

Statement of Ambassador Susan C. Schwab, US Trade Representative
TNC Meeting
World Trade Organization
21 July 2008

“Thank you Pascal. It is always good to be back in Geneva, and I am truly pleased to see so many of my colleagues again. Since the beginning of the year, we have all been anticipating the start of this week and the important task that it brings.

“The past few months leading up to today have featured two notable developments: First, I believe that never before in the six decades of GATT and WTO have so many Geneva hotel reservations been repeatedly made and cancelled over such a short period of time. Second - in a more serious vein -- I also believe that we would not be gathered here today had it not been for the hard work and tough slogging by our respective senior officials, along with chairmen Crawford Falconer and Don Stephenson. It is those efforts that have brought us to this critical point, and I take note of this with sincere appreciation.

“I have no doubt that we have all been reflecting privately on the broader, global backdrop for our work—rising food and energy prices, rising protectionism, and stresses in the financial system. At the same time we must recognize that our contribution can only be realized if we focus on the narrower fundamental task at hand. Our mandate is a simple but challenging one: secure the modalities in agriculture and NAMA that are needed to allow the Doha Development Agenda to move into its final phase of work.

“I know from conversations with many of you over the past months that I am not alone in coming to Geneva committed to a workmanlike approach and getting the deal done. I also know that most, if not all of us share the objective that this week produce an outcome that will place the Doha negotiations on a path that results in a contribution to global economic development, growth, and poverty alleviation. At the same time, each of us also has a focus closer to home, looking to achieve results that will generate new opportunities for our respective exporters, large and small. A successful outcome of the signaling conference on Services is likewise critical to our work.

“There are few greater negotiating challenges than securing a meaningful multilateral result - something that can be done only through the emergence of a complex balance of overlapping gives and gets. We all know this will not be easy, and so I hope that each one of us also brings a properly-grounded perspective to this week’s work -- one that acknowledges the strong challenge ahead while also recognizing the potential historic magnitude of shared reward for our efforts.

As we enter this critical week of work, I know I can count on most to understand that progress will not be achieved by falling back on tired rhetoric aimed only at perpetuating old divisions or creating new ones.

“We must all acknowledge our responsibilities and act upon them, together. It is not just one, two, or even five members or groups of Members that hold the key to success. Today’s dynamic economy brings to the table a broad and unprecedented spectrum of active and fast-growing economic players as never seen before. Our negotiations can succeed only if that same broad array of key trading partners come forward together to contribute and work toward solutions.

“We know we are among those members with the greatest responsibility for leadership, and I am here because the United States remains ready to step forward and to fulfill that responsibility. We look forward to being joined by others in this contribution as the week unfolds. We must each take up our respective responsibilities to ensure that together we can meet the challenge we face - and achieve the success that we all seek.”

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