

## Fifth Roundtable Five Highlights and a Quote!

***“From the perspective of the Americas, we would want to see a functioning WTO to help facilitate global food and agricultural trade to the benefit of everyone.”***

*Lloyd Day*

*Deputy Director-General*

*Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture*

- The Agricultural Attaché of The Gambia opened Roundtable Five indicating that his country had not been spared during the food crisis. The Gambia's poverty rate is around 48% while hunger has risen from 5 to 8% over the past five years. Those who are mainly dependent on farming are the most hungry, yet agriculture employs 46% of the population and up to 80% of people in rural areas.
- His views were echoed by the Pan-African Agribusiness and Agroindustry Consortium, which indicated that African agriculture was severely impacted by the current fertilizer shortage, with subsidies and other financing interventions being urgently required. With the Americas being net exporters of food and less dependent on the Black Sea region, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture reported that the crisis was less left in the region, even if the fertilizer shortage and higher food prices were nevertheless perceptible.
- Businesses reported serious disruption to international trade and global value chains as a result of the multiple overlapping global crises, ranging from an inability to access agricultural inputs and grain, to all sorts of logistical disruptions with the closure of the airspace above the Black Sea region conflict zone, and blockages in key ports. In addition, business was having to contend with many "emergency regulations" enacted by governments to confront these crises that were reducing the ease of doing business.
- Businesses also reported on the sustainability challenge, emphasizing the need to balance environmental and food security goals, and to ensure that environmental regulations are anchored in sound science. The Global Dairy Platform explained how the industry was pursuing various pathways to net zero emissions, but urged that countries not pursue their Paris commitments by reducing food exports. The global mass balance needed to be respected, and countries needed to consider the impact of their policies beyond national boundaries.
- The WTO has an important role to play in alleviating the multiple ongoing crises, and needs in particular to address food, feed and fertilizer export restrictions head on. These restrictions were still on the rise despite decisions taken at the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference (MC12). Such restrictions only lead to beggar-thy-neighbor policies and hurt food import-dependent countries. The representative of the European Union made a plea for addressing these restrictions with urgency and complimented the Committee on Agriculture on having adopted a Work Programme to increase the agricultural resilience of developing and least-developed net food importing countries, as requested by MC12.

### **Keywords:**

#food crisis

#fertilizer crisis

#export restrictions

#non-tariff barriers

#science-based measures

#rules-based trading system

#Committee on Agriculture  
#sustainability  
#Paris commitments