

## **G-33 Ministerial Meeting Press Statement**

**12 June 2005**

Ministers and high level officials of the G33 met in Jakarta on 11 and 12 of June to assess progress in the Doha Work Program and in the agriculture negotiations more particularly. The G33 is an alliance of a large number of developing countries, including LDCs, which have joined efforts to guarantee that the food security, livelihood security and rural development concerns of the developing countries are put at the centre of the discussions on agriculture at the WTO.

Ministers agreed on a Communiqué which would guide the G33 in making positive contributions into the negotiations leading to the July first approximation and the adoption of full modalities during the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong, China.

Ministers of the G33 welcomed the participation of the Chairperson of the General Council and the Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture in Special Session to the meeting. Ministers had a useful session with the special guests where they discussed the current state of affairs of the negotiations and targets for the July General Council. They also conveyed the concerns of the G33 to the special guests on issues of particular importance to the group.

Ministers highlighted the importance of this meeting in strengthening the solidarity and unity of the group and enhancing their cooperation at a critical moment of the WTO negotiations. Delegations recalled that Ministers were meeting for the first time after the WTO Cancun Ministerial Meeting held in 2003 in Cancun, to provide inputs to the negotiation process before the elaboration of the July first approximation of modalities.

Ministers agreed to intensify coordination and communication at the political level, as well as enhancing the organisation at the technical level. Ministers will meet on the fringes of WTO Informal Ministerial Meetings or Ministerial gatherings. They also agreed to hold another G-33 Ministerial meeting prior to the Hong Kong Ministerial.

Ministers reiterated their commitment to a successful outcome of the negotiations under the Doha Work Program. In this context, they noted with concern the lack of similar advancement across the various aspects of the negotiations and stressed the need to achieve a balanced first approximation of modalities in agriculture in July 2005, as a building block for full modalities to be established in the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the WTO to be held in Hong Kong, China, in December this year. Discussions highlighted the importance the G33 countries attach to achieving a high level of ambition in this round. Ministers emphasised that as this is a Development round, the objective of the group is to attain an ambitious development outcome which would support developing countries' development needs. In this context, Ministers stressed their desire to enhance cooperation with other developing country groupings such as the African Group, ACP, LDCs, and the G20 in achieving these objectives.

Delegations reiterated that provisions on Special Products (SPs) and the Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) are fundamental to addressing food security, livelihood security and rural development concerns of developing countries, which constitute the core of the group's development agenda in agriculture. Thus Ministers stressed the need for maximum flexibility being provided to developing countries in the designation and treatment of SPs and in the design of the special safeguard mechanism.

Ministers exchanged views regarding the state of play on the discussions on both these issues and noted that the detailed submissions made by the group in the last special session of the CoA were received by WTO members as an important contribution to the debate. Delegations expressed their willingness to engage constructively with other WTO members in order to move towards convergence on the foundations of the SP and SSM provisions to be included in the first July approximation of modalities and full modalities. In that respect, Ministers directed their negotiators to develop indicators of food and livelihood security and rural development that would assist developing countries in the designation of their own special products, with full appreciation of the domestic policy context and circumstances of individual developing countries concerned.

Delegations discussed other aspects of the agriculture negotiations as well. In particular, Ministers coincided in stressing the importance of the formula for tariff reductions. During the discussions, delegations pointed out that the overall tariff reductions by developing countries should be less than those required by the industrialized countries and stressed the need to take into account the different tariff structures of the developed and developing countries in the design of the tiered formula. Further, delegations insisted that the concept of harmonization has not been agreed by Members thus this must be taken into account when deciding on the formula for tariff reductions.

Ministers also stressed the importance of the *de minimis* support as one of the very few avenues the developing countries currently have for providing support to their agricultural sectors in a WTO consistent manner, and constitutes an integral element of their strategies to achieve food and livelihood security and rural development. Ministers agreed to join forces to counter attempts to impose reduction commitments of *de minimis* support on developing countries.

Representatives of the Indonesian farmers organisation and non-governmental organisations had the opportunity to present a statement to Ministers, conveying their concerns over the issue of food sovereignty, and unfair trade in agriculture. They appealed to the G-33 to continue its effort to protect the interest of small and vulnerable resource poor farmers in developing countries.

Ministers reiterated their readiness to contribute to a timely and successful outcome of the Doha negotiations. They stressed however, that for making a contribution, the G33 must be fully involved in the consultations and meetings convened to forge consensus. Therefore, the group insisted that an inclusive and open process of negotiations is essential for the legitimacy of the results of the negotiations and fairness.