Resolution on preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation WTO in Hong Kong

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Commissioner Fisher-Boel provided an update on the latest state of play of the WTO-DDA negotiations. She indicated that the level of ambition with a view to the ministerial meeting in Hong-Kong (13-18 December 2005) had been lowered since last October, but that the level of final ambition for the Doha Round remained intact. The main goal for Hong-Kong was now to reach an agreement on a framework rather than on the whole package and to make sizeable progress on the Development package. She reminded the delegations that, unlike other WTO members, the EU had tabled a revised conditional offer on agriculture on 28 October, as part of a meaningful contribution to the process of negotiations. She indicated that Commissioner Mandelson had met the G4 (EU, US, Brazil, India) and Japan in Geneva on 22 November with a view to taking stock of the positions of the different ministerial delegations before Hong-Kong.

The French delegation thanked the Commissioner and welcomed the absence of new concessions before, during or after Hong-Kong, having noted that the most concerned WTO parties had not reacted to the last EU offer on agriculture, and that the offer constituted the limit as to what the EU could propose without putting at stake the outcome of the CAP reform in June 2003. The French delegation also regretted that the expert working party had not been able to conclude on the socio-economic effects of the EU revised offer on agriculture nor whether it jeopardised the reformed CAP. The French delegation recalled its position that the package presented in Hong-Kong should be global and balanced and, with the support of the Irish delegation, that it should not contain any bands of figures. The French delegation also welcomed the initiative on cotton taken by the Commission as well as the duty free access for Least developed countries and protection against erosion of existing preferences. The delegation of the Netherlands expressed its appreciation of the position taken by the Commissioner and underlined the importance of the Development package.