

## **Concluding comments**

*Australia and the European Union  
in the Multilateral Trade Round:  
Defining the Common Ground*

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We have had two days of very useful and constructive discussion. It has been especially beneficial to have the contribution of business and academic as well as Government views on all the subjects on our agenda.

I believe, we have identified areas of common ground between Australia and the EU in all of the sessions throughout our two day program and there are many instances where further contact and discussion could significantly widen that area of common ground.

In Services, improved market access in sectors such as; telecoms, transport, professional services, business services and environmental services are shared objectives as are aims in a number of broader services issues such as; encouraging domestic regulatory liberalization in developing countries, maintaining an open market for e commerce, facilitating people movement (mode four) for the delivery of services and a focus on market access liberalization in Asian markets.

On development issues, both sides recognize that the time is coming for the WTO to address the discriminatory trade effects of preferential arrangements favouring only some developing countries. Both sides also recognize the

need to address high levels of protection and discriminatory trade arrangements between developing countries. Both sides also accord a high priority to capacity building and technical assistance for developing countries to help them cope with the challenges of adjustment to lower levels of protection.

On industrial tariffs, both sides appear firmly committed to a ‘no exceptions’ ‘formula approach to further liberalization, although Australian Ministers are still to approve a proposal for tabling in Geneva. Within the parameters of formula cuts, there also appear to be a number of specific issues such as; longer timeframes and lesser cuts for developing countries and what approach to take with regard to low tariffs, which could be constructively discussed further.

On competition policy, both sides clearly accept the strong link between trade liberalization and effective domestic competition policy laws and in the WTO seeking to develop some multilateral principles and rules which recognize and support this linkage.

On the WTO rules issues discussed, including dispute settlement, the discussion demonstrated the benefit of exchanging views in an informal and broadly based workshop atmosphere in enhancing the scope for reaching shared EU/ Australia views on a number of WTO rules issues.

On trade facilitation, both sides are of the view that an agreement on trade facilitation in the Doha package is a necessary supplement to market access liberalization and that attention should be given to capacity building and technical assistance in developing countries to achieve this.

On investment, there is a clear interest on both sides in the negotiation of new investment disciplines in the WTO.