



Cairns Group Farm Leaders
Statement to Cairns Group Ministers

San Jose, Costa Rica

23-25 February 2004

As farm leaders we represent millions of farmers in Cairns Group countries.

We strongly believe the Doha Round of negotiations is a key opportunity for governments to stop the on-going problem of support and protectionism.

Cairns Group Farm Leaders' believe that there can be no Doha Round outcome without a comprehensive agreement on agriculture.

Today, we reaffirm our commitment to meaningful reform of world agriculture trade in the Doha negotiations. High levels of spending and the disruptive effect of some food aid programs contribute to underdevelopment, high unemployment and instability in many developing countries. Globally, this is unsustainable.

In the Doha Round, Cairns Group farmers will not accept another limited set of outcomes. The deficiencies in the current agreement must be addressed. Success in the Doha Round will only be achieved if all WTO members are prepared to adopt bold and ambitious goals for agricultural trade reform.

Our vision is a world where an equitable and enforceable rules-based trading system in agriculture creates the opportunities for developed, developing countries and farmers to benefit from a sustainable agriculture sector and at the same time enjoy the benefits on their economies, contributing to the socio-economic development and political stability.



Cairns Group Farm Leaders' were disappointed at the lack of an outcome in Cancun, but despite this setback we have not wavered in our strong resolve to ensure a positive result for farmers from the current round of negotiations. We will never waver. We have a simple message for WTO member countries. Now is the time to deliver on the Doha mandate.

For all forms of export subsidies, we call for immediate elimination.

We want substantial improvements in market access to result in more open, effective, equitable access for all products.

On domestic support we seek substantial reduction of all trade and production distorting domestic support within a mandated timeframe.

We support meaningful special and differential treatment for Developing Countries, allowing them to unlock the potential of their agricultural industries and participate effectively in the global marketplace.

Sustainable development, protection of the environment and the responsible use of the world's resources is greatly enhanced by sensible economic policies such as trade reform in the spirit of the WTO. Long-term protection of the environment is greatly enhanced by the promotion of economic growth through compliance with a rules-based system for international trade.

We know that you, as Ministers representing our countries, are equally dedicated to this cause. We believe that the Cairns Group has a very influential role to play in the Doha Round. We call on you to show strong leadership over coming months in this regard.

Cairns Group Farm Leaders' hope that in 2004 countries strongly re-engage with the WTO process and work hard to deliver on the Doha mandate.

We thank you for your continuing efforts on our behalf. We wish you well in your deliberations over the coming days.