



Cairns Group UNGA Statement

Mr Chairman

I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the Cairns Group of 19 agricultural exporting countries, namely, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand and Uruguay.

Agriculture trade reform is unfinished business. At the last Cairns Group Ministerial Meeting last year our Ministers discussed the international trade policy environment, including the Doha Round agriculture negotiations, our shared desire to continue agricultural trade policy reform efforts, the development dimension to agriculture reform and food security, in accordance with the Doha mandate.

Mr Chairman

We **strongly encourage Members to engage constructively on agricultural issues**. It is our view, shared by many developing countries outside the Cairns Group, that agriculture remains the most important area if we are to advance the overall Doha negotiating process and that advances in agriculture may contribute for early harvest outcomes.

From our perspective the guidance from Trade Ministers at the WTO 8th Ministerial Conference in Geneva was clear.

- Ministers remain committed to work actively, in a transparent and inclusive manner, towards a successful multilateral conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda in accordance with its mandate.*
- In order to achieve this end and to facilitate swifter progress, Ministers recognize that Members need to more fully explore different negotiating approaches while respecting the principles of transparency and inclusiveness.*

- *In this context, Ministers committed to advance negotiations, where progress can be achieved, including focusing on the elements of the Doha Declaration that allow Members to reach provisional or definitive agreements based on consensus earlier than the full conclusion of the single undertaking.*
- *Ministers also stressed that they will intensify their efforts to look into ways that may allow Members to overcome the most critical and fundamental stalemates in the areas where multilateral convergence has proven to be especially challenging.*
- *Ministers maintained that, in their negotiations, they will continue their work based on the progress already made. Ministers affirm that any agreements reached, at any time, have to respect fully the development component of the mandate.*

From the Cairns Group's perspective it is critical that we re-engage in a meaningful way on agriculture. We have pointed on many occasions to the importance of this for development and to address the global imbalances and distortions in world agricultural trade whether these be market access, domestic support or export subsidies.

It is important that we address these distortions not only in terms of creating further market efficiencies and more effective price signals for farmers and investors in agriculture alike but also as a means of contributing to greater food security.

We are all familiar with the statistics - the FAO estimates that the global population will increase to 9 billion by 2050 and as a consequence agricultural production will need to increase by 70 per cent. The Cairns Group recognises the role the FAO plays in achieving food security.

The growth in food production to meet this demand will not all occur in the same places where the population is projected to grow. Trade will play a critical role in addressing the nutritional needs of these populations.

We have pursued reforms through the Doha agriculture negotiations so vigorously because, amongst other things, we recognise that trade policy reform is crucial in addressing food security. In a world grappling with such vital issues, it concerns us that the distortions and imbalances in agriculture continue to be so much greater than those for industrial goods.

We hope in the coming months in Geneva we might find a pathway back to having more substantive discussions on agriculture. This is essential if we are to meet the development objectives of the Doha Round we set ourselves but also if we are to make a contribution to addressing global food security.

Thank you.