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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 9, 2004

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UN Conference Has Opportunity to Address Global Commodity Crisis

Time to Inject Rural Development into World Trade System, New Paper Concludes

Minneapolis - The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) meeting next week in Sao Paulo, Brazil offers an historic opportunity to change the direction of the global trade system to ensure fair prices for farmers and spur rural economic development, according to a white paper released today by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP).

The paper, *UNCTAD XI: Challenging the Commodity Crisis* by IATP's Sophia Murphy, is available at: www.iatp.org/unctadxi.

From June 13-18, UN member nations will gather at UNCTAD XI in Sao Paulo to discuss how agriculture trade can promote development. Governments are facing a global farm crisis, where prices have steadily declined and export dumping at below cost of production prices is widespread.

IATP's white paper outlines how UNCTAD has traditionally played a major role in combating one of the major causes of the agriculture price decline - over-production. In the past, UNCTAD has been the home to international commodity agreements that helped ensure fair prices for farmers including agreements for coffee, cocoa, rubber, sugar and tin. At the meeting, UNCTAD will consider a new approach, a High Level Panel on Commodities, which would bring together governments, academics, businesses, and civil society to identify workable solutions to the global commodity crisis.

"Now is the time for UNCTAD to play a greater role in setting the international trade agenda for commodities," said IATP's Vice President of Global Programs Kristin Dawkins. "The current free market, trade liberalization model has been a disaster for farmers around the world. We need to inject new strategies for rural development into the global trade debate - and UNCTAD is in a unique position to lead."

IATP will have several staff attending the UNCTAD meeting and participating in the Civil Society forum at the Anhembi Convention Center, West Pavilion in Sao Paulo. IATP will brief delegates, the press and civil society on such issues as agricultural dumping (June 15), the emerging fair trade system (June 16), and strategies for global institutions to better promote development (June 17).

In addition, IATP will co-host along with others a June 17 Fair Trade Reception with UNCTAD Secretary General Rubens Ricupero; Brazilian Minister of Agrarian Development Miguel Rossetto; São Paulo local officials; NGO leaders and other special guests.

For more details on the UNCTAD meeting and civil society plans, go to: iatp.org/unctadxi.

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy promotes resilient family farms, rural communities and ecosystems around the world through research and education, science and technology, and advocacy.