

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS/229
18 May 2001
(01-2578)

WTO SYMPOSIUM TO FOCUS ON ISSUES CONFRONTING THE WORLD TRADING SYSTEM

The World Trade Organization will be the venue of a symposium on critical issues confronting the world trading system on 6 and 7 July 2001. Representatives from governments, non-governmental organizations, the media and members of the academic community are invited to participate.

"Many important issues from food safety, the environment and access to essential medicines are currently the subject of intense public scrutiny and need to be addressed," WTO Director-General Mike Moore said today. "The trading system as it stands now faces countless challenges in need of attention. It is my hope that this symposium will further discussion and thinking about how to tackle some of these pressing issues."

Special work sessions during the two-day symposium will focus on trade in agriculture, food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary standards, intellectual property rights (the TRIPS Agreement), development and environment issues and trade in services (the GATS). A fifth working session will address the relationship between the WTO and civil society.

Registration forms are available on request or can be downloaded from the WTO's website at www.wto.org.

To facilitate discussions and preparations for the five separate working sessions, on-line forums on the subject areas will be launched on the WTO's website in mid-June. Participants are encouraged to familiarize themselves not only with the issues, but with the views and concerns of other participants.

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