

Ambassador Michael Froman
United State Trade Representative (USTR)
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Ambassador Michael Punke
Deputy USTR and Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organization
U.S. Mission
11 Route de Pregny
1292 Chambesy-Geneva
Switzerland

November 26, 2013

Dear Ambassador Froman,

We write to express our dismay at U.S. opposition to proposals at the World Trade Organization (WTO) by developing countries to address their food security objectives, including reducing volatility in food prices and supplies. We urge you to support the G33's proposal to allow for greater public spending to ensure more stable food supplies and prices.

Food prices have been extremely volatile in recent years. This has been harmful to farmers in the global North and South. We continue to call for the establishment of grain reserves to dampen that volatility and advance fair prices for farmers everywhere. Grain reserves are neither simple nor cheap to operate. Yet the alternatives are worse. The lack of insurance against market failure cost enormous sums of money in emergency assistance, money the international community has to pay. The lack of provision for instability also costs lives – lives lost to hunger as an immediate consequence, and lives blighted for several generations by the effects of malnutrition on fetal development.

International markets serve those with the greatest purchasing power. This makes market mechanisms alone inadequate from the perspective of those whose purchasing power to secure food for their families is eclipsed by other demands on food systems, including the demands that generate significant food waste, as well as the demand for feed and fuel. The U.S. government has intervened through both its agriculture and its social welfare programs for over 100 years in recognition of market failures that need correction.

Yet our administration's trade policy ignores our domestic experience. For instance, while many in Congress are fighting to retain public funding levels for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at home, you are seeking to undermine policy space for developing countries to fulfil their own food security objectives with far fewer resources than are available

in the United States. Many of the poor in developing countries are often also small scale agricultural producers. Contrary to the letter sent to you by US commodity groups and agribusiness interests on October 24, we, the many US farm, faith-based and non-governmental organizations working on agriculture, food security, nutrition, health and economic justice acknowledge that the current agriculture rules in the WTO (including domestic support) are rigged to support big agribusiness. We do all countries a disservice when we promote only commercial export interests, ignoring the real political (and moral) imperative that governments are responsible for their citizens' welfare, including their right to adequate and affordable food and fair prices to agriculture producers.

The G33 food security proposal is an important first step in the reframing of global trade rules to promote more equitable and stable markets, especially for countries that face huge food security challenges. The U.S. proposal for a "Peace Clause" to suspend potential challenges to those efforts at the WTO is an unfair and inadequate response to a sensible proposal to explore new options to improve stability in national and global markets. We support the G33 proposal and call on the U.S. government to do the same.

Sincerely,

ActionAid USA
American Medical Student Association
Center for Food Safety
Center for Policy Analysis on Trade and Health (CPATH)
Family Farm Defenders
Farm Worker Association of Florida
Food Democracy Now!
Food First
Food & Water Watch
Friends of the Earth USA
Global Exchange
Global Health through Education Service and Training (GHETS)
Global to Local Advocates for Justice
Grassroots International
Health Alliance International
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
International Forum on Globalization
Illinois Fair Trade Coalition
Just Foreign Policy

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition
National Family Farm Coalition
National Farmers Union
Next GenU
Oakland Institute
Oxfam America
PLANT
Pivot Point
Rainforest Action Network
Rebuild the Dream
Rural Coalition / Coalicion Rural
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Texas Fair Trade Coalition
The Second Chance Foundation
Washington Fair Trade Coalition
Wisconsin Fair Trade Coalition
WhyHunger