

pressures, including letters advising against this move by a large number of U.S. Senators and Representatives.

Coming mid-way through the Doha meetings, this signal of flexibility was extremely helpful in bringing developing countries on side, reflecting the extent to which anti-dumping actions tend to be aimed at them—and in light of the pressure on the U.S. administration for safeguards action in areas such as steel and lumber, as recession and a highly valued U.S. dollar combined to squeeze U.S. commodity producers.

*Singapore Issues: negotiations definitely or only maybe?*

A further important “deal maker” was the European Union’s show of flexibility on the so-called “Singapore Issues”—investment, competition policy, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation.

The European Union’s insistence on inclusion of these issues in the forthcoming multilateral trade negotiations is a matter of curiosity to many observers, there being little obvious political pressure within Europe on these issues (with the possible exception of competition policy).

At the same time, many developing countries are decidedly set against inclusion of these issues, preferring instead to deal with an agenda focussed on traditional trade matters—most importantly improved market access.

Refined drafting came into play to help resolve the apparent impasse. At Doha, it was agreed that these issues would be studied in working groups, with a decision to be taken at the fifth Ministerial Meeting in Mexico in 2003 as to how to proceed. The question was: would negotiations on these issues automatically be launched at the fifth Ministerial with only modalities to be decided? Or would the decision whether to negotiate also be taken with finality at that Ministerial? The language of the communiqué skilfully glossed over this important difference, allowing different parties to offer varying interpretations following the Doha meeting.