



Turning trade challenges into opportunities

China's rapid development as a springboard for global sustainability

The 14th of December between 14.00-17.00 at the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong, WWF will arrange the first ever side-event with the support of MOFCOM, Ministry of Commerce, China, to discuss trade and environment issues. The side-event will explore opportunities to put the vision of sustainable development first – focusing on the design of trade measures to help reach this vision. A process which takes the needs of sustainable development as its starting point will differ from the current approach, where trade rules are designed foremost to provide increased market access.

“With emerging actors such as China, India and Brazil, it is obvious that the world community should not limit itself to simply promoting so called ‘end-of-pipe’ technologies that only marginally reduce the negative impacts of existing industries. While these technologies and products can be important, we must focus more of our attention on finding new approaches to providing welfare – in ways that use dramatically less natural resources”, said Peng Lei, Trade and Investment Policy Officer, WWF-China.

”The sustainability of environmental resources is critical to the social development of humankind, and trade policy should be an important instrument to achieve sustainable development and alleviate and eliminate poverty.”, said Zhang Xiang Chen, Director General of Department for WTO Affairs, MOFCOM.

“MOFCOM is delighted that WWF has arranged this timely side-event about trade and environment to discuss the role of trade for global and national environmental issues which MOFCOM takes very seriously. We think it is important for us to participate in the side-event and we look forward to beginning a project with WWF during 2006 to explore the opportunities for trade that helps the environment and sustainable development”, said Shi Miao Miao, Deputy Director General of Department for WTO Affairs, MOFCOM.

In the beginning of 2006 WWF and MOFCOM will begin a joint project to explore different opportunities for green trade. Rather than focusing on particular products, this will address the fundamental challenge of ensuring that trade can contribute systemically to development pathways that provide welfare without destroying the world ecosystem or polluting the environment.

“The world must stop looking at China’s development as a threat. Instead we must ensure that it is used as a springboard for global sustainability. But this can only happen if actors start thinking outside existing structures, and begin to support China’s attempt to provide welfare in a sustainable way. China could then become a leading exporter of, and investor in, sustainable goods and services. WWF hopes to see more actors from the emerging economies step forward in the constructive and visionary way that MOFCOM has done” said Dennis Pamlin, Global Policy Advisor, WWF.

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