

**PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1999 MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

Competition

*Communication from Norway*

The following communication, dated 6 September 1999, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Norway.

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**Background**

1. During recent decades we have witnessed a substantial liberalization of trade in goods and services. However, as the globalization process proceeds, we recognize that anti-competitive business conduct, combined with the absence of effective national competition policies, may prevent access to markets and thus reduce or nullify benefits achieved through trade liberalization.

2. A multilateral framework on competition within the WTO would be likely to enhance consistency between different national, bilateral and regional competition regimes, increase transparency for the benefit of enterprises and reduce their transaction costs. Such a framework would promote competition in the market, stimulate international trade and foreign investment, benefit the consumer and facilitate cooperation between competition authorities. In the negotiations on a multilateral framework due consideration should be taken of environmental concerns.

3. Effective competition policies that contribute to, *inter alia*, efficient allocation of resources and the securing of market access, are to the benefit of all Members, including developing countries. In developing a multilateral framework on competition, due account must be taken of the particular needs of Members at different stages of development, *inter alia*, through transitional arrangements and technical assistance.

**Proposal**

4. Negotiations should aim at developing a multilateral horizontal framework on competition within the WTO, covering private and public conduct, and containing, *inter alia*, the following elements:

- objectives;
- core principles;
- exceptions;
- international cooperation;

- the development dimension; and,
- dispute settlement procedures, as appropriate.

5. Furthermore, the negotiations should include an examination of the need to develop rules on anti-competitive conduct, including hard-core cartels, and, as appropriate, the elaboration of such rules.

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