

## **Mini-Ministerial Meeting to be Held in Paris**

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A ministerial meeting of the four main trade powers of the World Trade Organisation (Brazil, United States, India, European Union) has been planned for around 22 September in Paris, to try to relaunch negotiations on the Doha round, diplomatic sources announced in Geneva on Tuesday, quoted by the agency AFP. This meeting of external trade ministers of the "G4" will bring together the American Robert Portman, Celso Amorim of Brazil, Kamal Nath of India and the European Commissioner Peter Mandelson around the table. The exact date of the meeting has not yet been decided on, but the same sources announced that it will take place in the week commencing 19 September. The ministers will attempt to seek a means of relaunching negotiations on the Doha round, in preparation for the conference of the ministers of the 148 member countries of the WTO, to take place in Hong Kong in December. The meeting will be preceded by a further session of agricultural negotiations in Geneva from 13 to 16 September, as agriculture is the main stumbling block of the talks. Mr Mandelson and his colleague in charge of agriculture, Mariann Fischer Boel, are expected in Washington on 12 December to hold talks with their American counterparts, Robert Portman and Mike Johanns (Agriculture). The new director-general of the WTO, Pascal Lamy, who officially took up his new duties on 1 September, has promised to make the Doha round his "number 1, 2 and 3" priority. In a short statement to the media last week, Mr Lamy announced that he was to start internal and external consultations immediately. "Internally, obviously, with all the members of the Secretariat and the presidents of the various negotiation groups. Also with ambassadors, the regional groups, etc (...). The director-general of the WTO has no magic wand. It is the member states which have the powers of decision. We can act as a catalyst, we can facilitate, and sometimes we can guide; but at the end of the day, it is they who make the decisions, and that is why I must start this round of contacts", he explained (our translation).