



Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD

Comité Consultatif Economique et Industriel Auprès de l'OCDE

## PRESS RELEASE

31 August 2005

### **OECD BUSINESS CALLS ON NEW WTO LEADER TO BREATHE LIFE INTO STALLED WORLD TRADE TALKS**

Paris – The OECD business community welcomes the arrival of the new Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), but warns that it has high expectations for former EU trade negotiator Pascal Lamy. “We hope that he can breathe life into the stalled Doha trade negotiations. Given the reluctance of most governments to compromise on the key issues at hand, Mr. Lamy has a Herculean task before him,” said BIAC Secretary General, Thomas R. Vant, on the eve of Mr. Lamy’s first day in office at the WTO.

WTO members have only just over 100 days left to take key decisions. “If they fail to break the remaining deadlocks – in particular on agriculture and industrial goods – by end of the next WTO Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong, a major opportunity to boost global trade and to promote economic growth and global development around the world will be lost”, Mr. Vant cautioned.

For business, the Doha Round is too important to fail, as OECD companies need better access to international markets. This can still be achieved through an economically meaningful and balanced result in the Doha Round. “Under the WTO’s new leadership, governments must enhance their commitment to making a breakthrough, by working from a common base rather than from competing individual interests,” said the BIAC Secretary General.

Business will continue to do all it can to remind governments how important it is for the Doha Round to succeed. “However, the final decisions lie with governments, not business,” underlined Mr. Vant. “All of Mr. Lamy’s skills as a negotiator will be needed to bring members together around a successful outcome, and we wish him every success.”

*Founded in 1962, the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC) represents the major industry and employers’ organisations in the 30 OECD member countries.*

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