

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Committee on Agriculture
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WTO NEGOTIATIONS ON AGRICULTURE

IDA-ONLY COUNTRIES

Joint Proposal by Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Kenya,
Kyrgyz Republic, Nicaragua and Sri Lanka

The Chairman has received the following communication from the delegation of Kenya on behalf of the co-sponsors specified above with the request to circulate this proposal to participants.

WTO Members have reached a critical juncture in the preparatory process for the Cancún Ministerial Conference. The failure of Members to reach consensus on a number of fundamental issues of the Doha Work Programme, including many issues of the greatest importance to developing countries, raises concerns regarding the ability of WTO Members to deliver on the stated objective of putting development at the forefront of the Doha negotiations.

For the undersigning small and poor countries, the results of the agriculture negotiations will determine our assessment of the development component or deficit of the Doha Round. We have actively participated in these negotiations with other developing countries stressing the need to address the imbalances in the current agreement and the problems faced with its implementations.

We are grateful to you for understanding our concerns and providing the basis in the revised First Draft of Modalities for Members to discuss and agree on provisions such as Strategic/Special Products (SP) and Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) for developing countries in an attempt to fulfil the Doha mandate on Special and Differential Treatment. We are deeply concerned however, with the continued opposition by some WTO Members to even consider these concepts and the attempts by others to attach so stringent conditions for their use as to make them useless and ineffective to address the concerns of our countries.

Interesting proposals on how to operationalize the Special and Differential Treatment for developing countries have been discussed in the Negotiating Group on Non-Agricultural Market Access. During the last meeting of that Group, the delegation of Norway introduced a proposal to exempt from tariff reductions IDA-only countries Members of the WTO. Such provisions would allow the poorest and highly indebted countries a relief from further liberalization with the objective of bringing balance and equity to the on-going negotiations.

We believe that such an approach can be extended to the agricultural negotiations and contribute to solve the controversy on the scope of proposals on Special and Differential Treatment. We encourage you to seriously consider this approach and include it in a revised modalities text on

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agriculture. We are not in a position to continue reducing our tariff on agricultural goods, because of the serious revenue implications that are likely to ensue.

Modalities for further commitments in agriculture shall exempt IDA-only countries from any additional reduction commitments and guarantee access to a new SSM for all agricultural products to address emergency situations deriving from import surges and steep price drops.

We reiterate our willingness to support you in this difficult task and to contribute in good faith, as we have done up to this moment, to the success of the agriculture negotiations under your guidance.
