



IPC STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 30, 2009

Contact: Alexis Starkey
starkey@agritrade.org
1-202-328-5056

Trade is an Important Tool in the Food Security Tool Kit

(Washington, DC) G8 leaders must keep food security at the forefront of their meeting next week in Rome. “The economic crisis has not eclipsed, but rather exacerbated the food crisis,” states IPC Member Joachim von Braun, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute. One year after the G8 endorsed the formation of a Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security in the Toyako Declaration on Global Food Security, there is a policy consensus on the need to revitalize the agricultural sector in developing countries. Developing countries as well as donor governments have taken an important step by recommitting to higher levels of investment in agricultural research & development, extension services and improved rural infrastructure. The G8 needs to ensure that these financial commitments are not only met, but increased and prolonged, if their substantial pay-offs are to actually be achieved. This G8 Summit’s focus on Africa is appropriate. Nowhere is the need for sustained levels of commitment and investment greater than in Sub-Saharan Africa – a region with a relatively large availability of arable land but serious constraints: only 4% of African agriculture is irrigated and African producers are hampered by inadequate access to agricultural inputs.

“Ongoing efforts to boost agricultural productivity are absolutely crucial,” says IPC Chairman Carlo Trojan, “but trade is also an important element for food security.”

- Better access to local and regional markets will facilitate greater income for developing country farmers and promote food security. Trends towards greater regional integration in Africa are promising and should be encouraged.
- Distortions in the global agricultural trading system, such as high levels of production-linked domestic support and export subsidies, which disadvantage developing country producers, must be addressed.
- Remaining tariff peaks and tariff escalation on products in which many developing countries can have a comparative advantage must be reduced and eliminated.
- Africa should also seek greater market access to emerging economies, where there is a great potential for trade expansion.
- Access to imports also matters, in particular because challenges posed by rapid urbanization and climate change will require greater reliance on trade.
- An open trading system, which should include disciplines on export restrictions, provides more affordable and reliable access to agricultural inputs and food at more stable prices.
- To ensure global equity, open trade must be reinforced with institutional innovations and supplemental resources to ensure access to supplies and adequacy of purchasing power across all market conditions, modernization of food infrastructure to meet rising standards and expectations, and transfer of technologies to promote sustainable productivity growth.
- The Aid for Trade package as included in the Doha Round package merits full support and implementation.

For more on the role of trade in food security, see IPC’s Discussion Paper by Robbin Johnson at <http://www.agritrade.org/documents/FoodSecurity.pdf>

###

About IPC The International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) promotes a more open and equitable global food system by pursuing pragmatic trade and development policies in food and agriculture to meet the world’s growing needs. IPC convenes influential policymakers, agribusiness executives, farm leaders, and academics from developed and developing countries to clarify complex issues, build consensus, and advocate policies to decision-makers. More information on the organization and its membership can be found on our website: www.agritrade.org.