

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS/398
18 March 2005

(05-1168)

STANDARDS AND TRADE DEVELOPMENT FACILITY

Canada donates 385,000 Swiss Francs for the Standards and Trade Development Facility

The Canadian Government, today, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the WTO over a contribution of Canadian \$400,000 (approximately CHF 385,000) to the Standards and Trade Development Facility, a programme which assists developing countries in improving their expertise and capacity to analyse and implement international sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards.

"I am grateful to the Canadian Government for its generous contribution to the Standards and Trade Development Facility," said WTO Director-General Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi. "It will allow us to meet developing countries' additional demands for assistance in the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary standards. Meeting export markets' SPS standards is still too often an considerable obstacle for developing countries. Programmes like the Standards and Trade Development Facility, by informing developing country governments of new developments in SPS standards and assisting them in their implementation, have a direct impact on these countries' capacity to export."

The Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) is a joint initiative between the World Trade Organization, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the World Organization for Animal Health, and the Food and Agriculture Organization. It was established with initial funding from the World Bank Development Grant Facility and the WTO's Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund.

To date, five WTO Members have given funds to the STDF: France, the Netherlands, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Canada. The WTO Secretariat administers the STDF trust fund which finances the programme.

END