



Committee on Agriculture

**CoA@100 EVENT
GENEVA, 17 MARCH 2022**

INFORMAL SUMMARY REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT¹

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. On the margins of the 100th session of the Committee on Agriculture (CoA), a half-day CoA@100 event² was organized on 17 March 2022 to recall and acknowledge the Committee's accomplishments over the last twenty-seven years.

1.2. On 4 February 2022, the CoA Chairperson sent an invitation [letter](#) to all Members, observer governments and International Observer Organizations to participate in the event. The Chairperson requested that Members extend the invitation to current and past delegates, in particular former CoA chairpersons.

1.3. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Chairperson and delegations, prepared a detailed programme of the event. The programme was circulated as an official document³ for easy access and wider circulation. The programme included two panel discussions, facilitated by a moderator, followed by exchanges among participants. The first panel entitled "**25 years of the CoA**" recalled the evolution of the Committee's Review Process, and provided an assessment of the CoA's work and accomplishments over more than 25 years. The second panel on the theme of "**CoA – 25 years into the future**" explored the possible role of the Committee in assisting Members to deal with the contemporary challenges facing global agriculture and agricultural trade.

2 OPENING CEREMONY

2.1. The opening ceremony was moderated by Edwini Kessie, Director of the Agriculture and Commodities Division and entailed an address by the Director-General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and video messages by former CoA chairpersons Ambassador Apiradi Tantraporn of Thailand and Ambassador Nestor Osorio Londoño of Colombia.

2.2. In her [opening remarks](#), the Director-General (DG) commended the WTO Secretariat for the event and welcomed the presence of several CoA chairpersons and agricultural delegates at the event, thanking them for the services rendered to the Committee. The DG noted that the CoA had undertaken with distinction the important task of facilitating and monitoring Members' implementation of undertakings assumed under the Agreement on Agriculture. In so doing, the Committee provided a robust forum for WTO Members to exchange views about compliance with existing rules and to address concerns with each other's trade policies before they escalated into disputes. The DG also underlined that the Committee had contributed to WTO's overall efforts to promote the rule of law at the international level. She also recalled the Committee's role in developing effective, accountable, and transparent farm policies contributing thereby to the achievement of public policy goals in areas such as food security and rural development and to help ensure that trade in food and farm goods worked to improve people's lives. Recalling how the Committee offered a vital forum for discussion and dialogue between Members during the COVID-19

¹ This report has been prepared by the Secretariat solely to keep a record of the discussions held during the CoA@100 special event for future reference and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

² The event was organized in a hybrid format with virtual participation via Interprefy.

³ G/AG/GEN/196/Rev.1.

pandemic, the DG encouraged Members to continue to invest in strengthening the Committee's work through participating actively in its deliberations and by sharing information about trade measures in a timely and transparent manner.

2.3. **Ambassador Apiradi Tantraporn** of Thailand and **Ambassador Nestor Osorio Londoño** of Colombia, who chaired the CoA respectively during 1996-1997 and 1997-2000, also spoke at the opening ceremony. In her [video message](#), Ambassador Tantraporn emphasized that the conclusion of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and its entry into force in 1995 marked a significant milestone towards the reform of global agricultural trade. She noted that the role of the CoA to oversee the AoA's implementation and as a forum for Members to address agriculture-related concerns had since remained crucial, including by monitoring Members' compliance with subsequent Ministerial Decisions resulting from agriculture negotiations. She also noted the need for the Committee to evolve and have additional tools to effectively deal with newer global agricultural challenges, and alluded to the Committee's possible transition to a 'COA 2.0'. Ambassador Tantraporn emphasized the importance of addressing agricultural trade-related challenges for developing and least-developed countries and to support them towards the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ambassador Tantraporn also noted that the agricultural trade reform process mandated by Article 20 of the AoA was still outstanding and that the CoA would play a key role to implement those new commitments, once agreed.

2.4. Ambassador Nestor Osorio, in his [video message](#), noted that the AoA was one of the most important and politically sensitive achievements of the Uruguay Round, which also gave birth to the WTO. The CoA had a colossal task to follow-up on thousands of commitments on TRQs and on domestic and export subsidies which the Committee, through its rigorous system of notifications, had assumed with great responsibility and technical competence. Ambassador Osorio also recalled the two-year long "Analysis and Information Exchange" (AIE) process, conducted by the Committee during his Chairmanship with remarkable support by the Secretariat, which provided a robust technical foundation for the conduct of the mandated negotiations. He also referred to an important organic link which the CoA had maintained with the CoA Special Session, with the responsibility, as necessary, of monitoring the implementation of outcomes reached so far, including the 2015 landmark agreement on the elimination of agricultural export subsidies. Ambassador Osorio considered the Committee as an asset for the Membership to achieve a balanced, fair and sustainable trade in agricultural products and thereby support food security and nutrition.

3 PRESENTATION BY THE SECRETARIAT

3.1. The Secretariat (Diwakar Dixit, Secretary of the CoA) in its [presentation](#) noted that, in addition to the important political dimension associated with the task of the Committee to follow up on the first-ever comprehensive multilateral agreement on agriculture, there had been a critical 'implementation' dimension of the Committee's work. With the technical complexity and novelty of thousands of numerical 'annual' commitments that Members assumed on TRQs and agricultural subsidies within the framework of the AoA, it was imperative to have the institutional framework of the Committee to provide the confidence that those commitments had been adhered to. The Secretariat also shared statistics in respect of the two key mechanisms of notifications and Q&A that the Committee bases its work on, and noted the greater reliance by Members in recent years on Article 18.6 and the review of Members' agricultural policy developments compared to the review of notifications. The Secretariat also underlined the contribution of the on-line Agriculture Information Management System (AG-IMS) platform to facilitate transparency and Members' participation in the CoA.

4 PANEL I: '25 YEARS OF THE COA' - RECALLING THE EVOLUTION OF THE COMMITTEE REVIEW PROCESS, AND OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE COA'S WORK AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

4.1. The moderator of the first panel, and current CoA Chairperson, **Mr. Marcos da Rosa Uranga** (Uruguay) introduced the discussions by providing a summary of the Committee's work and important milestones since its establishment in 1995. **Mr. da Rosa** noted that Members had engaged in extensive discussions from the beginning on the implementation of the Uruguay Round agricultural commitments, including some that led to consultations and disputes already in 1995. The efforts made enabled the Committee, at its second meeting in June 1995, to adopt the detailed notification requirements and formats contained in G/AG/2, which had since played a key role to support the Committee's monitoring function. Strong calls were heard in the very early days of the establishment

of the CoA to achieve further clarity on TRQ administration methods. Members feared that various TRQ administration arrangements employed by Members lacked transparency, and could impede trade or impair the value of market access concessions. The CoA Chair had to convene informal consultations on this issue already in 1996. A lot had happened on the issue of TRQ administration since then until it became an important component of the agriculture negotiations agenda, resulting finally in the adoption of the Bali TRQ Decision in 2013, along with an underfill mechanism whose future operation Members had continued to discuss in the CoA, including at the 100th CoA meeting in March 2022.

4.2. **Mr. da Rosa** recalled the important role played by the Committee's AIE process agreed by the Singapore Ministerial Conference. By way of several technical submissions by Members and the Secretariat, the AIE process during 1997-1999 prepared the ground for the launch of the substantive negotiations envisaged under Article 20 of the AoA in 2000. He also referred to extensive discussions in the Committee during 1998-1999 to address several notification-related issues and practices, which resulted in a detailed background note prepared by the Secretariat as contained in G/AG/W/45. **Mr. da Rosa** referred to the detailed work programme conducted in the CoA during 2009-2011 to enhance the transparency of the CoA and to improve the timeliness and completeness of agriculture notifications in particular, which resulted in several important outcomes, including streamlining of CoA documents, launch of notification workshops, elaboration of a Notification Handbook by the Secretariat, launch of the AG-IMS Q&A in 2012 and of the AG-IMS on-line notification system in 2019.

4.3. **Mr. da Rosa** referred to the important role the CoA played in facilitating the agriculture negotiations and ensuring a proper follow-up of the ministerial outcomes arising from them. He specifically referred to the first dedicated discussions on export competition in 2014 after the Bali Ministerial Conference and in 2016 after the adoption of the Nairobi Ministerial Decision on export competition. The CoA had already concluded two triennial reviews on export competition respectively in 2018 and 2022, and agreed on important outcomes⁴ on the transparency of TRQ administration in 2019 during the Bali TRQ Decision review exercise launched in 2017. **Mr. da Rosa** also recalled that the Committee convened a special meeting in June 2020, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and since provided an important forum for Members' engagement on each other's COVID-19 agricultural measures based on contributions by Members and observer international organizations.

4.4. With this introduction, Mr. da Rosa invited panellists⁵ to share their insights on the evolution of the work of the CoA, the Committee's accomplishments, possible avenues for improvements, anecdotes about their personal experiences, lessons learned and the role they had played in the work of the Committee.

4.5. **Mr. Chris Carson** (New Zealand) provided background on why and how the Committee was established and what was the trading environment at the time of the launch of the Uruguay Round in September 1986. There were major distortions in international markets resulting from frequent recourse to border measures, quantitative restrictions, voluntary restraint agreements, variable levies, and heavily price-dependent domestic subsidies. Most agricultural measures were not regulated under the GATT and there were two major agricultural subsidy providers, namely the United States and the European Communities, as it used to be called then. This had led to highly distorted world markets for agricultural products, giving rise to terminologies like 'wine lakes', 'butter mountains', with agricultural products being pushed to world markets with the use of export subsidies. This led to global prices being pushed down and effectively forcing other countries to subsidize to maintain the income of their farmers. Academic work, including by the OECD, suggested that if subsidies by the European Communities and the United States were to be reduced together, the adjustment would be easier facilitating the recovery of depressed global prices.

4.6. Mr. Carson considered that the Uruguay Round outcome was ground-breaking for setting aside the GATT legality of certain measures and for establishing reduction commitments on agricultural subsidies. The former had resulted in tariffication, TRQ commitments and a special agricultural safeguard (SSG) whereas the latter was manifest in aggregate domestic support commitments and product-specific quantity and budgetary outlay limits on export subsidies. The establishment of subsidy commitments, effected through extensive data exchange and submission of supporting

⁴ G/AG/29.

⁵ Please refer to Annex 1 for the composition of Panels.

tables, was indeed a novelty which only few experts at that time, including in the Secretariat, had deemed feasible, both from practical and legal perspectives.

4.7. The period between the conclusion of the Uruguay Round agriculture negotiations in December 1993 and the first CoA meeting in 1995 saw intense discussions among Members to establish the notification requirements and formats contained in G/AG/2, which were primarily derived from the Uruguay Round schedules and supporting tables. Although not without divergences and controversy, G/AG/2 and the Committee's procedures for the first time allowed a holistic discussion on the individual elements of Members' agricultural policies based on the review of notifications and under the Article 18.6 process. Despite practical challenges like those related to the definition of 'year' to determine individual start dates of Members' commitments, there was a genuine optimism within the CoA. The Uruguay Round was highly instrumental in encouraging both the European Communities and the United States to undertake reforms in their agricultural subsidy regimes even before the start of the implementation of the AoA in 1995.

4.8. Mr. Carson also alluded to significant technological evolution in handling and processing of information by the CoA and the Secretariat since 1995. While currently there is a digital platform like the AG-IMS, back in 1995 computers were seldom used, communication was through phones and fax machines, and most information was received and circulated on paper. He referred to the cover page of G/AG/2 which advises Members to provide notified information in 'diskette' in Lotus or Word-Perfect formats.

4.9. **Ms. Pam Cooper** (Canada) noted that Members had accorded significant importance to the framework of rules and disciplines under the AoA, and the binding commitments it anchored on market access, domestic support, and export competition. In relation to the establishment of the CoA, there had been a critical interest among Members to ensure that rules were fully adhered to.

4.10. Ms. Cooper noted that the foundation for the Committee had been laid during the work conducted in 1994 through the Preparatory Committee, including specifically on agricultural notification formats. She referred to three documents forming the foundation of the work of the CoA and the review process, namely: the 'Terms of Reference'⁶ of the Committee, agreed at the first meeting of the General Council in January 1995; the 'Organization of Work and Working Procedures'⁷, adopted by the CoA at its first meeting in March 1995; and the 'Notification Requirements and Formats'⁸, adopted by the CoA at its second meeting in June 1995. She also noted that even before the adoption of the notification requirements and formats by the Committee in June 1995, notifications had been submitted, and the first questions were put to Members already at the very first meeting of the Committee in March 1995.

4.11. Ms. Cooper also underlined that the three foundational documents adopted by the Committee were not limiting, nor specifically prescriptive; they rather offered sufficient scope and flexibility for the Committee to organize its work. This might be a possible reason why these core organizational parameters continued to guide and serve the Committee well till date.

4.12. Ms. Cooper also attributed the success of the Committee in its early years to the exceptional set of people involved in its work. Through the last years of the Uruguay Round and into the first few years of the Committee, Members were extremely well supported and advised by the staff of the Agriculture and Commodities Division, led by Frank Wolter as Director and Evan Rogerson, Paul Shanahan and Chris Carson as the key officers in the Division. The first chairs, starting from late Ambassador Danai Tulalamba, followed by Ambassador Apiradi Tantraporn, both from Thailand, and Ambassador Nestor Osorio of Colombia played a key role in leading the Committee to an impressive start and guiding the subsequent chairpersons to ably steer the Committee. Finally, Ms. Cooper recalled the role of first Agriculture attachés who most often were the veterans of the Uruguay Round and brought with them a solid knowledge of domestic and trade policies in agriculture, the Agreement itself and Members' commitments; these exceptional individuals had approached the work of the Committee with a practical and pragmatic mindset.

⁶ WT/L/43.

⁷ G/AG/1.

⁸ G/AG/2.

4.13. Ms. Copper noted that the Committee had also contributed two other core functions of the WTO, namely, the process of resolving differences between Members, and laying the foundation for future negotiations as mandated by Article 20 of the AoA. Many of the issues raised at the Committee were under Article 18.6 discussions, and some ended up in dispute settlements, while others were settled through a process of seeking additional information on policies and practices in the Committee. She also specifically alluded to the highly productive role of the Chairperson and informal meetings and consultations during the early years of the Committee.

4.14. Ms. Copper recognized the significant changes introduced over the years by the Secretariat in the organization of the Committee's work towards increased transparency to streamline the process of submitting and distributing notifications, questions and answers, tracking outstanding notifications and deferred replies, and to make the information easily accessible to Members and the general public. Recalling a highly contrasting situation in early years of the Committee, when most of the information was shared and processed manually on paper, she welcomed the existing automation and efficient information management tools facilitating the Committee's work. Simultaneously, Ms. Cooper considered that these data automation related changes had dealt primarily with the organization and mechanics of the Committee and information management rather than the fundamental purpose and nature of the review process.

4.15. Referring to the presentation by the Secretariat on the work of the Committee, Ms. Copper took satisfaction in the growing level of activity in the Committee, characterized by a high volume of incoming notifications and an increasing number of issues being raised under Article 18.6. Ms. Cooper considered this a reflection of good health of the Committee and Members' confidence in the utility of its deliberations. She recalled the contrasting situation prior to and during the Uruguay Round, when several of the then-existing GATT Committees had become relatively inactive, with quite a few countries choosing not to submit notifications for several years. Similarly, the number of cases that went to dispute settlement in the last years of the GATT dropped noticeably - as Contracting Parties had lost confidence that the dispute settlement process, in being possibly blocked by another Contracting Party, would provide a satisfactory resolution to their specific concerns. The growing number of notifications and matters raised at the Committee, as shown by the Secretariat, was therefore a good indicator of the continuing vitality of the Committee.

4.16. **Mr. Magdi Farahat** (Egypt), who chaired the CoA during 2002-2004, believed that the CoA was the preeminent body of the WTO and the functioning of the CoA had been the barometer to gauge the overall health of the WTO. He noted that for many developing and least-developed countries, the AoA had been the major achievement of the overall Uruguay Round outcome, and several of these countries assessed the success of the Round by reflecting on what was achieved in the domain of agriculture.

4.17. Mr. Farahat highlighted that, for Egypt, as was for several other developing countries, food security issues had remained central, more so after the global food crisis of 2007-08. These countries had consistently looked to the CoA in its Regular and Special Sessions to assist them in addressing food security challenges. He also considered that the distinction between the CoA Regular and the CoA Special Session was artificial; these two bodies were rather indivisible and should accordingly maintain the necessary synergy and interaction.

4.18. Mr. Farahat echoed previous speakers and commended the professionalism and the camaradery among agriculture colleagues both within and especially outside of the CoA meetings, which greatly facilitated the work of the Committee. He also underlined the key role of the Chairperson towards efficient and productive CoA meetings. He gave the example of the first discussions at the CoA within China's Transitional Review Mechanism under his chairmanship. There were engaged discussions and the matter entailed high sensitivity. His decision to suspend deliberations and organize an informal conversation among key Members had finally allowed the Committee to smoothly undertake the exercise. Referring to the Secretariat presentation on the evolution of the review process, Mr. Farahat pointed that, while the number of questions raised by Members at the CoA had been increasing, the situation in respect of the rate of outstanding replies was concerning and needed to be remedied.

4.19. Somewhat akin to the suggestion by Ambassador Tantraporn for a 'CoA 2.0', Mr. Farahat argued that the time was ripe for an 'AoA 2.0'. The idea would be to address the concerns of most Members which would, *inter alia*, allow to develop new ways of transparent interactions. While acknowledging the sensitivity of agriculture for virtually all Members, as pointed out by

the Director-General, Mr. Farahat hoped that both the Regular and Special Sessions of the CoA would play their due roles and bear the responsibility towards the goal of an AoA 2.0.

4.20. **Ambassador Julie-Ann Guivarra** (Australia) recalled that, prior to the Uruguay Round, international agricultural trade had been amongst the most distorted sectors of international trade. The Uruguay Round negotiations developed effective rules for agricultural trade, and the establishment of the AoA was indeed a game changer at that stage. Similarly, the CoA had played a vital role to follow up on the implementation of the agreed rules and commitments. Ambassador Guivarra mentioned that, over the years, the transparency of the review of notifications had remained one of the greatest strengths of the CoA, as it allowed visibility of policies and measures used by countries to support their agricultural production. The CoA processes had facilitated a better understanding of individual policy settings and circumstances of various Members. Ambassador Guivarra also considered that the development of the AG-IMS had been a huge step forward in terms of greater accessibility to the Committee's information and notifications.

4.21. Ambassador Guivarra noted that the Committee had also contributed to advancing agriculture trade reform. She gave the example of the preparatory process for the 9th Ministerial Conference (MC-9) in Bali in 2013, where she highlighted the work of the Committee to promote transparency around several issues. After the adoption of the relevant ministerial decisions, follow-up on these issues had now become a part of CoA regular processes, including the enhanced transparency around TRQ administration, Public Stockholding programmes and Export Competition measures.

4.22. Ambassador Guivarra referred to the Export Competition questionnaire and the annual dedicated process at the CoA, which had been first established through the MC-9 Bali process, and later became part of the agreement at MC-10 in Nairobi in 2015 to eliminate export subsidies. In her view, the processes of transparency provided all Members with a greater understanding and assurance that governments had continued to remain on track in their collective efforts to reduce trade distorting measures in agriculture. She also commended the Secretariat's background documents and data collection efforts on export competition. As the Secretariat's infographics suggested, Members' increased number of questions recently towards improved adherence to commitments, including under the export competition outcomes since 2013, suggested a robust review process. This also reflected a genuine interest among Members to learn about the policies and practices of their trading partners, especially with a view to organizing domestic agricultural interventions and assisting farmers in less trade-distorting ways.

4.23. Ambassador Guivarra also reminded the audience about the serious challenges faced by Members to further the agricultural reform agenda. Noting that political drivers to maintain distortive support to farmers still existed, she referred to data from major UN agencies estimating current global support to agriculture at around USD 540 billion, 87% of which was deemed trade-distorting, inequitable and generally harmful to the environment. She wondered whether the current domestic support rules would be deemed fit-for-purpose in the next thirty years. On market access reforms, Ambassador Guivarra noted that, despite significant market access improvements achieved through free trade agreements (FTAs), results were not delivered in a multilateral setting for all Members, especially for those who lacked relative trading and bargaining power to gain market access via FTAs.

4.24. Ambassador Guivarra noted that the work of the Committee might also assist in dealing with some of the greatest contemporary agricultural challenges, such as climate change and related supply chain issues, as well as food security, by examining Members' current practices and a better appreciation of the challenges. She specifically referred to the WTO 2021 World Trade Report, which recognized the importance of trade in addressing economic and environmental resilience, and talked about the varied effects of climate change on countries, including in terms of yields and crops. She further added that it was important for the CoA to be abreast of agricultural reforms that were occurring outside of the WTO to suitably reflect those in its work.

4.25. Ambassador Guivarra emphasized that she was a true believer in the work of the Committee. She urged both the CoA and the CoA-SS, joined by experts from other relevant international organisations, to work together to tackle contemporary issues linked to agricultural trade.

4.26. **Ambassador Yoichi Suzuki** (Japan), the fourth chairperson of the CoA (2000-2002), shared the sentiments expressed by previous speakers about the importance of the CoA and its critical role

in the WTO. Ambassador Suzuki recalled that, during the early years of the Committee, delegations were dealing with a new reality after the successful Uruguay Round, which had brought agriculture comprehensively within the multilateral trading system. There was a renewed optimism and expectation among Members for the achievement of fair and market-oriented agricultural trade.

4.27. One major preoccupation in the CoA discussions at that time was to deal with agricultural subsidization. The important enabling factor for having disciplines on agricultural subsidies under the AoA was that the then two major subsidizers, namely the United States and the European Communities, themselves were finding it difficult to continue with heavy subsidization and were interested to seek avenues for collective reforms. Trading partners at the receiving end of such distorting subsidies naturally were interested in such an effort.

4.28. The second major element of discussions in the CoA in the early 2000 related to elements in the market access pillar associated with tariffication and TRQ administration. There was a serious desire among Members to understand the various administration arrangements employed to administer TRQs. The task of the Chair and the Committee was to develop a good fact-finding database of information through notifications and Committee's records of discussions under Article 18.6 to facilitate full transparency about these measures. Here, Members were already conscious of the then imminent negotiations under Article 20, which were mandated to commence in 2000.

4.29. Ambassador Suzuki noted that Members attributed great importance to notifications and their collective review by the Committee in order to ensure full transparency. In the event of no or delayed submission of notifications, Members were often willing to explain the reasons for such delay. He hoped that Members still considered timely submission of agricultural notifications to be important for the work of the CoA.

4.30. Ambassador Suzuki indicated that, after more than a quarter of a century of work of the CoA, Members' priorities seemed to have changed, with possibly a greater focus on domestic support and export competition rather than on market access. It may be because regional trade agreements were increasingly dealing with agricultural market access, while market access negotiations at the WTO had been stagnating. This may pose a broader question for Members to see if this type of division of labour between the multilateral and FTA-based negotiations was more permanent. Ambassador Suzuki noted that improved transparency and predictability were the basis for fair and market-oriented agriculture trade, both to importers and exporters. He concluded by asking whether current agricultural markets were functioning properly to support the objective of sustainable agricultural trade.

4.1 Q&A AND FINAL COMMENTS BY THE PANELLISTS

4.31. **Mr. Jorge Riaboi** (Argentina), who also chaired CoA meetings on a few occasions during 1995-1997, commented that the AoA should be deemed as just the first instalment of the agricultural reform agenda, as agriculture was still subject to several distortions and exclusions from the full reach of the multilateral trading system. He also cautioned against adopting measures which could circumvent or bypass existing WTO agricultural rules. Mr. Riaboi expressed concerns on regulatory protectionism where some countries effectively sought to enforce their domestic rules onto their trading partners in granting market access. He considered that domestic legislations should ideally adapt to internationally agreed rules.

4.32. With regards to sustainable development and climate change, Mr. Riaboi indicated that environmental concerns were already part of the Marrakesh Agreement, the Agreement on Agriculture, the SPS Agreement and other disciplines of the WTO. Sustainability objectives should not be used as a pretext to engage in trade distortionary policies. Recalling the 1996 World Food Summit organized by FAO, which conceptualized that trade was a key element to achieving food security, Mr. Riaboi called for a holistic and conceptual discussion on the notion of food security. Mr. Riaboi also expressed concerns with the use of Annex 2 of the AoA, especially in relation to the provision of 'income support', where, in the absence of required adjustments in the design of the policies, such income support could de-facto become price support.

4.33. The panellists, in their final observations, noted that:

- a. The AoA resulting from the Uruguay Round was indeed, using Mr. Riaboi's expression, the 'first instalment' of the agricultural reform outcome. This is explicitly acknowledged in the continuation clause in Article 20 of the AoA.
- b. Policy-specific windows in the AoA's Annex 2 were oriented towards the policy priorities and concerns prevailing at the time of the Uruguay Round. It may be worthwhile to examine those provisions to see if they were fit-for-purpose in the current circumstances and the associated challenges (e.g. climate change and sustainable agriculture).
- c. The CoA, while not being the forum for negotiations, could play a key role to incorporate discussions on contemporary issues and good practices to tackle the current challenges and also to suitably inform the ongoing agriculture negotiations in the Special Sessions of the CoA.

4.34. The moderator (**Mr. da Rosa**) thanked all panellists and participants for their insights and for recalling the illustrious journey of the CoA over more than 27 years. The discussions reaffirmed the critical role and the continuing relevance of the Committee. **Mr. da Rosa** also considered that looking at the past of the CoA was important to understand the present and to project into the future, bearing in mind that work in the CoA should evolve in parallel with challenges faced in order for it to remain relevant and responsive to emerging realities and challenges.

5 PANEL II: '25 YEARS INTO THE FUTURE' - POSSIBLE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE IN ASSISTING THE MEMBERSHIP TO DEAL WITH THE CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES FACING GLOBAL AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL TRADE

5.1. **Mr. Christian Häberli** (Switzerland), who was the CoA Chair during 2005-07, moderated the second panel, which explored the role of the Committee into the next 25 years in dealing with the challenges to agri-food trade, and trade and investment rules. He particularly referred to two such biggest challenges respectively in the form of addressing alarmingly high food prices and global food security, and the growing contribution of agriculture to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming.

5.2. On food security related challenges, Mr. Häberli referred to the global food price crisis of 2007-2008, the COVID-19 pandemic and the existing food price rise, which is expected to further worsen by the ongoing situation in the Black Sea region. Mr Häberli noted that, despite the CoA and the review process, there had been a pattern of government's limited adherence to WTO rules during past crises. The WTO COVID-19 Tracker recorded that, out of a total 405 notifications, 92 measures had hit agricultural products by September 2021. Mr Häberli identified the second challenge as being the contribution of agriculture to global warming given that greenhouse gas emissions, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA), had reached their highest level ever in 2021.

5.3. Mr Häberli invited the panellists to comment on the role that the CoA could play in addressing these two major challenges, as well as any other challenge that they would wish for the Committee to deal with. He invited the panellists to look at the existing CoA processes and working procedures and the 'leeway' that the Chair and the delegates could exercise to addressing those challenges, and specifically alluded to the following seven examples: i) Implementation of commitments and the CoA's review process under AoA Article 18:5 taking into account normal growth in world trade, broader agricultural policy developments and the AG-IMS; ii) Counter-notifications under AoA Article 18:7; iii) Special and differential treatment under AoA Article 15; iv) Monitoring of the follow-up to the NFIDC Decision under AoA Article 16; v) Prevention of circumvention of export subsidy commitments under AoA Article 10; vi) Possible role of Trade Policy Review (TPR) reports in the CoA review process; and vii) Conciliation and mediation by the Chair pursuant to Article 5 of the DSU.

5.4. Mr Häberli urged the panellists to engage in discussions without being necessarily bound by respective national positions. He also made it clear that the objective of the discussion was not to suggest changes to the existing rules, a task assigned to the Special Session of the CoA.

5.5. **Ambassador Miriam Chaves** (Argentina), the chairperson of the CoA during 2014-15, noted the current critical challenges facing global agriculture and agricultural trade were hard to envisage twenty years ago. Simultaneously, the AoA and the terms of reference of the CoA offered sufficient

flexibility to Members to explore any pertinent matter related to the implementation of the agricultural reform process.

5.6. Ambassador Chaves emphasized that food security, enhancing productivity and satisfying food demand of a 7.5 billion global population, which could grow to nearly 10 billion by 2050, without harming the environment, represented the greatest agricultural challenge of the coming decades. She noted that agricultural production had always been a risky activity, however, frequent extreme weather events and climate disruptions exacerbated those risks. Considering the varied natural resource endowment among countries, Ambassador Chaves emphasized the importance of functioning international trade and markets in food and agricultural products and recourse to 'smart' production systems and practices to find a balance between increasing food demand and environmental preservation.

5.7. Ambassador Chaves noted that reconfiguring agricultural policies and practices had been increasingly debated in various countries. Several countries had already successfully imbibed transformative agriculture production technologies, including artificial intelligence, machine learning, remote sensing and blockchain technologies, while other countries faced technological and budgetary impediments to do so.

5.8. Ambassador Chaves proposed a holistic and inclusive vision of sustainable agricultural policies and measures at the national level, and their possible coordination at the regional and multilateral levels. She considered that Green Box under Annex 2 of the AoA could usefully anchor national policies related to food security and the environment.

5.9. In addition to new challenges, Ambassador Chaves emphasized that recourse to governmental support in the agriculture sector, currently in the range of USD 700 billion. with more than 40% of it linked to production incentives, continued to be a major contemporary challenge. It was important for the work of the Committee that Members submitted complete notifications in a timely manner. Underlining that price and production incentives and support often ran counter to sustainable agriculture, she emphasized the need for an urgent realignment of domestic agriculture subsidies to cope with contemporary challenges without disrupting production and trade.

5.10. Regarding the possible role of the Committee to assist the Membership in dealing with contemporary challenges faced by global agriculture and agricultural trade, she recommended for the Committee to organize informal sessions to: (i) recognize and discuss national agricultural policies and approaches to deal with contemporary challenges; (ii) identify the scope of policies within Annex 2 of the AoA to meet the growing demand for food and protection of the environment; and (iii) catalogue from among the diversity of national policies and practices, those that resulted in positive environmental externalities. Ambassador Chaves clarified that this exercise was not suggested to be in the setting of examining legal compliance of various policies and practices with the relevant AoA disciplines, but rather to establish a repertory of best practices to address food security and environmental sustainability.

5.11. **Mr. Charles Bertsch** (United States) commended the important work by the Secretariat in supporting the CoA, as well as the contribution of Geneva-based agriculture attachés to the work of the Committee. He underlined that transparency remains the core of the Committee's work, and made three specific suggestions for the Committee's possible future tasks: i) The Committee could review and update the notification requirements to better reflect the current realities of agricultural trade and to improve its functioning; ii) Systematic efforts should be made towards enhancing participation of significantly more Members at the CoA. To this effect, the Secretariat could align its training programmes to enable Members to realize the utility of their participation at the CoA; and iii) An effort should be made towards synchronous organization of CoA and CoA-SS meetings to have an improved synergy between these two organically linked WTO bodies.

5.12. In response to specific questions by the moderator, Mr. Bertsch noted that global food security had been an important issue well before the establishment of the WTO, and that open trade formed a critical component of assuring global food security. Mr. Bertsch noted that food supply chains had been severely threatened first by the COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequently aggravated further by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. He referred to the recent G-7 Agriculture Ministers meeting where ministers expressed their commitment to safeguarding global food security and nutrition while maintaining open markets and restraining the use of export-limiting policies. On the latter,

Mr. Bertsch underscored the importance of timely notifications and referred to the discussions at the 100th CoA meeting, where Japan had specifically raised questions on non-notified agricultural export restrictions.

5.13. On climate change, Mr. Bertsch considered that the CoA could help inform the negotiations and increase transparency. The Committee could provide a forum for sharing national experiences on efficient policies with least negative spill-over effects and hence could assist in developing a set of 'best practices', as was mentioned earlier by Ambassador Chaves, to help mitigate the negative impact of climate change.

5.14. **Mr. Guilherme Bayer** (Brazil), who chaired the CoA during 2013-2014, commented on the unique role and situation of the CoA within the WTO architecture as being the only multilateral body where Members could deliberate on agricultural policies and their impact on trade. By facilitating an informed understanding of Members' agricultural policies, the CoA's work was essential for meaningful negotiations. Mr. Bayer simultaneously argued for a careful separation between the CoA and the COA-SS to maintain the value of the CoA as a robust platform for data-driven dialogue, and not to contaminate it with 'negotiating logic'.

5.15. On possible improvements to the functioning of the CoA, Mr. Bayer noted that, while the Q&A function of the Committee was effective and functioning well, there might be a value to establish a separate mechanism to raise 'concerns', as for example was done under the 'specific trade concern' window of the SPS Committee. Currently, it was not always possible to distinguish a 'question' seeking additional information and clarification from a 'concern' with a particular measure. Mr. Bayer also suggested to create an effective 'consultation mechanism' under the CoA, akin to the Good Offices mechanism⁹ already established under the SPS Committee. He considered the proposed consultation mechanism within the ambit of the CoA to be especially important keeping in mind the current challenges to the functioning of the DSU.

5.16. On agriculture and climate change, Mr. Bayer underlined the need to fight food insecurity while reducing environmental footprints of agricultural activities. He also believed that agriculture was more a victim of climate change rather than the cause. He also considered that the CoA might currently lack the tools necessary to monitor the environmental dimension of agricultural activities, as there existed no specific multilateral agreement within the WTO to rely on. Mr. Bayer also lamented that developing countries, who relied heavily on agriculture for income and livelihood, had been increasingly subject to disguised protectionist policies on the pretext of those being environmentally fair.

5.17. Mr. Bayer underlined that climate change was a fundamental challenge of the current time, which needed to be tackled responsibly based on multilaterally agreed norms and principles. He also noted that there could possibly be room for the WTO to develop tools that would help improve the carbon footprint of international trade, however, in the absence of a prior agreement on what and how to monitor, this task would currently appear to lie beyond the scope of the CoA.

5.18. **Ambassador Valeria Csukasi** (Uruguay), who served as the Chair of the CoA during 2007-2011, noted that the biggest challenge in the domain of agriculture had been, was, and would remain the 'reform' of agricultural trade, which was the responsibility of the COA-SS and not the CoA. She cautioned against 'mixing' the tasks of the two bodies and believed that the success of the CoA had been achieved primarily by focussing on improving the enforcement of the existing rules.

5.19. In response to the call for AoA or CoA 2.0 by previous panellists, Ambassador Csukasi advised to avoid over-ambition and to focus on tasks which could realistically be delivered by the CoA. In this context, she noted that the CoA could undertake the important task of analysing the state of agriculture around the world, and access to this information and record of Committee's deliberations and Secretariat reports should be deemed as prized possessions for most resource-constrained developing countries, in order to appreciate various 'best practices' and to also enable their informed participation in future agriculture debates, including in the negotiations.

⁹ G/SPS/61.

5.20. Ambassador Csukasi suggested that any improvements in the functioning of the CoA should be effected via existing transparency mechanisms like timely notifications and committee debates. This information can then usefully feed into the negotiations, which would always be the biggest challenge for Members to successfully conclude. This did not mean that Members should be dissuaded from discussing 'new' issues; however, that should rather be done in the setting of seminars or information sessions separate from the formal CoA meetings.

5.21. **Ms. Gitanjali Brandon** (India) highlighted the importance of the CoA in contributing to a rules-based trading system and alluded to the following four broad points:

- a. The role of the CoA was to oversee the implementation of the AoA and to afford Members the opportunity to consult on their agricultural trade policies. For the CoA to assume this role effectively, Members had to comply with their notification obligations in accordance with G/AG/2. Several WTO Members were often late in submitting notifications on their very sizeable domestic support disbursements and market access policies¹⁰. Ironically, three to four Members, who contribute to about 50-60% of the total questions raised in a CoA meeting, had not achieved full notification compliance with respect to their own notification obligations; their compliance for domestic support notifications rather ranged between 88 and 92%. Further, it might not be deemed as constructive and equitable for the CoA to encounter a situation of some Members with large delegations and better capacity focus exclusively on the scrutiny of agriculture policies of a few Members, often in a seemingly coordinated manner. She suggested that the CoA meetings could instead be used to understand the overall macroeconomic and policy environment of Members and why they adopted particular policies.
- b. The COVID-19 pandemic should not only be treated as a crisis to be managed, but also as an opportunity to identify and address the structural barriers to global food and agriculture systems. The FAO food price index of February 2022 reached an all-time high of 140.7 despite world food production across commodities being also at record levels. Exceptionally high food inflation had resulted from higher costs arising from global supply chain limitations during the pandemic, buttressed further recently by the geopolitical situation in the Black Sea region. Governments were naturally concerned by the destabilizing impact of rising food prices on vulnerable consumers, who often incur a disproportionate amount of total spending on food. It might be useful to examine the policies of countries that have successfully managed to contain food inflation domestically, and fully appreciate the underlying rationale of their policy choices to develop what some previous panellists referred to as 'best practices'.
- c. The founding principles of the Marrakesh Agreement provide that trade and economic endeavours should be conducted with a view to raising standards of living, ensuring full employment and steadily growing volume of real income. There was a need for positive efforts designed to ensure that developing countries, and especially LDCs, secured a share of growth in international trade that would be commensurate with their economic development needs. The work of the WTO and the CoA should not lose sight of these founding principles of the Marrakesh Agreement.
- d. In order to make the work of the CoA more relevant and useful in the spirit of the founding principles of the WTO, the following steps may be considered: (i) technical assistance and capacity building of Geneva-based as well as capital-based delegates, especially from developing countries and LDCs on data collection, and improved understanding of agriculture notifications; (ii) continued digital progress to enable enhanced participation of developing country delegations at Geneva-based meetings and deliberations (e.g. via Interprefy); and (iii) renewed focus on seeking outcomes in the agriculture negotiations, which is also crucial for the continued relevance and utility of the work of the CoA. The negative impact of the pandemic on food and livelihoods security had naturally led to a renewed focus on the mandated negotiations on public stockholding (PSH) for food security purposes.

5.22. Ms. Brandon also believed that to be able to address these critical challenges, Members would need to look beyond the narrow mercantilist prism and focus on the structural support required to

¹⁰ G/AG/GEN/86/Rev.44.

help combat the depression in agricultural wages on account of the pandemic, especially in developing countries and LDCs. She also considered that food security related safety-net schemes instituted by countries to protect the livelihood of hundreds of millions of their vulnerable population in these challenging times needed to be considered as successful 'best practices'.

5.23. Ms. Brandon also considered it useful to explore if the trade policy review (TPR) reports by governments and the Secretariat could usefully feed into the discussions of the CoA (and other relevant bodies).

5.24. On the question raised by the moderator in relation to the contribution of agriculture to climate change, Ms. Brandon advised to proceed with caution, as these discussions would be beyond the ambit of the CoA. She reminded that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was the relevant forum for exchanges on all climate change-related issues, including the role of agriculture in contributing to climate change.

5.25. **Mr. Michael Wamai** (Uganda), who was the chairperson of the Committee during 2015-2016, noted that the CoA had been allocated a central role in the monitoring of Members' commitments under the AoA and other decisions agreed as a part of the agriculture negotiations. Mr. Wamai considered that inclusive participation of all WTO Members in CoA deliberations was key for the CoA to fulfil its mandate.

5.26. Mr. Wamai further noted that the AoA had provided for a range of notification obligations which formed the basis of the work of the CoA. Simultaneously, many African countries had difficulties in fulfilling their notification obligations, primarily due to human resources and institutional capacity constraints. Since the ability to fulfil notification obligations depended on Members' levels of development and availability of resources, Mr. Wamai suggested that Members' notifications burden should be commensurate with their share in agriculture trade¹¹. Developed Members should also lead by example in submitting comprehensive, timely, and accurate notifications.

5.27. Mr. Wamai referred to the statistics from the AG-IMS on the participation of African countries in the CoA, and noted that these countries had thus far posed only 20 questions since the inception of the Committee processes twenty-seven years ago, with 2015 being the latest year when this group of countries posed a question at the CoA¹². These statistics should not lead to the conclusion that African countries did not have trade concerns to raise at the CoA. Mr. Wamai gave the example of the latest question raised by South Africa in 2015 concerning underfill of TRQs by the European Union on grape juice; while no questions were raised subsequently on this theme, the EU's fill rate for the grape juice TRQ remained low for subsequent implementation years.

5.28. Mr. Wamai hinted that there could be other impediments for developing countries to effectively use the CoA's review process, which should be probed and addressed. He elaborated that the ability of African countries to process and make use of the information submitted in agricultural notifications remained slim. Mr. Wamai suggested that discussions to improve transparency and efforts towards institutional reform of the CoA should consider the challenges often faced by developing countries in their participation in the Committee's deliberations. He applauded the efforts of the Secretariat towards the provision of technical assistance and capacity building, and through the development of digital tools like the AGIMS (and e-Ping in the area of SPS measures).

5.29. Regarding new challenges such as climate change, Mr. Wamai noted that relevant discussions were already on-going in other fora such as the UNFCCC, where governments had been discussing climate adaptation and mitigation plans, and the means of implementing those plans. He added that many countries were already undertaking voluntary 'Nationally Determined Contributions' to address climate change. In this background, Mr. Wamai wondered whether the CoA had the expertise and the competence to deal with the challenge of climate change, and what could the envisaged outcome of the CoA process be. In terms of the future agriculture agenda, Mr. Wamai emphasized that the task was already set up under Article 20 of the AoA to deal, *inter alia*, with domestic support and to eliminate the existing barriers to trade in agriculture. He cautioned against introducing new issues

¹¹ Africa contributes to approximately 3.4% and 5.1% of world's agricultural exports and imports respectively.

¹² African countries had received around 450 questions from other WTO Members at the CoA.

on the agenda of the WTO agriculture discussions. On global food security challenges, Mr. Wamai referred to the intervention of the previous panellist Ms. Brandon of India.

5.30. **Ms. Agata Galinska** (European Union) highlighted the complementarity between the CoA-SS and the CoA, where both bodies needed to work side by side synergically influencing each other's work. The CoA needed to implement the current agreement and prepare the ground for future negotiated agreements as, for example, was ably demonstrated during the negotiations of agricultural outcomes at Bali and Nairobi. She also underlined the need for Members to invest their efforts and commitments for fuller implementation of the agreements reached in the negotiations.

5.31. Ms. Galinska noted that the agenda and activities of the CoA are entirely in the hands of Members. Simultaneously, the reality remained that the ability of the CoA to respond to current and future challenges would depend on the progress and outcomes in the negotiations. Members needed to deliver outcomes in the negotiations which the CoA could usefully follow-up on. Ms. Galinska also believed that increasing reliance on Article 18.6 in the agenda of the CoA might be a reflection of the reality that the negotiations were not delivering on current challenges facing agricultural trade.

5.32. Ms. Galinska also considered that the peer review system of the CoA could be an important driver and catalyst to change and shape policies; however, to realize the full potential of the CoA, Members would need to submit comprehensive notifications, thoroughly examine notifications, participate in the Committee's Q&A process, and undertake a timely follow-up on deferred or partial replies.

5.33. Ms. Galinska acknowledged that reviewing bulky notifications and other CoA documents and preparing questions and replies constituted a demanding undertaking, especially for smaller delegations. In this context, she shared the concerns expressed by the previous panellist Mr. Wamai about the need to diversify the CoA discussions to a wider group of Members, including especially smaller and developing Members, rather than it being limited to only few Members, as currently. She recalled some efforts having been made in the past by a group of Members in facilitating a wider participation of the membership at the CoA. She also considered that Geneva-based delegates could play an important role in sharing their knowledge and experience, especially with newly arrived CoA delegates.

5.34. Ms. Galinska also commended the Secretariat for facilitating Members' participation at the CoA, in particular by developing useful digital tools, including the AG-IMS. She considered it highly impressive from the transparency perspective that deliberations of the CoA had been made publicly accessible via the AG-IMS. She also wondered whether all governments and other stakeholders, including the private sector, were fully aware of their access to this rich source of information.

5.1 Q&A AND FINAL COMMENTS BY PANELLISTS

5.35. The moderator, Mr. Häberli, acknowledged the issue raised by some panellists about the participation of smaller delegations in the work of the CoA. He noted that some smaller delegations had done an exemplary task in the past in effectively raising issues of critical importance to them at the WTO. He specifically referred to the role of small LDC delegations from the C-4 who had been able to place the issue of cotton at the centre of the WTO agriculture agenda.

5.36. **Ambassador George Mina** (Australia) commended the enormous utility of the CoA in offering a highly democratic monitoring tool to Members, which should be cherished and preserved. He also shared the concern expressed by earlier speakers about the limited participation of African countries in the CoA, with no questions raised in the last six years. He considered it important to remedy that shortcoming in order to make the work of the Committee useful for all. On the issue of climate change, where differing perspectives were heard among the panellists, Ambassador Mina noted that the role of the CoA would not be to contest nationally determined contributions. At the same time, it was not possible for the CoA to ignore the imperative of climate change. In fact, the CoA had already been contributing to dealing with climate change by continuously shedding an important light on the potential negative effects of extensive global distorting support on climate change, which should in turn usefully inform the negotiating conversation among Members.

5.37. **Mr. Alamgir Kabir** (Bangladesh) lamented at some startling statistics facing global agriculture and food systems where 1.3 billion tonnes of food were wasted every year, obesity levels had tripled since 1975, half a billion people were undernourished, another three quarter of a billion people might face hunger by 2030, and almost USD 700 billion distorting subsidies had been disbursed globally every year. Mr. Kabir exhorted the panellists and the audience to make sincere efforts so as not to pass these challenges to future generations, which he believed was a collective moral imperative.

5.38. **Mr. Magdi Farahat** (Egypt) opined that, as a way forward to address some of the highly protracted issues, small informal brainstorming conversations outside the setting of formal WTO meetings, under Chatham House rules, should be considered to gather more ideas towards eventual collective agreements and progress. The moderator, **Mr. Häberli**, commented that this was precisely the approach followed by the first CoA Chair, late Ambassador Tulalamba (Thailand), who had regularly convened informal small groups in various settings involving Members with extremely divergent positions on issues at hand.

5.39. **Mr. Jorge Riaboi** (Argentina) referred to several panellists highlighting the monitoring and implementation aspect of the AoA, and reminded that monitoring of Article 20 of the AoA should not be lost sight of. He expressed concerns on efforts being made by some governments to impose carbon border taxes and wondered how those measures would reconcile with the existing WTO rules and the jurisprudence. Mr. Riaboi underlined the need to resist efforts to *de facto* export national rules and regulations via domestic trade regulations. He also cautioned against giving space to various regional lobbying groups who might seek to influence the WTO deliberations and water down disciplines.

5.40. The panellists, in their final observations, noted that:

- a. Efforts should be made to strengthen and institutionalize informal consultations among Members and the offices of the CoA Chair, akin to the approach under Article 12.2 of the SPS Agreement, to promote free discussions. The agenda of such informal discussions should be balanced and reflective of the global challenges faced collectively by the Membership.
- b. Article 20 of the AoA enshrines the wisdom of the Uruguay Round negotiators to set the future agricultural reform agenda for next decades. This might also allow to have free discussions, not necessarily under the formal CoA agenda, to deal with contemporary challenges of food security and environment. Some aspects were already dealt with in formal meetings under Article 18.6.
- c. The CoA should strengthen its collaborations with other relevant organizations, like the FAO and OECD, to promote informed discussions on important themes such as food security.
- d. Serious efforts should be made to widen the participation of Members at the CoA. The Secretariat could play an important role through its training and capacity building programmes.
- e. The CoA responded effectively in the monitoring effort stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, and this transparency template could be improved and replicated to deal with future crises.
- f. Feeding the world and addressing hunger are the fundamental challenges which should not be lost sight of in whatever we do at the WTO under the agriculture stream.

5.41. The moderator (Mr. Häberli) considered that, in a scenario where the DSU and the CoA-SS had been facing functional challenges, the monitoring role and responsibility of the CoA had further increased. He noted that the trade aspects of the two challenges that he referred to in his opening remarks, namely, record high world food prices and all-time high contribution of agriculture to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, should be looked into by the CoA. Mr. Häberli also paid special tribute to the first CoA Chair, late Ambassador Danai Tulalamba of Thailand, for his enormous contribution in setting up the foundation of the Committee.

6 CLOSING STATEMENT

6.1. WTO Deputy Director-General Mr. Jean-Marie Paugam in his closing remarks acknowledged the highly enriching and lively debate involving several CoA chairpersons and current and past agriculture delegates. He agreed that the CoA had been able to successfully monitor the implementation of, in Ambassador Osorio's words, 'one of the most politically sensitive Agreements' ever reached within the multilateral trading system. In doing so, the CoA had dealt with both quantitative and qualitative challenges. The ever-increasing number of notifications and questions and answers was a good reminder of the quantitative aspect of the CoA's work. At the same time, the challenge of participation of smaller delegations and the longstanding absence of African countries from the CoA's Q&A process should be remedied. The monitoring of highly sensitive policy matters, such as the provision of subsidies, which noticeably impacted important governmental policy objectives, should reflect the important qualitative challenges that the Committee had successfully dealt with. He also recalled the interventions by several panellists in appreciating the monitoring role of the CoA during the COVID-19 pandemic as a solid bulwark when sudden shocks had severally impacted global agricultural markets.

6.2. DDG Paugam noted that, while the first panel offered fascinating insights about the Committee's work to lay the foundation of the agricultural trade monitoring architecture that existed today, the second panel had provided plenty of "food for thought" on how the Committee could evolve to address current and new challenges. Varying perspectives were also heard on some issues, including the relationship between 'negotiation' and 'implementation' functions of the Committee.

6.3. DDG Paugam thanked and congratulated the CoA team, the entire Agriculture and Commodities Division, the Conference Office, colleagues responsible for media and communications, interpreters and all other relevant WTO colleagues for organizing the special event to commemorate the impressive journey of the CoA.

7 PARTICIPATION OF COA CHAIRS AT THE COA@100 EVENT

6.4. The CoA@100 event benefitted from the active participation of and guidance from several chairpersons of the Committee. These Chairs welcomed the idea of organizing a special event to mark the occasion of the 100th CoA meeting and shared messages on this occasion. The messages by Apiradi Tantraporn (Thailand, 1996-1997), Nestor Osorio Londoño (Colombia, 1997-2000), Yoichi Suzuki (Japan, 2000-2002), Magdi Farahat (Egypt, 2002-2004), Roald Lapperre (Netherlands, 2004-2005), Christian Häberli (Switzerland, 2005-2007), Valeria Csukasi (Uruguay, 2007-2011), Guilherme Bayer (Brazil, 2013-2014), Miriam Chaves (Argentina, 2014-2015), Michael Wamai (Uganda, 2015-2016), Garth Ehrhardt (Canada, 2016-2017), Debora Cumes (Guatemala, 2018-2019), Christiane Daleiden Distefano (Luxembourg, 2019-2020), Maria Escandor (Philippines, 2020-2021) and Marcos da Rosa Uranga (Uruguay, 2021-) are accessible at the [CoA@100 event page](#) on the WTO website. Several of these chairpersons, including Alf Vederhus (Norway, 2017-2018), participated in the event in person.

ANNEX 1**CoA@100 – PROGRAMME****10:00-10:15****Opening Ceremony**

- Opening Address by **Dr Ngozi OKONJO-IWEALA**, WTO Director-General
- Remarks by **Ambassador Apiradi TANTRAPORN** (Thailand), Former CoA Chair (1996-1997)
- Remarks by **Ambassador Nestor OSORIO LONDOÑO** (Colombia), Former CoA Chair (1997-2000)

10:15-10:25**A brief look at the work of the CoA**

- **Diwakar DIXIT**, Counsellor, Secretary of the CoA, WTO Secretariat

10:25-11:40**Panel I: 25 years of the CoA**

Recalling the evolution of the Committee Review Process, and overall assessment of the CoA's work and accomplishments.

Moderator: **Marcos DA ROSA URANGA** (Uruguay), Current CoA Chair (2021-)

Panellists:

- **Chris CARSON** (New Zealand), Counsellor (Agriculture), New Zealand Permanent Mission in Brussels, and former WTO Secretariat
- **Pam COOPER** (Canada), Former Agriculture Attaché
- **Magdi FARAHAT** (Egypt), Former CoA Chair (2002-2004)
- **Ambassador Julie-Ann GUIVARRA** (Australia), Group Manager, Strategic Policy Group, National Indigenous Australians Agency, and former Agriculture Attaché
- **Ambassador Yoichi SUZUKI** (Japan), Former CoA Chair (2000-2002)

11:40-12:55**Panel II: CoA – 25 years into the future**

Possible role of the Committee in assisting the Membership to deal with the contemporary challenges facing global agriculture and agricultural trade.

Moderator: **Christian HÄBERLI** (Switzerland), Former CoA Chair (2005-2007)

Panellists:

- **Guilherme BAYER** (Brazil), Former CoA Chair (2013-2014)
- **Charles BERTSCH** (United States), Senior Director, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)
- **Ambassador Miriam CHAVES** (Argentina), Former CoA Chair (2014-2015)
- **Ambassador Valeria CSUKASI** (Uruguay), Former CoA Chair (2007-2011)
- **Agata GALINSKA** (European Union), Deputy Head of Unit, DG AGRI, European Commission, and former Agriculture Attaché
- **Michael WAMAI** (Uganda), Former CoA Chair (2015-2016)
- **Gitanjali BRANDON** (India), Deputy Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, and former Agriculture Attaché

12:55-13:00**Closing statement**

- **Jean-Marie PAUGAM**, WTO Deputy Director-General