



JOINT STATEMENT BY THE CAIRNS GROUP AND G20

The membership of the G20 and the Cairns Group, embracing 27 countries, covering more than half of the world's population, and representing a range of levels of economic development, call on the major agricultural subsidisers and protectionists to return to the core issues of this Round. Unless the negotiations take up the central issues of market access, domestic support and export subsidies, Hong Kong will be a lost opportunity.

Meaningful progress this week in Hong Kong on agriculture is crucial to the success of the Doha Round.

We are united in our efforts to secure the removal of distortions in international agricultural trade.

Agriculture is at the centre of this Round and of the development dividends we seek from it. Removing distortions and restrictions in international agricultural trade is essential to unlocking the development benefits of trade reform.

Those most responsible for such distortions must now face the difficult political decisions necessary to move the Round forward. The dynamics of the negotiation require movements by both the EU and the USA. It is time for them to display leadership. Market access continues to hold back progress in other areas, as the EU has yet to table an offer in line with the requirements of the Doha mandate. Further steps in terms of cuts and disciplines are required in domestic support. We call for the total elimination of all forms of export subsidies – the most distorting form of support – by no later than 2010. We want to see progress in making operationally effective the special and differential treatment provisions of the July 2004 Framework agreement, including Special Products, the Special Safeguard Mechanism and issues such as tropical products.

Without significant progress in these areas in Hong Kong, the Membership risks prolonging the impasse well into the future, an unsustainable outlook for the Round. We urge the major Members to show the necessary flexibility this week, to ensure we can conclude the negotiations in 2006 and deliver on the promise of the Doha Development Agenda.

16 December, Hong Kong

Members of the two Groups are: Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Egypt, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.