

Bush: 'Tough sledding' for poverty talks

Staff and agencies

By DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON - President Bush, trying to jump start global trade negotiations, urged European and developing nations Thursday to make tough decisions to finish a trade deal that he claims will curb poverty.

"It's tough sledding right now," Bush said at the Initiative for Global Development's national summit focused on getting the public and private sectors to work together to end poverty across the world.

"We're ready to eliminate all tariffs and subsidies and other barriers to free flow of goods and services, and we expect other nations to do the same," Bush said.

Bush said he planned to carry that message to next week's European Union summit.

Bush spoke after attending a ceremonial swearing-in at the White House of the new U.S. trade representative, Susan Schwab, who is working to wrap up key elements of a deal by the end of July.

Former Secretary of States Colin Powell and Madeleine Albright co-chaired the summit, which was attended by some of the nation's top business leaders, philanthropists, policy experts, government officials and civic leaders.

The Initiative for Global Development was founded in 2003 by former Sen. Daniel Evans of Washington; Bill Gates Sr., father of Microsoft founder Bill Gates; Bill Ruckelshaus, former administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; Bill Clapp, chief executive officer of Global Partnerships; and Gen. John Shalikashvili, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.