

C4 PRESS RELEASE

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS ON COTTON

For 14 years now, the four co-sponsors of the Sectoral Initiative in Favour of Cotton (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad) have been raising at the WTO the issue of the ongoing distortions to cotton production in the least developed countries (LDCs) and the African cotton producing and exporting countries. The C4 has submitted a draft text for a Ministerial Decision on cotton in the framework of the negotiations of the Tenth Ministerial Conference in Nairobi.

This draft is intended to ensure the phasing out of all forms of subsidies and domestic support that have a distorting effect on the international cotton market, and duty- and quota-free access for cotton and cotton by-products.

These four countries, which are among the weakest and most vulnerable in the world, note with considerable regret that so far, while the negotiations conducted actively both in Geneva and Nairobi have failed to achieve any substantial progress, the distorting effects on the international cotton market of the subsidies and domestic support accorded by WTO Members persist.

In view of the entrenched positions of the countries that have opted for domestic support and subsidization policies with regard to cotton, the co-sponsors of the Sectoral Initiative in Favour of Cotton renew their urgent and desperate appeal to all of the stakeholders to show flexibility so that we can reach a concrete, quantifiable and historic result in Nairobi on the three pillars of market access, domestic support and export competition, without prejudice to the outcome of the negotiations on agriculture.

In any event, the C4 calls international public opinion to witness this situation, and will hold the countries concerned responsible for any failure in the negotiations on cotton, whose importance to the survival of many small producers in the poor countries throughout the world, and in Africa in particular, has been amply demonstrated.

Nairobi, 16 December 2015
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