

E-Commerce Readiness Initiative where, in partnership with the business community, APEC has established global leadership in enabling economies to assess and improve their readiness for the new economy.

20. We welcome the comprehensive package announced by Japan before the Kyushu-Okinawa G8 Summit, to provide about US\$15 billion for addressing the international digital divide, noting that a significant proportion will be mobilised in the APEC economies.
21. We place particular emphasis on preparing our young people for the challenges ahead and agree that information technology should be a core competency for learning and teaching. We support APEC programs to enhance the quality of teachers and build sound education management through a process of cooperation in education in the region and commend the Association of Pacific Rim Universities and other organisations for their initiatives to develop distance learning capacity within the region. The new information and communication technology also enables important networks to be developed to extend health and medical services to the wider community and to address basic health issues. We commend the progress already made in strengthening disease information networks. We commit to fighting HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases and call on the relevant authorities to report in the next year on a strategy which can be used in APEC to more effectively meet these disease challenges.

Strengthening the Multilateral Trading System

22. In this era of globalisation, a fair and rules-based multilateral trading system is even more crucial to our success and prosperity. The system should respond to the challenge of the 21st century.
23. We reiterate that there is a need to expeditiously launch a new WTO round for the benefit of all WTO members, particularly least-developed and developing economies. We agree that a balanced and sufficiently broad-based agenda that responds to the interests and concerns of all WTO members should be formulated and finalised as soon as possible in 2001 and that a round be launched in 2001. The elements and objectives we agreed in Auckland remain relevant.
24. We instruct our Ministers to make meaningful progress in the agriculture and services negotiations now underway. We also instruct them to continue the preparatory work on industrial tariffs and other related areas, as part of the preparation for a new round, without prejudice to the overall agenda for negotiations. We reaffirm our commitment to the moratorium on the imposition of customs duties on electronic transmissions until the next WTO Ministerial Meeting and we acknowledge the importance of