



CAIRNS GROUP FARM LEADERS' COMMUNIQUE HONG KONG – DECEMBER 11, 2005

Farm leaders representing millions of farmers from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Thailand and Uruguay have today met at a critical point in the history of the Doha Development Round.

The Doha Development Round is under serious threat of failure. Strong political leadership is urgently required to move it forward. Intransigent WTO members who fail to make meaningful concessions are putting at risk the entire Doha Round.

Ministers attending the 6th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, have a unique opportunity and accompanying responsibility to take concrete steps to end the gross unfairness and distortion in world agricultural trade.

Our priority is improved market access which according to the World Bank accounts for 93 per cent of the potential gains of trade liberalization. Their research shows that removing government agricultural and other trade policy distortions could lift world incomes by US\$300 billion annually — mostly in developing countries.

In order to address global poverty and allow millions of farmers (particularly in developing countries) to realise their full economic potential world leaders must agree to meaningful trade reform.

Cairns Group farmers seek nothing more than the promise of the Doha mandate:

“...comprehensive negotiations aimed at: substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reductions in trade distorting domestic support.”

We insist this must be achieved in a manner that reduces the inequities in the level of current commitments and creates fair and enforceable rules which apply equally to all WTO Members, bearing in mind the development objectives of the Doha Development Round that mandates special and differential treatment for developing countries in addition to acknowledging the special circumstance of least developed countries.

We call on all Ministers attending the WTO Ministerial Conference to work towards:

- Reaching agreement on an approach that will deliver substantial and commercially **meaningful improvements in market access on all products through:**
 - deeply cutting tariffs with the highest tariffs being cut by more in the tariff reduction category, and,
 - significantly improving tariff rate quota commitments;
- Eliminating export subsidies on all products by 2010 at the latest and tightening disciplines on commercially displacing food aid, subsidised export credit programs and trade distorting practices of export state trading enterprises;
- Achieving significant real cuts to current spending on trade-distorting domestic subsidies in a manner that:
 - obtains the maximum reduction of the support provided by the high spenders,
 - places strong disciplines on product-specific support,
 - prevents the direct transfer of trade distorting support from the amber box to the blue; and,
 - establishes strong disciplines on the new blue box which achieves a reduction in current spending.
- Developing a comprehensive work program aimed at completing the negotiations in 2006.

With agricultural trade reform decades overdue, the world cannot afford an outcome from this Round that falls short of the Doha Development mandate which was agreed by all Ministers in Qatar in 2001.

Farmers will not accept a limited outcome from this Round. The deficiencies and distortions in current rules must be eliminated and the Doha mandate represents a minimum.

As we stated in Cartagena in March this year, the Doha Development Round will not be judged on its processes or on the mere signing of a final agreement. It will be judged on how much real new commercial trade it creates.

As farmer leaders' we know Cairns Group Ministers and others who seek a truly liberalising outcome will not weaken in their resolve. We give Cairns Group Ministers our full support in the important negotiations ahead.