



AFRICAN GROUP DRAFT TEXT ON AGRICULTURE

SUBMISSION FROM THE AFRICAN GROUP

The following submission, dated 1 July 2024, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Chad on behalf of the African Group.

The African Group, comprising 45 Members, remains deeply committed to achieving substantial outcomes in the agriculture negotiations, reflecting our collective resolve to advance and preserve the integrity of our longstanding positions. This draft text is submitted for Members' consideration in the Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture, aiming to further the dialogue and negotiations within the framework established.

Our submission builds upon the Chair text presented at MC13, which serves as the foundation due to the high degree of convergence achieved in the weeks leading up to the conference. The African Group believes that this text will garner positive responses and active engagement from the Membership, aligning with our enduring expectations for the WTO to deliver meaningful and effective outcomes in the agriculture sector.

We look forward to constructive discussions and collaborative efforts towards realizing these goals, ensuring that the interests and priorities of the African Group are duly recognized and addressed in the ongoing negotiations.

[DRAFT TEXT ON AGRICULTURE]

Emphasizing the critical role that a rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable and transparent multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core can play in addressing contemporary challenges faced by the food and agricultural systems including climate change and its impacts;

Expressing our deep concern that the share of people facing chronic hunger in the world was more than 9% and moderate or severe food insecurity in the world was around 29% of the global population, concentrated predominantly in developing countries, including least developed countries (LDCs), as recently estimated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;

Underscoring our determination to make progress towards the achievement of a fair, equitable and market-oriented agricultural trading system, ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, promoting sustainable agriculture and food systems, in an equitable manner, and promoting the adoption of resilient agricultural practices, and ensure policy space that enhances productivity and production, particularly in developing and least developed countries in fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goal 2 of the United Nations, taking into account the interests of small-scale food and agriculture producers in developing countries;

Reiterating our commitment to take concrete steps to promote domestic production, facilitate trade and improve the functioning and long-term resilience of global markets for food and agriculture, with a view to achieving equitable rules that enhance global food security and ensuring that the agriculture sector has the policy tools to contribute towards addressing contemporary sustainability challenges;

Noting with concern the limited progress on most agriculture negotiating issues to date and recognizing that much work remains to be done especially in areas where mandates are overdue to successfully conclude the negotiations;

Recognizing the work undertaken by the Committee on Agriculture (CoA), including under paragraph 8 of the Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity in relation to the needs of Least-Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries (NFIDCs);

Reiterating that trade, along with domestic production, plays a vital role in improving global food security in all its dimensions and enhancing nutrition; and emphasizing that WTO deliverables will contribute to enhancing global food security;

Decides that:

1. Members commit to continue the agriculture negotiations in accordance with the reform objective of Article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and subsequent Ministerial and other Decisions on agriculture in particular building on the progress made under the current Doha Round of negotiations. Members shall accordingly make all concerted efforts towards achieving tangible progress and balanced outcomes in the negotiations by the Fourteenth Session (MC14).
2. Members acknowledge the Report prepared by the Chair of the Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture (CoA-SS) under his own responsibility¹, which summarizes the state of play in the negotiations. Members welcome the work done by the CoA-SS as reflected in the Chair's Report and commit to revitalize and intensify the negotiations on outstanding issues. The negotiations shall build on the work undertaken thus far and be based on discussions among Members, and their existing and future submissions.
3. Members reaffirm the importance of predictable agricultural and input markets and of facilitating trade in these products, including by reducing the time and procedural costs related to their importation and exportation, in conformity with WTO agreements. Members

¹ Document [TN/AG/58](#).

may also consider discussing the role and impact of trade-restrictive measures, with a view to enhancing their transparency and predictability and minimizing negative consequences and risks for exporters and importers. Members will also consider the need for policy space to augment agricultural production and productivity, meet food security needs and also address the special needs and interests of small-scale food and agriculture producers in developing countries, especially NFIDCs and LDCs.

4. Members recognize the importance of the implementation of existing notification and transparency obligations under Article 18 of the AoA to provide notifications in a timely, complete and comprehensive manner. The WTO Secretariat shall provide technical assistance to Members facing capacity constraints in fulfilling their notification and transparency requirements, at their request.
5. Special and differential treatment for developing countries shall be an integral part of all elements of the negotiations and shall be embodied in the Schedule of concessions and commitments and as appropriate in the rules and disciplines to be negotiated, so as to be operationally effective and to enable developing countries to effectively take account of their development needs, including food security and rural development. Protection of existing S&D provisions and expansion of S&D will be part of the negotiations. LDCs shall be exempted from undertaking reduction commitments.² The non-trade concerns of Members shall be taken into account in the negotiations.

DOMESTIC SUPPORT

6. Members commit to pursue and intensify negotiations on domestic support with a view to reducing substantially and progressively trade-distorting support in a fair and equitable manner, by targeting the most inequitable elements first, and improving disciplines in accordance with the reform objective in the AoA within a reasonable timeframe to be agreed by Members. These negotiations shall preserve the special and differential treatment of developing country Members and LDCs, including support to low-income or resource-poor farmers, as well as to encourage diversification from growing illicit crops. The negotiations shall also agree modalities of flexibilities for LDCs and NFIDCs.
7. Members will agree on the elements and the methodology of implementation of the reform according to the Timeline for Implementation section below.

MARKET ACCESS

8. Members commit to pursue and intensify negotiations on agricultural market access with a view to reducing substantially and progressively protection in a fair and equitable manner to improve market access opportunities for all Members and improving disciplines in accordance with the reform objective in the AoA and within a reasonable timeframe to be agreed by Members. These negotiations shall take into account exporting Members' interests and importing Members' sensitivities, including non-trade concerns. Members will agree on the elements and the methodology of implementation of the reform according to the Timeline for Implementation section below.

PUBLIC STOCKHOLDING FOR FOOD SECURITY PURPOSES (PSH)

9. Pursuant to Bali Ministerial Decision ([WT/MIN\(13\)/38-WT/L/913](#)), the General Council Decision ([WT/L/939](#)), and the Nairobi Ministerial Decision ([WT/MIN\(15\)/44-WT/L/979](#)), Members commit to pursue and intensify negotiations on PSH in Dedicated Sessions of the CoA-SS and agree and adopt a permanent solution on the issue of public stockholding for food security purposes by MC14, which shall be available to all developing country Members. Public stockholding programmes shall not distort trade or adversely affect the food security of other Members.
10. The negotiations for a permanent solution shall pay particular attention to the food security challenges of LDCs and NFIDCs, and consider all relevant issues, including domestic food security targets of the programmes; product coverage; safeguards and anti-circumvention,

² The situation of recently graduated LDCs shall be considered.

including with respect to exports; transparency; and legal certainty. They shall also consider the impact of inflation on calculations of the Aggregate Measurement of Support.

SSM

11. Pursuant to the Nairobi Ministerial Decision ([WT/MIN\(15\)/43-WT/L/978](#)), Members shall pursue and intensify negotiations in Dedicated Sessions of the CoA-SS on a special safeguard mechanism for developing country Members, as envisaged under paragraph 7 of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration ([WT/MIN\(05\)/DEC](#)), and to which the developing country Members will have the right to have recourse under paragraph 1 of the Nairobi Ministerial Decision. Members will agree on the elements and the methodology of implementation of the reform according to the Timeline for Implementation section below.
12. To this end, Members agree to engage in enhanced technical discussions on specific themes relevant to the special safeguard mechanism to address developing countries' vulnerabilities to import surges or price decreases. Technical elements of the existing Special Agricultural Safeguard instrument in Article 5 of the AoA and the experience gained in its implementation since 1995 may also be considered.

EXPORT PROHIBITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

13. Members agree to continue discussions on export prohibitions and restrictions disciplines in Article 12 of the AoA and Article XI:2(a) of the GATT 1994. Members will agree on the elements and the methodology of implementation of the decision according to the Timeline for Implementation section below.

EXPORT COMPETITION

14. Members agree to continue negotiations to enhance disciplines on export credits, export credit guarantees or insurance programmes, agricultural exporting state trading enterprises and international food aid and other measures with equivalent effect to prevent circumvention of export subsidy elimination commitments and non-commercial transactions commitments. The negotiations shall take into account and preserve the benefits of LDCs and NFIDCs to the provisions of Article 9.4 of the Agreement on Agriculture. Members will agree on the elements and the methodology of implementation of the decision according to the Timeline of Implementation section.

COTTON TRADE-RELATED COMPONENT

15. Members commit to pursue and intensify negotiations on cotton trade-related measures based on Members' submissions, and pursuant to the cotton-related elements of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration ([WT/MIN\(05\)/DEC](#)), as complemented by the Bali Cotton Ministerial Decision ([WT/MIN\(13\)/41-WT/L/916](#)), and the Nairobi Cotton Ministerial Decision ([WT/MIN\(15\)/46-WT/L/981](#)) to address it ambitiously, expeditiously and specifically within the agriculture negotiations. These negotiations shall seek to reduce substantially and progressively the trade-distorting domestic support for cotton by limiting the Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS) to cotton, significantly reducing Cotton Blue Box, disciplining Cotton Green Box and the transfer of support from one box to another.
16. The negotiations shall also seek to significantly reduce market access barriers, pursuant to the Ministerial outcomes listed in paragraph 14, for cotton-producing and exporting LDCs. Members are encouraged to open their markets allowing greater purchases of cotton products and byproducts from cotton-producing LDCs, including through the offer of duty-free quota- free market access.
17. Members undertake to continue efforts aimed at enhancing transparency and monitoring of cotton-related trade measures affecting the global cotton market through the Dedicated Discussions on Cotton held on a bi-annual basis, as mandated by paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of the Bali Ministerial Decision on Cotton ([WT/MIN\(13\)/41-WT/L/916](#)) and confirmed in paragraph 14 of the Nairobi Ministerial Decision on Cotton ([WT/MIN\(15\)/46-WT/L/981](#)). Members reaffirm the need to respect their notification obligations in the context of the required transparency.

COTTON DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMPONENT

18. Members reaffirm that development-related aspects of cotton shall be addressed as provided for in paragraph 12 of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration ([WT/MIN\(05\)/DEC](#)) and paragraphs 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the Nairobi Ministerial Decision ([WT/MIN\(15\)/46-WT/L/981](#)).
19. Members reiterate their commitment to the rules-based multilateral trading system, which strengthens the possible synergies between trade in cotton, productive investment and development assistance for LDCs. They recognize the need for an inclusive partnership that makes cooperation and negotiations the preferred instruments for finding the most appropriate solutions to the considerable systemic and cyclical challenges faced by cotton-producing and exporting LDCs, in particular the C-4 countries.
20. Members underscore the central role of the WTO Director-General's Consultative Mechanism on Cotton as an international forum of reference bringing together the various stakeholders of the global cotton community (public and private sectors, and multilateral agencies) and as an effective multilateral consultation platform for the development of cotton-producing and exporting LDCs. As such, they agree to coordinate cotton development assistance interventions, follow up on completed and ongoing projects, and use this platform to attract and mobilize further investment with a view to promoting and supporting the production, processing and marketing of cotton and its by-products in LDCs.
21. Members welcome the initiatives undertaken with development partners over recent years such as partner conferences, World Cotton Day, or WTO-FIFA Memorandum, aimed at better integrating the cotton sector of LDCs, in particular the C-4 countries, in global value chains for value-added products deriving from cotton and its byproducts, and encourage all development partners to intensify their efforts in this perspective.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

22. In order to achieve tangible progress and concrete outcomes, Members instruct the CoA-SS Chair to provide, based on Members' contributions, annual negotiating schedules to discuss all aspects, including the elements and the methodology, of each of the negotiating topics in this Decision. As a confidence and trust-building exercise, and consistent with the reaffirmed mandates of the Nairobi Ministerial Decision, the outcomes on PSH, SSM and Cotton (both trade-related and development assistance components) and their implementation shall be accorded priority in these negotiations.
 23. The Trade Negotiations Committee shall regularly review progress in these negotiations.
 24. Senior Officials will review the progress achieved in the negotiations especially on PSH, SSM and Cotton, one year after MC13, particularly in relation to the definition of the elements and the methodology of implementation of the reform and make recommendations for the way forward.
 25. Members shall adopt an intermediate framework of the agreement four months before MC14. This framework shall provide a comprehensive view of the basic structures of the agreement or other outcomes to be delivered by MC14 including a permanent solution on PSH and may include texts with different levels of maturity.
 26. Members shall adopt a decision on modalities by MC14 and shall adopt a permanent solution on PSH in accordance with paragraph 9 by MC14.
 27. Modalities of each respective negotiating topic shall be implemented in a timeframe to be decided by Members taking into account the possible differences in maturity of discussions in negotiating topics.
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