

NEWS RELEASE



For more information, please contact:

M. Ann Tutwiler, 1-202-328-5001, tutwiler@agritrade.org

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN DERBEZ AGRICULTURAL DRAFT, SAY INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LEADERS

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In the past few weeks, the chances for rekindling global trade talks have improved dramatically. US Trade Ambassador Robert Zoellick is traveling the globe drumming up support for relaunching the talks. EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy is also urging countries to come back to the negotiating table. The Group of Twenty and the Cairns Group are meeting to consider how to restart the process. And, in Geneva the WTO has appointed new chairs to take over the Doha negotiating committees.

Negotiators must agree on a framework for the agricultural negotiations in the next few months.

The agricultural text drafted by Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Ernesto Derbez in Cancun must be the basis for further negotiations: starting over with a new text would cause considerable and unnecessary delay. However, the International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) believes the Derbez text must be improved considerably if the objectives of the Doha Development Round are to be realized.

- ***Negotiators must establish a fixed date to eliminate all forms of subsidized export competition, and a schedule for phasing them out.***
- ***Negotiators should not allow countries to play a shell game with their domestic subsidies by moving them into another category. Negotiators should tighten disciplines on domestic support by capping and substantially reducing trade-distorting subsidies, and by applying disciplines commodity by commodity.***
- ***Negotiators should require minimum tariff cuts, commodity by commodity, and should require countries to subject the bulk of their tariffs to the more ambitious tariff-reduction formula.***
- ***Negotiators should not exempt politically or economically sensitive products from tariff ceilings, tariff cuts or quota increases. Instead, countries should have the flexibility to phase in measures over a longer timeframe, or provide increased market access in those products through higher import quotas.***
- ***Negotiators should require both developed and developing countries to share in commitments to reduce trade distortions and open their markets, both to create trading opportunities and to stimulate economic growth.***

If developing countries and farmers everywhere are to have faith in the power of trade to enhance economic development, then the trade reforms taken in the Doha Development Round must be real and meaningful. An agreement that allows countries to continue trade distorting, subsidized export competition; move trade distorting domestic subsidies from one category to another without real reductions; and continue to protect the most highly protected commodities, will only elicit more cynicism and distrust in global trade, hurting developed and developing countries alike.