



**G-33 Statement
COA-SS Informal Open Ended
July 2008**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am taking the floor on behalf of the Group of 33.

The G-33 joins other delegations and groups in thanking you, Chair, for all your initiatives and extra efforts in maintaining as well as in trying to move the agriculture process forward towards possible convergences. Like others, the Group strongly feels that your next revised draft text on Agriculture Modalities is indeed very crucial in laying a constructive basis for a successful and meaningful outcome.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, your draft text must be able to create the positive conditions for the future negotiations process - so as to impart confidence among developing Members, that their development interests will not be subverted in any manner. Especially, Chair, on issues which have clearly been accepted as an integral part of Special and Differential Treatment - such as our Group's two issues of Special Products and Special Safeguard Mechanism.

Mr. Chairman,

On SPs and SSM, the G-33 has over the course of the negotiations, clearly outlined the basic and fundamental ingredients for a workable architecture. The Group has reiterated the importance of these two issues on countless occasions. It should also be underlined that the G-33 has so far been the only flexible contributor and has taken significant steps towards narrowing the gaps on both SPs and SSM.

In this critical juncture of the negotiations, lack of positive, constructive and flexible stands from our negotiating partners is very discouraging. Regretfully up to now, we are yet to see genuine movements and flexibilities from our negotiating partners.

Mr. Chairman,

The two issues of SPs & SSM are among the issues of vital interest to developing countries. It will be the litmus test to deliver the development outcomes of this round of negotiations. It is equally important to ensure that developing countries shall be provided the necessary tools in this round, to fight against unfair trading conditions – as well as in making developing countries' agricultural production more competitive, in the face of the heavily subsidized agricultural trade.

SPs & SSM are indeed the tools to support the fragile agriculture sectors of developing countries, with small, poor and subsistence farmers - which are totally free from commercial considerations. The Doha Round is the window of opportunities to balance the existing inequitable trading conditions that developing countries have been suffering for a long period of time. Whether such a balance is reached, will solely depend to the way we all effectively address the development related needs of developing countries, through Special and Differential Treatments such as, SPs and SSM.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman,

From the point of view of the G-33, all elements of SPs and SSM conveyed by the Group over the years and in particular most recently - must be incorporated in the next Agriculture revised text for submission to Ministers. For us, it must be a part of the final outcome.

Any suggested formulation that does not include the explicit treatment of SPs with zero cuts and the remedies for SSM going beyond the pre-Doha bound levels, coupled with more flexible triggers than the SSG – cannot constitute a solution for the G-33. It will simply not be acceptable to the Group under any circumstances.

For highly political reasons, the zero cut principle remains as a must for the G-33. New revised modalities text should provide an opportunity of having a separate zero cut tier for a comfortable and reasonable percentage of tariff lines. The G-33 is ready to negotiate an overall average cut for the non-zero SPs which will be at a sufficiently low level to secure the well known concerns of G-33 Members. The cuts for the non-zero SPs can only be a cut that is not the same or exceeding neither the cuts for sensitive products nor for an ordinary agriculture products.

Furthermore on SSM, limiting the level of remedy only up to the pre-Doha bound level nullifies any benefit from such a mechanism and renders the SSM to be meaningless. Yet, the G-33 is ready to negotiate a two-window approach. A structure that: first, allows developing countries remedies up to the Pre-Doha bound levels, under the principle of all agriculture products in any given 12 months period –

and, second, for a reasonable and logical percentage of tariff lines, and not products - developing countries shall be given the remedies entitlement that would go beyond the pre-Doha bound level, without any capping.

The G-33 would also make it clear that LDCs, SVEs and RAMs, shall be provided with more and additional flexibilities to the provisions of SPs & SSM.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me assure you once again, of the Group's confidence in you, Chair. The upcoming revised modalities text on Agriculture must enable us all to further negotiate constructively for a successful and more balanced outcome. The G-33's fundamental positions on SPs & SSM, must therefore be fairly reflected.

To conclude, let me reiterate that the G-33 has always been supportive of transparency, inclusiveness and the bottom up approach in the negotiations. Accordingly, the Group has always remained ready to engage in a dialogue which is constructive and positive in its process.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.