

## APPENDIX 4

### **Taken from Statement of the Chair, Meeting of APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade, Auckland, 29–30 June 1999.**

Trade facilitation issues—

- better communicate APEC's work on trade facilitation in order to improve understanding and increase support from business and others for this work, which is important.
- improve the ease of business travel by simplifying arrangements and reducing the amount of paperwork associated with moving people on short term assignments. Urge all APEC economies to join the APEC Business Travel Card Scheme.
- Reduce the compliance costs associated with trade, which are especially severe for SMEs, through improved cooperation in such areas as customs and standards. Existing processes are duly complex and inconsistent and APEC's progress is to slow. Also cross border costs are often arbitrary, too high, changeable and not appealable.
- Modernise and harmonise customs systems across the region including by establishing electronic data interchange systems and shared data banks. Harmonise product and commodity classifications. Simplify and harmonise customs procedures, guidelines and documentation requirements. Benchmark progress against best practice standards. Again, progress is too slow.
- Improve coordination of APEC work on electronic commerce and recognise the role of the private sector in leading the work agenda in this area. Needs more effective ministerial involvement/leadership.
- There are no borders in e-commerce but there are in legal systems. APEC should intensify work on cross-border fraud and virus contamination issues associated with electronic commerce. This is an area of increasing significance and cross-border enforcement is essential
- Work towards harmonising qualifications and recognising skills acquired in the region.
- The complexity and inconsistency of tax systems is a major problem.

