



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

For Immediate Release

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Grassley Disappointed as Ministerial Ends, But Doha Round is Far From Over

HONG KONG -- Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, the Senate committee with legislative and oversight jurisdiction over international trade, made the following statement on the near-final draft ministerial declaration circulated at the World Trade Organization Ministerial this afternoon. The near-final ministerial declaration is expected to be approved by the WTO membership before the ministerial ends late tonight or early tomorrow morning.

"It's good that the ministerial will lead to more negotiations. On the toughest issues, it just kicks the can down the road. We've got a lot more work ahead. We need development out of this round, and without market access for U.S. farmers, manufacturers, and service providers, there won't be any development.

"Congress has high expectations, and if we don't see progress, there won't be a final agreement in the round. As chairman, I'll be watching the negotiations closely, and my colleagues will too. Congress would have to approve legislation implementing any agreement. I can tell you right now that without substantial improvement over the next few months, this framework will go over like a lead balloon. That's not to denigrate our trade negotiators, who worked around the clock this week. They could negotiate only so much with certain trading partners who wanted to get everything and give up nothing.

"The best hope for a successful Doha Round lies in small-group negotiations over the next few months. The world was watching Hong Kong for progress, and some WTO members took advantage of that spotlight to divert attention from the toughest issues more than negotiate. Smaller sessions without so much media attention might grease the wheel for more progress. When the cameras are gone, I hope people will get more focused."

(Background: Under the U.S. system, the President negotiates trade agreements but the Congress must pass legislation implementing those trade agreements, so approval by the Congress is necessary for the United States to implement trade agreements such as a Doha Round agreement. The Congress also is responsible for legislation granting Trade Promotion Authority to the President. Trade Promotion Authority significantly expedites the United States' ability to negotiate and implement trade agreements. A longtime outspoken advocate for American agriculture and free trade, Chairman Grassley farms corn and soybeans with his son in Butler County, Iowa.)

