OPPORTUNITIES IN MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES
Background

- Art 20 of AoA mandates the negotiations on further liberalisation on Agriculture
- Reaffirmed at Doha in 2001
- Areas of negotiation is in three pillars
  - market access,
    tariffs, selection sensitive products, designation of special products, SSM
  - Export Competition
    Elimination of Export Subsidies, disciplining the displacing effects of food aid, etc
  - Domestic Support
    Substantial reduction of trade distorting DSM
Why should Africa be interested in Agriculture Negotiations?

• The significance of Agriculture to most African countries as a driving force
• Most African countries especially LDCs have high dependency on Agriculture from two perspectives;
• The potential that Agric provides
a) As an employment, food security and rural livelihood

b) Export revenue generator

- An increasing realisation of the positive role that trade can contribute towards African development
- The recognition of the fact that globalisation as inevitable
• Unlike in the Uruguay round and the lessons learnt from unilateral and IMF/WB adjustment programs, Africa is now cautious on commitments to be made.

• African position is guided by pronouncements embedded in various AU declarations on WTO
Key principles for Africa

- Adequate policy space must be provided
- Consideration of S&D treatment for developing and LDC countries.
- Addressing distortions affecting competitiveness of African products on international markets e.g. cotton issues
- Addressing supply constraints on the production side.
African Countries interests in Market Access

LDCs
• Clarification and implementation of the 97% DFQF principle agreement of HK
• Simplification, transparency and implementation of RoO

Other interests
• Proportionality in tariff reduction
• Designation of special products
• Introduction and application of SSM
• Preference erosion
Domestic Support

• Substantial reduction of trade domestic support by the developed countries.

• Clarification and review should not result in any box shifting.

• Cotton request of total elimination of trade distorting support on DS
Export Competition

• Even though Africa originally targeted 2010 as end date for export subsidies, now agreeing to HK decision of 2013.

• Safeguard access to food aid for emergency situations, but discipline the distorting effects
Opportunities

Opportunities include among others:

• Enhanced market access with predictable/binding commitments
• Enhanced competitiveness
• Access to financial resources to address supply side constraints e.g. A4T
• Enhanced TRTA
Challenges

- Institutional and human constraints to ensure that an effective negotiating mechanism is in place and able to advance interests of Africa.
- Coordination between Capitals and Geneva
- Capacity to identify specific needs of African countries that require financial assistance.
- Absorption capacity of TRTA support