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COMMITTEE ON COMMODITY PROBLEMS

INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP ON MEAT AND DAIRY PRODUCTS

Twenty-first Session

Rome, 13-16 November 2006

THE WTO NEGOTIATIONS: DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR LIVESTOCK, MEAT AND DAIRY MARKETS

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document provides brief background information to prepare delegates for discussion of this agenda item. Originally this item was envisaged to provide an occasion to discuss the potential impact of a successful outcome to the Doha Development Round. In the absence of an agreement, a panel has been assembled to provide a range of views that may stimulate discussion on the role of trade policies as they shape the future of international markets for livestock, meat and dairy products.

II. STATUS OF THE WTO ROUND

2. In July 2006, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy recommended the suspension of the Doha Round trade negotiations because of persistent differences. The Council did not formally vote to freeze the talks, which means that a specific decision by Members will not be necessary to restart them. The last effort had failed on 24 July when the Ministers from the EU, the US, Australia, Brazil, India and Japan (the so-called G-6) failed once again to reach a deal on cutting farm subsidies and tariffs. Agriculture was one major reason for the suspension and negotiations had been contentious all along. Key Members and negotiating Groups had made proposals to cut subsidies and tariffs but the proposed parameters were not acceptable to others.

3. For the first time after the suspension of the Doha Round negotiations, the WTO General Council met on 10 October 2006. At this meeting, the Chair of the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) - the WTO D-G - reported on his consultations since last July on the prospects of resuming the trade talks. He said that the desire to come back to the negotiating table is widespread and genuine, and the present time-out in the negotiations should allow for thinking more creatively about how trade, development and growth can fit together into a coherent whole. The Chair said that given this desire to resume the negotiations, the next step was to determine how and when everyone can return to the table. Based on his consultations, he identified some of the parameters that should lead to a resumption of talks, including the need for a substantive change in the position of members on key issues, with increased flexibility to achieve an agreement.

III. PANEL DISCUSSION

4. The theme of the panel discussion is "The Role of Trade Policies in Shaping the Longer Term Developments in International Livestock and Dairy Markets". Panel members from Kenya, Uruguay, European Union, New Zealand and Canada have been asked, in their role as providing a representative cross section of the world meat and dairy industries, to provide their perspectives on this topic. Each panel member has been requested to speak for 10-12 minutes to respond to the following questions:

1. What trade policies are important for the longer term development of your livestock industries (both meat and dairy)?
2. In the absence of a WTO agreement, what are the threats to your industries?
3. What analysis or capacity building can be provided by FAO to enhance understanding among its member countries of trade developments in meat and dairy?

The following panel Members will address the Session:

Kenya	Ms Kamau, Kenya Mission to the WTO, Geneva
Uruguay	Ms Csukasi, Uruguay Mission to the WTO, Geneva
European Commission	Mr. Londero, European Commission, Brussels
New Zealand	Ms Berendt, New Zealand Mission to the WTO, Geneva
Canada	Mr Tudor Price, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Ottawa

IV. DELEGATE DISCUSSION

5. After the panel has provided its views, Delegates will be invited to provide the perspective of their countries, in particular focussing on the question of what trade policy developments are conducive to enhancing the development of their respective livestock sector over the longer term. The discussion should not focus on negotiating positions, nor on the current status of current WTO talks. The purpose of the discussion is to determine whether there is some consensus concerning the longer term vision of a world market that fosters growth, prosperity and equity in the worldwide meat and dairy product industries, in particular, the role played by trade policy in shaping the evolution of these industries.