

Press Release

FOOD SECURITY AND PRICE VOLATILITY IN AGRICULTURE

FARM GROUPS CALL FOR COHERENCE - TRADE POLICY MUST NOT DICTATE AGRICULTURE POLICY

Brussels, 20 June 2011

On the eve of the meeting of G20 ministers of Agriculture, farm groups from 66 countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe adopted a joint declaration stressing that trade policy must not be allowed to dictate domestic agricultural policies or ignore non-trade concerns; contrary to the commitments undertaken in the Uruguay Round¹. In the wake of growing world food demand, food security is crucial, and better coherence between World Trade Organisation (WTO) and other global concerns is required.

With less than 10% of the world's agricultural production traded on global markets, agriculture plays an important role in providing food security to local populations, maintaining viable rural communities and looking after precious land resources. Farm groups therefore insist upon the recognition of the special and strategic role of agriculture in light of the huge challenges it faces: increasing price volatility exacerbated by excessive speculation on the markets, finite land and water resources and threats posed by climate change. Meanwhile, the high number of hungry in the world persists and world food demand is rising.

During a media conference in Brussels, Djibo Bagna, President of Roppa, representing farm organisations from West Africa said, "We are questioning if the approach of simply opening markets, without regard to these issues and how they impact farmers who produce food, is really the best way forward. Better coherence is required between any agreement on agriculture at the WTO and the commitments undertaken through other major international treaties on issues such as poverty, hunger, climate change and biodiversity."

"We firmly support the objective that countries respect the same clear, transparent and predictable rules for world trade, said Paolo Bruni, Cogeca President, representing farm organisations across the EU. "But trade is a means of enabling human development, not an end in itself. Food is vital for human life and cannot be treated like other commodities. The

¹ WTO Agreement on Agriculture, Article 20 c.

extent of liberalisation must therefore be tempered by the need to provide the means and economic incentives to farmers in all parts of the world, so that they can fulfil their production potential in a sustainable way.”

Governments need to take coordinated action to ensure more stability on agricultural markets and to strengthen farmers’ position vis-à-vis highly concentrated agri-food businesses. We also need a more harmonised approach to protect the environment and biodiversity as well as addressing climate change.

Farm groups are pressing their political leaders to take into account the following basic principles when pursuing trade agreements:

- all countries must have the right to produce for domestic consumption in order to improve self-sufficiency and ensure their food security, including the use of tariff measures;
- trade rules must allow for policy measures, including supply management, which promote stability of food supplies and prices;
- special and differential treatment and capacity-building for developing countries must enable them to address the real concerns of resource-poor, vulnerable and small-scale farmers, and;
- all countries should have the right to meet the non-trade concerns of their citizens including food safety, the environment, animal welfare and needs of rural areas so as to promote sustainable agriculture and, help combat climate change and, protect biodiversity.

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The “Call for Coherence Declaration” was officially endorsed on June 20, 2011 by farmers’ organizations, representing millions of farmers around the world.

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The following farmers' organizations, representing farmers from 66 countries in Africa, America, Asia and Europe have endorsed the Call for Coherence Declaration on June 20, 2011:

Advocacy Center for Indonesian Farmers (Indonesia)
Canadian Hatching Eggs Producers
Chicken Farmers of Canada
Dairy Farmers of Canada
Eastern African Farmers Federation – EAFF
Egg Farmers of Canada
European Farmers and European Agri Cooperatives – Copa-Cogeca
European Council of Young Farmers
Independent Farmers Network (Sri Lanka)
JA Zenchu (Japan)
National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (Republic of Korea)
National Cooperative Union of India
National Farmers Union (United States)
Norges Bondelag (Norwegian Farmers Union)
Norsk Landbrukssamvirke (Federation of Norwegian Agricultural Cooperatives)
Réseau des organisations de paysans et producteurs agricoles – ROPPA
Sub-Regional Platform of Farmers' Organizations in Central Africa – PROPAC
Swiss Farmers Union
Turkey Farmers of Canada
Maghrebian Farmers Union - UMAGRI (Union magrébine des agriculteurs)
UPA (Union des producteurs agricoles – Québec)