

Trade in Services (Group on Services - GNS)

At the time of the official launch of the Uruguay Round in 1986, the question of whether to include trade in services within the ambit of the negotiations was such a major contentious issue that it almost aborted the whole launch. At Montreal, Ministers were able to register substantial progress since the Punta del Este meeting in terms of the analysis and understanding of the issues and the stakes involved. They also reached agreement on detailed guidelines for the negotiations to develop a framework of principles and rules to govern trade in services in a manner analogous to the GATT for trade in goods. The integral text of the Ministerial agreement on services is as follows:

1. "Ministers reaffirm the objectives for negotiations on trade in services agreed at Punta del Este. Ministers agree that substantial progress has been achieved in pursuit of these objectives.
2. Ministers take note of the report of the GNS to the TNC contained in MTN.GNS/21 which they consider an important basis for further work directed towards the achievement of these negotiating objectives. This work should proceed in a parallel and interrelated fashion.
3. Ministers note the understanding reached on statistics and on existing international arrangements and disciplines as set out in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the GNS report.
4. Work on definition should proceed on the basis that the multilateral framework may include trade in services involving cross-border movement of services, cross-border movement of consumers, and cross-border movement of factors of production where such movement is essential to suppliers. However, this should be examined further in the light of, inter alia, the following:
 - (a) Cross-border movement of service and payment.
 - (b) Specificity of purpose.
 - (c) Discreteness of transactions.
 - (d) Limited duration.
5. Ministers agree that work would proceed, without excluding any sector of trade in services on a a priori basis, with a view to reaching agreement on the sectoral coverage under the multilateral framework in accordance, inter alia, with the considerations that coverage should permit a balance of interests for all participants, that sectors of