

First Roundtable Five Highlights and a Quote!

“Global supply chains are essential if we plan to meet the upcoming food security challenge. We need to build a resilient system in order to do that.”

Kristjan Herbert

CEO of Herbert Farms, Global Farmer Network

- Global agricultural and food trade has more than doubled since 1995, after the WTO Agreement on Agriculture entered into force, amounting to over USD 1.8 trillion today. Emerging and developing country exports are on the rise, accounting for over one-third of total agricultural exports, making trade vital for economic growth and sustainable development.
- One of the most important changes in the past few decades has been the fact that food is increasingly produced in global value chains. Global value chains have been enormously beneficial to mankind, allowing each component of a food to come from where it can most efficiently be produced. This efficiency is also reflected in natural resource use, since trade in food is trade in land, water, and energy. Value chains allow, for example, for components that are water-intensive to come from water-abundant regions and not from regions with a shortage. The resilience of these chains has been tested lately by the pandemic, war, and now an impending global recession.
- Global food and agricultural value chains are essential to the stability of food supply at the global level, in particular in light of the climate crisis, and essential to the spread of new technologies and new ways of growing and distributing food. They are equally essential to taking new technologies to scale. Public and private sector engagement is necessary to address supply chain bottlenecks, and the harmonization of food standards also key. Emphasis was placed on the importance of removing unnecessary barriers to trade and addressing trade distortions through agreements such as the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS).
- The Global Farmer Network noted that there could be no question that global supply chains had been beneficial for farmers and that their lives had improved as a result. It called on the WTO to engage farmers in order to reduce supply chain bottlenecks and to allow farmers to bring their stories to the WTO negotiating table.
- The Eastern Africa Grain Council highlighted the seriousness of the current fertilizer shortage, and its impact on the African grain sector in particular. It went as far as to say that restricting the export of fertilizer in one end of the globe would be to sign a death warrant for people on the other end. It urged that the world change its perception of fertilizer, which has to be seen as equivalent to food and food security. International trade in fertilizer, and global fertilizer supply chains, underpin global food security.

Keywords:

#food security
#fertilizer security
#global value chains
#pandemic
#war
#recession
#climate change
#sustainability

#farmers

#non-tariff barriers

#TBT

#SPS

#Public private sector partnership