

Statement of Task Force on Trade of the World Farmers' Organisation before the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation

The World Farmers' Organisation, representing farmers' organisations and cooperatives across the globe, is committed to working with governments and relevant stakeholders to achieve multilateral improvements to the global trading system.

Trade delivers an opportunity to increase food security worldwide in a fair and sustainable manner. It delivers economic prosperity and ensures a food supply. At the same time, trade must not undermine national food security.

All Governments must have the right to define their own domestic agricultural policy, in order to ensure that the major concerns of their citizens are met, including the provision of safe and secure supplies of food for their people, the well-being of rural communities and environmental concerns. Trade rules should also permit domestic policy measures which promote stability of supplies, such as safety nets, orderly marketing and supply management. Governments should ensure that domestic policy is fully transparent, complies with international obligations and does not disrupt global markets.

The 12th WTO Ministerial session is a crucial appointment for the world trade in face of the current crisis to pursue the reinforcement of the global agricultural trading system so that farmers can operate in a fair, transparent and predictable trading environment.

We want Governments across the globe to commit to increase the resilience of farmers; to embrace new technologies and innovations to secure a sustainable food system fit for the demands of growing global populations; to guarantee high quality and affordable food for all; to remove illegal and infrastructural obstacles to trade flows globally, both of food and inputs, and to improve transparency and predictability of trade.

We need to shift towards more efficient and sustainable food systems and global and local trade are central pieces of that puzzle.

Governments and the international community must now act urgently, engaging with farmers and their cooperatives, to keep global agricultural trade flows open to prevent the war and the long term consequences of the pandemic crisis from transforming into a severe hunger crisis, causing unprecedented migratory flows that further endanger food security, when farmers leave their lands. In relation to this we support a multilateral decision to waive food purchases by the World Food Programme (WFP) from any export restriction.

The Task Force on Trade of the World Farmers Organisation, WFO, appeals to the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference to update the agricultural negotiations to the new global challenges facing the food and agriculture system, reinforcing the position of farmers in the food chain and ensuring the food security of the global population.
