



9th WORLD ELECTRONICS FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ CANBERRA & SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA 2003

About WEF

The World Electronics Forum (WEF) is a voluntary gathering of CEOs and Directors of electronics industries associations worldwide. Founded in 1995, WEF meets annually to discuss major topics of common interests to the various associations, exchange information on services and data and strengthen relations between associations for the benefits and services of our industries.

The 9th WEF was held in Canberra and Sydney, between 1-3 September 2003. The Australian Electrical and Electronics Manufacturers' Association (AEEMA) hosted the event. WEF delegates from associations from Australia, China, France, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and the USA were represented. A wide range of Australian government and industry leaders also participated in the meeting.

The theme of the 9th WEF was 'Opportunities and the future of the high-tech electronics industry in the global economy 2004-2005'. The program included a briefing of global research undertaken to review emerging trends in the industry. In addition, the program featured various technology presentations at the Australian Technology Park (ATP) in Sydney. The Australian Government also formally launched the Australian Electronics Industry Action Agenda at a WEF function at the ATP.

Over the course of its deliberations WEF reached agreement on the following principles:

1. Free Trade

WEF supports the WTO non-agricultural market access negotiations. While recognising sensitivities within some product areas, WEF strongly supports the need for a broad and comprehensive agreement that is capable of sustaining movement towards global tariff elimination on as many electronics products as possible.

WEF recognises that tariff elimination talks must take into account non-tariff trade barriers that could undermine progress made in tariff concessions.

In recognition of the enabling and wealth creation characteristics of electronics, WEF emphasises that the removal of tariff and non-tariffs barriers to trade supports development by eliminating unnecessary distortions of price and removal of barriers to the use of electronics-based technologies.

2. Intellectual Property

WEF supports the development of intellectual property regimes that provide appropriate reward for creative and intellectual endeavour. The provision of adequate protection for creative and knowledge-based industries, however, should not be allowed to stifle technical development and innovation in the electronics sector, nor should it impose undue technical constraints on electronic product development.

3. Environment and Extended Producer Responsibility

WEF endorses the commitment of member associations and leading electronics suppliers to programs of constant improvement in product design and manufacturing for the environment. WEF acknowledges that suppliers have a contribution to make to supporting the end-of-life recovery and processing of electrical and electronic goods. WEF proposes that this be oriented towards the following principles:

- The development of the waste processing industry, not the encumbrance of the supply industry;
- Promotion of sustainable consumption alongside sustainable production; and
- The use of regulation to the extent that it is necessary and in terms that are consistent with open trade in electronics.

WEF delegates discussed the opportunity for its constituent associations to participate in an internet-driven environmental regulatory resource database – EIATrack.

4. Future Directions of the Electronics Industry

WEF believes that the immediate future of the electronics industry lies in the further development of vertical sectors such as home automation, industrial, defence, medical, space, and automotive. In the short term (2004-2005), activity in the telecommunications sector is likely to be constrained by over-capacity. Microelectronics is a key enabler for added value and jobs for the industry.

The next WEF meeting will take place on 21-23 September 2004 in Washington DC. Hosts for the 10th WEF will be EIA, CEA and TIA. Visit www.wefonline.org

WEF delegates extended a vote of appreciation to AEEMA for the hosting of the 9th WEF.