WORLD FARMERS' ORGANISATION

Statement of the World Farmers' Organisation before the 14th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization

The World Farmers' Organisation (WFO), representing national farmers' organisations and cooperatives across the globe, is committed to working with governments, the WTO and relevant stakeholders to strengthen trust in the rules based multilateral trading system.

Trade delivers an opportunity to increase food security worldwide in a fair and sustainable manner. It delivers economic prosperity and ensures a stable food supply. At the same time, trade must contribute to national food security objectives. This is particularly important in a context of growing geopolitical tensions and conflicts that are increasingly disrupting trade flows and global food security.

Trade rules should enable prompt response to global food crises, supporting vulnerable countries while preserving domestic food security, in line with the Emergency Food Security Declaration established under MC12.

To ensure that the major concerns of citizens are met, including the provision of safe and secure supplies of food, the well-being of rural communities and environmental concerns; trade rules should permit policy measures, which promote stability of supplies, such as safety nets, orderly marketing and supply management.

Governments should ensure that policies are fully transparent, coherent, and compliant with international obligations, while avoiding the proliferation of unilateral measures that undermine trust in the multilateral system.

At the foundation of the WFO Policy on International Trade is a commitment to several policy objectives aimed at ensuring agriculture can meet its full potential, including:

- A rules-based trade system that supports sustainable and fair global agri-food supply chains.
- The inclusion of youth and women in the agri-food production system.
- Recognising the role of agricultural production in conjunction with climate and environmental outcomes.
- Trade-related climate measures should consider the adaptation costs for farmers, particularly in developing countries, and avoid creating unlawful protectionist measures, while promoting sustainable practices.

- A fair price system, which reflects the true cost of production and supports innovation at the farm level.
- Improved resilience of the global food systems and farmers' livelihoods to market shocks.
- The elimination of export subsidies and disciplines on export measures with equivalent effect.
- Improved market access, taking regard of local conditions.
- Continued efforts to regulate trade-distorting domestic support that negatively affects other markets.
- Strengthened rules applied to export prohibition/restriction and export taxes.
- Special and differential treatment for developing countries and least developed countries.
- Special attention should be given to smallholder farmers and family farms, ensuring equitable access to international markets and supporting livelihoods, rural development, and local food systems.
- The maintenance of food safety requirements and the prevention of 'dumping' of lesser-quality food in developing and least-developed countries; and
- Proper enforcement of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

As a result, discussions at the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference will be decisive in setting the conditions for future progress on agricultural trade, and fair reforms of the of the WTO system.

As such, the WFO and its Members are actively engaging with governments and the international community to reiterate its support for a rules-based multilateral system and farmer- friendly progress in the negotiations on agriculture. Governments and the WTO-administration should involve farmers and their organisations in the work on further progress in the negotiations, as well the implementation of the new agreement.

The further path on agriculture should take a holistic approach encompassing all issues, including:

- The establishment of fair and equitable WTO rules that would allow all farmers to compete on a level playing field.

- The repurposing of trade-distorting subsidies that negatively affect other markets.
- The integral role of fair and accountable trade rules are recognised as enablers of climate change mitigation and adaptation which promotes food security and sustainable development. Trade and climate agreements should reinforce each other, with trade offering the opportunity to lessen the negative impacts of a changing climate on global food security.
- The repurposing of agricultural subsidies that crowd out smaller-scale agricultural producers from their own markets and impede the achievement of climate goals.
- The tight control of food export restrictions in the WTO so that food importing countries do not find their food supply diminished in times of global crisis.
- The maintenance of flow of agricultural trade and prevent export restrictions inconsistent with WTO rules, recognizing the critical role of international programs, such as the UN World Food Programme, in ensuring food security globally.
- A resolution of the issue of the public stockholding for food security purposes.
- A renewed commitment to refrain from unilateral trade measures and to reinforce the multilateral, rules-based system as the cornerstone for stability and predictability in global trade.
- A fully functioning dispute settlement system that is efficient, effective, transparent, and accessible.
- Recognising the role of agricultural production in conjunction with climate and environmental outcomes, including through constructive engagement in initiatives such as the Informal Forum on Trade and Climate (IFCCT).
- An active participation of the Farmers' Organizations in the Integrated Forum on Climate Change and Trade, an initiative from our COP30 Action Agenda. It's built on the simple case that trade matters for the transition to a more sustainable, prosperous and inclusive economy. This cannot be achieved without food security.
- Proper protection of geographical indications as provided for under the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and recognition of country-of-origin requirements that allows countries to distinguish their products without distorting trade.

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Looking beyond the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference, the WFO calls for action to reinforce the global agricultural trading system in a way that includes strengthening international standards, eliminating unlawful protectionist measures, capacity building for under-represented and vulnerable groups, an investment in trade infrastructure, improved transparency, and a trading system where farmers benefit fairly and where governments prevent the abuse of market power. More details on each of these policy recommendations are outlined in the WFO Policy on International Trade.

Future trade agreements must be designed to ensure fair market returns for producers and production of safe, quality food for consumers. Thus, future trade agreements must not be limited to regulating domestic support levels, export subsidies, and market access. Rather, every future trade agreement must address differences in labour standards, environmental standards, health standards and the trade distorting effects of currency manipulation and the cartelization of agriculture markets.

The WFO appeals to the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference to ensure the agricultural negotiations are responsive to the global challenges facing the food and agriculture systems and the needs and experiences of farmers at the local level, reinforcing the position of farmers in the food chain and ensuring the food security of the global population.

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