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“World Food Security Requires an Open Global Food System based on Market Access and Equal Opportunity, Supply Assurance, Commitment to Multilateral Solutions and a Sustained Focus on Agriculture in Developing Countries”

IPC Statement on the Occasion of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy to be held in Rome, June 3-5

“We must respond to the immediate needs of the vulnerable,” stresses IPC Chairman Piet Bukman, “but at the same time we must seize this environment of high prices as an opportunity to push for the right agricultural and trade policies so as to trigger the right long-term responses.”

An open global food system needs to be based on:

I. Market Access and Equal Opportunity

- All countries should facilitate open trade to ensure that surplus production can move without impediments to food deficit areas. Removing high tariffs and trade distorting domestic support also allows for greater production efficiencies so badly needed given the increased demands on the agricultural sector for food, feed and fuel purposes and the likely constraints presented by climate change.
- Governments need to rethink whether tax incentives and high tariffs for first-generation biofuels are the best way to support this industry given their clear impact on food prices. Trade disciplines on biofuels are one way to accomplish sounder policies.

II. Supply Assurance

- IPC has long called for effective disciplines on export taxes, export restraints and export embargoes to restore the balance of obligations between exporters and importers. In today’s environment, export bans and other export restrictions present a threat to food security because they impede badly needed supply responses.

III. Commitment to Multilateral Solutions

- Multilaterally agreed commitments and action are required to promote an open global food system and resolve the world food crisis. An ambitious outcome of the drawn-out Doha Round negotiations will importantly lead to further agricultural and trade policy reforms, increase the effectiveness of food aid, facilitate greater “aid for trade” flows and result in more effective rules on export restrictions and pave the way for disciplines on government support to biofuels. A conclusion of the Round would also signal that the international community can act in concert to resolve complex, global challenges.

IV. Sustained Focus on Agriculture in Developing Countries

- IPC agrees with FAO Director General Jacques Diouf’s assessment that **‘The time for re-launching agriculture is now and the international community should not miss the opportunity.’** Developing country policymakers, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies should adopt a pro-agricultural stance, and increase investment in the sector by focusing on research and development, extension services and infrastructure. This ramped up investment is required to undo several decades of neglect and to facilitate a long-term supply response to the high demand. The payoff of increased attention to agriculture in developing countries is greater food security, rural development and increased income opportunities.

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.