

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/GC/W/265
20 July 1999

(99-3039)

General Council

Original: English

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1999 MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Negotiations on Trade and Environment

Communication from Switzerland

The following communication, dated 20 July 1999, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Switzerland.

1. Switzerland suggests the following elements for a draft Seattle Declaration:

Proposal

2. Negotiations shall aim to strengthen the coherence between trade and environmental policies (i) by clarifying the relationship between the multilateral trading system and multilateral environmental agreements through the establishment of appropriate principles, rules or procedures and (ii) by elaborating instruments to take better account of basic principles of environmental protection and of current issues stemming from the interdependencies between trade and environment.

Background

3. Switzerland supports a new round of negotiations leading to a further substantial step forward on the track of progressive liberalization in international trade. However, the work carried out by the CTE has shown that there is an inherent interrelationship between trade and environment. In order to ensure that further trade liberalization also reflects legitimate environmental concerns, the Seattle Declaration needs to refer not only to the overall objective of sustainable development as recognized by the WTO, it should also include, as a subject for negotiations, issues resulting from the interdependency between trade and environment. Addressing these issues during the upcoming negotiations would complement the useful analytical work of the CTE.
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