

MEETING OF APEC MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRADE
(STAND-ALONE) STATEMENT ON DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

AREQUIPA, PERU, 31st MAY – 1st JUNE 2008

We, the APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade, gathering for our XIV Meeting in Arequipa, Peru, once again express our strong support for and commitment to the Multilateral Trading System and reiterate our determination to bring the Doha Development Agenda to a successful conclusion this year.

Now that the completion of negotiations is within reach, it is more urgent than ever for WTO Members to show strong leadership and willingness to compromise. All key issues must be addressed in a decisive and balanced way that takes into account the interests of all parties and recognizes the central importance of the development dimension of the Doha Round.

We remain deeply committed to strengthening a predictable and transparent rules-based global trading system which promotes trade liberalization and increased economic opportunities for WTO Members. We emphasized that a successful conclusion of the Doha Round must effectively address all modalities issues, including the delivery of real and effective improvements in market access. This will help foster economic development and raise living standards for all.

Since our last meeting there has been substantial progress on key issues in the Doha negotiations. The recent release of revised negotiating texts on agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA), and other Chairs' reports on services and rules, are significant new developments that move the Round into a new phase that should lead us into final negotiations. We express our political will and strong determination to conclude the Round with a balanced and ambitious outcome before the end of the year.

While finding an ambitious and balanced result in agriculture and NAMA remains central to advancing negotiations, a successful outcome must deliver meaningful progress in all areas. The upcoming services Signalling Conference offers the opportunity to move forward in this area. We reiterate our commitment to the single undertaking and a Round that creates new commercial opportunities for all, especially for developing economies. This is the key to liberalizing and expanding trade flows that promote growth and development. We will continue to engage actively and constructively in the negotiations in Geneva. We APEC Ministers are ready to engage to deliver expeditiously a modalities agreement. We urge other WTO Members to do the same.

We are convinced that a prompt, ambitious and balanced conclusion to the Round will be one of the important factors in overcoming the serious international situation caused by recent food price escalation.