



IPC STATEMENT

IPC is Encouraged by New Momentum in Doha Round Negotiations

(Washington, DC, June 11, 2009) The Cairns Group Ministers, as well as several non Cairns Group participants including China, the EC, India, Japan and the US at their June 2009 ministerial, reaffirmed the importance of reaching a conclusion of the Doha Round, and expressed their hope for progress on the agricultural negotiations in particular. They rightly pointed out that concluding the Doha Round would deliver a much needed contribution to economic recovery and demonstrate the benefits of the multilateral trading system. This is an important political declaration, which will hopefully be echoed at other upcoming high-level international meetings. “We welcome the new political momentum,” stated International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) Chairman Carlo Trojan, “and hope that it will be matched by technical progress in the negotiations.”

For political declarations to be meaningful, they must be accompanied by serious work among trade negotiators. A “two track approach,” as suggested by WTO Director General Lamy, is sensible. A great deal of progress has been made in the agricultural modalities and Parties need to continue to resolve outstanding differences. At the same time, however, WTO members should provide greater clarity on how they would likely apply the modalities, in particular the flexibilities provided within them.

In the wake of last year’s food crisis, many countries quickly resorted to protectionist measures to ensure domestic food supplies. And, in the wake of the financial crisis, countries have adopted inward-looking policies. These political reactions, coupled with a sharp decline in trade financing and trade flows, highlights the importance of open international markets.

“Multilateral rounds are not easy or fast negotiations,” according to IPC member Carlos Perez de Castillo, “but despite this, they remain the most promising venue for making real progress in agricultural trade liberalization.”

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About IPC The International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) promotes a more open and equitable global food system by pursuing pragmatic trade and development policies in food and agriculture to meet the world’s growing needs. IPC convenes influential policymakers, agribusiness executives, farm leaders, and academics from developed and developing countries to clarify complex issues, build consensus, and advocate policies to decision-makers. More information on the organization and its membership can be found on our website: www.agritrade.org.