



NEWS RELEASE

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World Business Leaders Urge Trade Ministers to Seize the Opportunity to Resurrect the Doha Round

Hong Kong – Trade Ministers from around the world need to focus their efforts in Hong Kong on resurrecting the Doha Round by providing the basis for a substantial trade liberalization agreement to be achieved before the end of 2006. Six of the world's leading CEO-based business organizations today renewed their call on the member nations of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to commit to negotiating trade outcomes consistent with the principles set down in the Doha Development Agenda (DDA).

The business leaders who comprise World Business Leaders for Growth (WBLG) are united in their conviction that the Doha Round offers a vital opportunity to achieve significant and lasting economic gains for the 149 trading nations of the WTO.

A successful conclusion to the DDA would help boost economic growth over the long term. It also would send a positive signal to markets in the near term. Developing and developed countries alike have a clear stake in boosting sustainable economic growth by supporting freer trade in all the key areas under negotiation: agriculture, non-agriculture market access, services and trade facilitation. Agreements in these areas would deliver lasting economic and social benefits.

WBLG members are deeply concerned, however, about the lack of progress in the lead up to the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong. It is essential that governments and WTO officials work together to ensure that the negotiations achieve substantial outcomes across all of the key areas.

Business leaders believe that the high hopes for a substantial round of trade liberalization under the DDA can still be realized. Achieving meaningful progress in Hong Kong, however, will require strong leadership and resolve by both developed and developing countries.

In recognition of the important objective of saving the Doha Round, WBLG will be represented in Hong Kong by a delegation of company chairmen and CEOs. Previous

WBLG initiatives have included the release of a policy paper titled “Advancing the Promise of Doha,” the convening of a CEO Summit in Washington in September, and meetings with WTO officials and the ambassadors in Geneva.

Members of World Business Leaders for Growth

Business Council of Australia (www.bca.com.au) – The Business Council of Australia is an association of chief executives of leading Australian corporations with a combined national workforce of one million people. It was established in 1983 to provide a forum for Australian business leadership to contribute directly to public policy debates in order to build a better and more prosperous Australian society. The Business Council of Australia's aspiration is that Australia should be the best place in the world to live, learn, work and do business.

Business Roundtable (www.businessroundtable.org) – Business Roundtable is an association of chief executive officers of leading corporations with a combined workforce of more than 10 million employees and \$4 trillion in annual revenues. The chief executives are committed to advocating public policies that foster vigorous economic growth, a dynamic global economy, and a well-trained and productive U.S. workforce essential for future competitiveness.

Canadian Council of Chief Executives (www.ceocouncil.ca) – Founded in 1976, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives is Canada’s premier business association, with an outstanding record of achievement in matching entrepreneurial initiative with sound public policy choices. A not-for-profit, non-partisan organization composed of the chief executives of 150 leading Canadian enterprises, the CCCE was the Canadian private sector leader in the development and promotion of the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement during the 1980s and of the subsequent trilateral North American Free Trade Agreement.

Consejo Mexicano de Hombres de Negocios – Consejo Mexicano de Hombres de Negocios is a non-profit organization established in 1963, grouping the CEOs of the largest Mexican private companies, most of whom also have controlling interest in them. Its mandate is to provide initiatives and efforts for Mexico’s growth and development, and to promote the image of Mexico abroad. The Council has 40 members, who in the last five years invested more than 40 billion US dollars, exported nearly 55 billion and provided direct employment to 850,000 persons.

European Round Table of Industrialists (www.ert.be) – The European Round Table of Industrialists is a forum of around 45 leaders of large internationally operating companies of European parentage. Its core mission is to promote the competitiveness of European industry. It expresses views on those areas most connected to its own interest and expertise, chiefly major developments which may affect the conditions essential to providing the proper environment conducive to successful business operation. Member companies cover a wide range of industry sectors. Their combined turnover is €1,500 billion and they employ around 4.5 million people worldwide.

Nippon Keidanren (www.keidanren.or.jp) – Nippon Keidanren is the key representative organization for Japanese business and industry, with 1,600 members. It represents the interests of 1,300 leading companies including 100 foreign-owned companies, 130 industrial sector associations, and 50 regional economic organizations. Keidanren is committed to contributing to the further development of the national and global economy. Keidanren proactively works towards a better business environment both at home and abroad.