



# *Facts on Global Reform*

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## ***U.S. Leadership on Environmental Protection at the WTO***

For the first time in its history, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has agreed to undertake negotiations explicitly aimed at enhancing the mutual supportiveness of trade and environment policies. In particular, the WTO has initiated negotiations on:

### **Fisheries Subsidies**

- The mandate calls for negotiations to “clarify and improve WTO disciplines on fisheries subsidies, taking into account the importance of this sector to developing countries.”
- The United States is a leading advocate for prohibiting harmful fisheries subsidies, with provision for appropriate exceptions for subsidies that do not contribute to overcapacity and overfishing.

### **Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and Environmental Goods and Services**

- The mandate contains three areas for negotiation: (i) the relationship between specific trade obligations set out in MEAs (among Parties) and WTO rules; (ii) information exchange between MEA secretariats and WTO bodies and the criteria for observer status; and (iii) market access for environmental goods and services.
- The United States is committed to safeguarding the integrity of both sets of international obligations at issue – those in the WTO and those in MEAs to which we are a party.
- The United States is an active advocate for an outcome on environmental goods and services that will lower prices and increase availability of environmental technologies and services for the world’s business and consumers, in particular those in developing countries.

**In addition to the above negotiating mandates, the Doha Development Agenda instructs the Committee on Trade and Environment to focus its discussions on:**

- the effect of environmental measures on market access, especially in relation to developing countries;
- relevant provisions of the TRIPs agreement;
- eco-labeling requirements;
- technical assistance and capacity building;
- sharing expertise in conducting environmental reviews of trade agreements; and
- achieving sustainable development objectives in the overall negotiations.

### **Win-Win-Wins for Trade, Environment and Development**

- Over 75% of global fish stocks are overexploited, depleted or fully exploited. Global subsidy levels are estimated at \$10-15 billion annually – a quarter of total (\$56 billion) annual trade in fish. Stronger WTO disciplines will make a significant contribution to protecting fish stocks, and can benefit developing countries seeking to develop their own fisheries.

- Global exports of environmental goods (for example, turtle-safe fishing nets, solar cells, wastewater filters, and bags made of natural fibers) are already on the rise, growing 52% from 1999 to 2004, from \$273 billion to \$415 billion. Reducing tariffs, which are as high as 60% in some countries, and non-tariff barriers to these products will reduce the tax burden to consumers and make these beneficial technologies cheaper and more widely available.
- Developing country exports of environmental goods are growing twice as fast as global exports at 110%, from \$31 billion in 1999 to \$65 billion in 2004. Environmental goods accounted for nearly one quarter of total developing country exports to the world in 2004. Reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers will create new business opportunities for developing country exporters, while at the same time benefiting the environment.