

protectionist purposes, we renew our commitment to the observance of internationally recognized core labor standards.

32. We attach a high priority to expanding the membership of the WTO, on the basis of commitments to adhere to WTO rules and to provide commercially meaningful market access. As agreed at Singapore, we also support the further integration of the least-developed countries in the trading system, through a plan of action, including, for example, providing predictable and favorable duty-free market access conditions for their products on an autonomous basis to help foster the expansion and diversification of their exports. We look to the WTO-UNCTAD-ITC Conference to enhance their capacity to benefit from increased trade and investment. We each will continue to improve, through various means, access to our markets for least-developed countries.

33. The development of electronic commerce has the potential to yield great benefits to all our citizens and enterprises. To do so, it must be able to grow in a predictable and stable environment. We have directed our officials to work with the OECD, WTO, other appropriate international organizations, and the private sector to identify opportunities to facilitate global electronic commerce, as well as the challenges it poses to ensure preservation of national security interests, consumer protections, effective tax administration and the ability to deal with criminal activities, including money laundering.

34. In Lyon we initiated an effort to standardize and simplify customs procedures. We urge our customs experts to complete their work in the next year and report prior to our next meeting on their efforts to standardize both the data required by customs and other related administrations to carry out their responsibilities and the form in which data are to be reported electronically, and to reduce data requirements to a minimum consistent with effective administration of customs responsibilities.

35. The globalization of national economies has increased the challenge of harmful tax competition. As stated in the Lyon communiqué, tax schemes aimed at attracting financial and other geographically mobile activities can create harmful tax competition between states, carrying risks of distorting trade and investment, and could lead to the erosion of national tax bases. Harmful tax competition also undermines the fairness and neutrality of the tax system. Hence we attach great importance to the work undertaken by the OECD. We hope that the OECD can produce its conclusions and recommendations on this subject in time for our consideration at next year's Summit.

UKRAINE

36. We encourage Ukraine to tackle the challenges of reinvigorating economic reform and creating a more welcoming environment for investors. Immediate progress on the ambitious reform plan outlined by the Ukrainian government last fall is crucial to that effort and to gaining access to the considerable financing package already available from the IFIs and the donors. Decisive steps are now needed by government to improve the legal standing and practical