

Geneva Watch

An overview of the WTO negotiations on agriculture

Cannes It Get Completed?

G-20 leaders reiterated their support for a successful conclusion of the DDA at their Cannes Summit on November 3-4, 2011. "We stand by the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) mandate," their final statement said.

"However, it is clear that we will not complete the DDA if we continue to conduct negotiations as we have in the past. We recognize the progress achieved so far. To contribute to confidence, we need to pursue in 2012 fresh, credible approaches to furthering negotiations, including the issues of concern for Least Developed Countries and, where they can bear fruit, the remaining elements of the DDA mandate," the statement continues.

Director General Pascal Lamy has advocated for new approaches consistent with the mandate to unlock the current impasse. The DG is confident that the current deadlock could be broken if Members agree to move away from the sacrosanct single undertaking. His proposed approach is to reach stand alone deals through paragraph 47 of the Doha Declaration which allows Members to effectively escape the notion that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.

The first test of this new resolution will come in a little more than a month's time when a small package on LDCs will have to be agreed upon. The leaders directed their respective Trade Ministers to work on such approaches as well as on other challenges and opportunities to the multilateral trading system at the upcoming Ministerial Conference (MC8) and report back by the time of their next Summit in Mexico in 2012.

"Avoiding protectionism and strengthening the multilateral trading system"

Leaders in Cannes also reiterated their commitment to avoid putting in place new trade protectionisms. "At this critical time for the global economy, it is important to underscore the merits of the multilateral trading system as a way to avoid protectionism and not turn inward," the Cannes Summit declaration said.

"We reaffirm our standstill commitments until the end of 2013, as agreed in Toronto, commit to roll back any new protectionist measure that may have risen, including new export restrictions and WTO-inconsistent measures to stimulate exports and ask the WTO, OECD and UNCTAD to continue monitoring the situation and to report publicly on a semi-annual basis."

However, Sources present in Cannes, said Brazil and Argentina, questioned this standing commitment, arguing that the current economic environment gives good reason for protectionist measures. According to those same sources, Brazil told their G-20 counterparts that it is experiencing difficulties with other countries' trade practices i.e. those who distort world trade by maintaining their currency undervalue (China) and those exporting their subsidies (the US and its quantitative easing programmes).



Upcoming Events

- APEC Ministerial Meeting, November 11, 2011
- Regular Agriculture Committee, November 17, 2011, March 21-22; June 20-21, September 26-27, 2012
- WTO General Council, December 1-2, 2011
- WTO Ministerial Conference (MC8), December 15-17, 2011

Geneva Watch is published by Dairy Farmers of Canada, Chicken Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Canada, Turkey Farmers of Canada and Canadian Hatching Egg Producers to report on the various events occurring in Geneva, particularly on the WTO negotiations on agriculture.

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