

Highlights of WTO Framework Trade Deal

By The Associated Press

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The plan approved Sunday by the World Trade Organization sets out principles for a legally binding treaty to liberalize international trade. Here are the key commitments.

AGRICULTURE: --A "down payment" reducing countries' subsidy cap by 20 percent in first year of agreement. --A 5 percent cap on subsidies limiting production. --Eliminating export subsidies. --Eliminating export credit guarantees or insurance programs with repayment periods longer than 180 days, and regulating those with shorter terms. --Work to remove trade-distorting practices in food aid and state-run export boards. --Using an unspecified formula to cut the highest tariffs by the largest amount.

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS (The text says the issues are not yet agreed upon):

--Cutting import tariffs below a maximum ceiling based on a future formula. --Negotiating to either bring some tariffs to a fixed level or eliminate them.

SERVICES: --Countries should submit offers to liberalize their service industries as soon as possible. Revised offers should be submitted by May 2005. --Countries should not exclude any service sector and should make it easier for their nationals to work abroad.

TRADE FACILITATION: --Members agree to start negotiations on "further expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit," and improving cooperation between customs authorities.

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