also seek agreement by all members on the separate review of WTO dispute settlement procedures, including measures to enhance transparency.

The US and EU are committed to maximizing the benefits developing countries gain from

being in the WTO. We agreed to take forward a preferential market access initiative for least developed WTO members, initially with our Quad partners. We will work with other WTO Members to establish as soon as possible a new, revitalized program for capacity building and technical assistance undertaken by the WTO, beginning with the Integrated Framework established in 1996, and in cooperation with other international institutions. We also agreed to consider what we would do to address the concerns of a number of developing countries with implementation of existing multilateral trade agreements.

On issues of interest to our civil societies, we agreed that changes to global economy have brought new challenges to the trading system. Nowhere is that evident than the debate that is now joined regarding the relationship between trade and labor. The US and EU are committed to working with our partners to engage the WTO and ILO in a constructive dialogue, including consideration of the relationship between core labor standards, further liberalization, trade policy and social development, in order to foster understanding and consensus. And on trade and environment, we will work together to ensure that trade rules support and do not undermine the ability of governments to establish and achieve high levels of environmental protection.

The cooperative relationship between the US and the EU has been crucial to the development of the multilateral trading system over the past 50 years. We recognize our shared responsibilities to continue this work, but also the need to involve all our WTO partners more directly. This will pave the way for continued prosperity, sustainable development, and long-term growth for the 21st century.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.