

Closing Session

Five Highlights and a Quote!

"In the end, at this event, industry and farm leaders have sent the WTO community a message that is loud and clear: they want more not less WTO. And I firmly believe that we in the WTO must now take the time to reflect on this event, and to deliver."

Anabel Gonzalez
Deputy Director-General
World Trade Organization (WTO)

- Offering her overall assessment of Agri-Food Business Day, WTO Deputy Director-General, Anabel Gonzalez, found that the food and fertilizer crisis had been front and centre of all roundtables, with participants expressing their serious concern about the current situation and their hope that trade policy would be part of the solution, and not part of the problem. The underlying message of all sessions she thought was that this was a time for the international community to “join hands” rather than to drift apart. She stressed that there was a need to be sharing food and fertilizer across global agricultural value chains.
- The Egyptian Ambassador provided an overview of COP27 Summit outcomes on agriculture. The Summit made history by including food, rivers, nature-based solutions, tipping points, and the right to a healthy environment in an overarching COP “cover decision” for the first time. Agriculture and food security – thought to have been at risk of dropping off the climate talks’ agenda – were given a stronger mandate and a four-year lease of life through the “Koronivia Work Programme”. The Egyptian Presidency of the COP also launched a Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation or FAST initiative, which was expected to deliver important outcomes. Furthermore, Sharm el-Sheikh hosted the first food-systems pavilion at a COP.
- The World Farmers Organization (WFO) presented its full and unwavering support for the WTO, pointing to the first ever trade policy statement sent by WFO to a Ministerial Conference (MC12). In it, farmers called for a trading system that provides for a fair, transparent and predictable trading environment. The International Seed Federation (ISF) agreed, stating that there is a need to empower farmers. Farmers need a diversified supply of seeds, and access to innovation, and hence the paramount importance of international trade. Equally paramount for the seed sector is that regulation be science-based; and in this endeavor ISF sought continued help and support from WTO.
- The US Ambassador called on WTO Members to use the WTO system to help foster and incentivize innovation in food systems through the opening of borders and trade to the latest technologies. Innovation would be vital, she stressed, to the ability of food systems to respond to current challenges. This would have to be pursued however with the recognition that no one-size can fit all – the world needs to be open to a variety of approaches.
- The International Agri-Food Network (IAFN) signaled strong private sector commitment to the WTO, indicating that “action time” for the private sector is always now. The WTO needed to make immediate progress in ongoing agriculture negotiations.

Keywords:

#global solidarity
#sharing food & fertilizer
#COP27
#farmers
#fair, transparent, predictable trading system

#seeds
#innovation
#private sector