

HoDs Meeting – 17 December 2005

STATEMENT BY MINISTER CELSO AMORIM ON BEHALF OF THE G-20

Mr. President,

I will speak first on behalf of the G-20 and, subsequently, I will make some specific remarks on other points of the Ministerial Declaration on behalf of Brazil.

The G-20 is a developing country grouping dedicated to agriculture. On this issue, central to development and to the Round, we have consistently stressed the need for the removal of distortions in agricultural trade. It is central to the Round and central to developing countries. We have made progress since July 2004. Nevertheless, this progress has been rather faltering and insufficient.

The G-20 has made positive contributions to the negotiating process in substance and in process, with a forward looking attitude and its commitment to ambitious results in agriculture in line with the Doha Mandate. The Group has tabled a complete set of proposals in all three pillars of the negotiation. Given the diversity of its composition, the Group's proposals in themselves represent a balanced view. The G-20 is living proof that a "bottom-up" approach is feasible and capable of forging the necessary compromises. The Group has changed the nature of the negotiating process in the WTO, playing a constructive role, enhancing transparency and promoting inclusiveness.

Throughout this process, the G-20 has preserved its unity. More than that, the G-20 has been capable of going beyond the Group's confines. Indeed, Hong Kong witnessed the unprecedented Ministerial Meeting between the G-20, the G-33, the ACP, the LDCs, the African Group, and the Small Economies. Whilst recognizing their diversity, the Groups vowed to intensify their dialogue, with a view to ensuring that the negotiations lead to an outcome consistent with the development mandate of the Doha Round. Efforts to divide and separate developing countries came to nothing. Efforts to de-legitimize our demands lost credibility.

The expectations for the Hong Kong Ministerial were low. Elements for the central bargains were not there. Key players have been unable or unwilling to engage. This was clearly reflected in the Draft Ministerial text, which fell far short of what is needed to complete modalities. We had hoped, however, that our partners would feel the importance of the hour and make at least some gestures that would provide the necessary impetus for continuing the negotiations. We haven't seen any such gestures as yet.

The text before us marginally improves the original draft. Even within the confines of limited expectations, it should have gone farther. An unequivocal reaffirmation of the July 2004 Framework is required. Furthermore, it is necessary to make it clear that developing country members will be placed on a fourth band for the purpose of cutting their AMS and their overall trade-distorting support. Also, we should provide for a linear cut in Market Access, so as to be in line with amendments in other areas of the Declaration.

As you have said, Mr. President, agriculture is the engine of the Round and the engine is losing steam. There is urgent need for a political reaffirmation of commitment to the Round. And it is essential that this reaffirmation be made with regard to agriculture.

Setting the date for the elimination of all forms of export subsidies can provide that reaffirmation. There is no justification for the continuation of export subsidies, the most distorting form of support. There are no ethical, economic or social reasons to justify their maintenance. There is already an agreement to eliminate them. What we need is a credible end date. Such date is 2010.

We also wish to reaffirm our solidarity to the aspirations of poor cotton producing countries of Africa that is shared by other producers in the developing world.

Mr. President,

I wish to add some elements in the representation of my own country regarding other aspects of the draft Ministerial Declaration.

Our concerns in NAMA regard the balanced treatment of this subject and agriculture. In the adoption of any formula in NAMA, it should be made clear the operation of the principle of "less than full reciprocity" in reduction commitments.

It will be also important that the question of flexibilities for developing countries be considered an integral and stand-alone part of the modalities.

In this respect, I would like to indicate that Brazil together with the group known as NAMA Eleven will be forwarding our concerns to the President on the NAMA text.

I understand the work undertaken with respect to services has started to address the concerns of G-90 delegations regarding excessive prescriptiveness of the text.

I wish also to highlight that it is necessary to agree on a mandate to initiate negotiations on the relation between TRIPS and CBD.

Thank you, Mr. President.