



G-33 Statement COA-SS Informal Open Ended 26 May 2008

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

The G-33 appreciates and fully recognizes your efforts, Chair, to come up with a new revised draft text for Agriculture Modalities.

As the Group has stated in the last Open-Ended Meeting, the G-33 has been keenly expecting that the new revision would be a balanced and workable text. Especially, that it would better reflect any of the progress achieved and where the current agriculture negotiations are right now.

It should also be recalled that during our last Open-Ended Meeting, it was somehow been suggested that the two issues of SPs & SSM have not yet succeeded in providing any major progress since the February draft text.

Yet, to the Group's deep concern - it is very clear that new and even more divergent elements on SPs & SSM have been brought into the new revised draft text. Paragraphs 118, 120, 125, 128, 129, 131 and Footnote 17 - would best reflect this notion. All this, has significantly disrupted the balance of a workable draft text on SPs & SSM, which would have potentially encouraged and facilitated the finalization of our negotiations.

In this respect, the G-33 is very concerned with the new imbalances which exist in the current draft modalities text.

The new draft text shows that some arbitration on a somewhat arbitrary basis has been conducted on the issues relating to SPs & SSM. This is in contrast to other elements or issues in other areas of the agriculture negotiations, in which varying views have been accommodated or treated in a more favourable and balanced manner.

Mr. Chairman,

Since early September last year, the G-33 has consistently demonstrated our positive nature and willingness to engage constructively in the negotiations. However, it remains that specific fundamental elements of SPs & SSM have not been incorporated. Even for the most recent new position that the Group has provided – such as the concept of a percentage of tariff lines in the product coverage of the SSM or for another example, the ad-valorem price based SSM, and the specific flexibility for RAMs on SP cuts, still have not been reflected in the new draft text.

For the G-33, a workable revised draft text is the only course that all members can follow in order to transcend to the next level. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, the Group calls for another new revised draft text – at least, on SPs & SSM – which is more balanced, factual and comprehensive, in line with the mandate and the paramount objective of development in this Round.

The G-33 remains with the firm view that any horizontal process shall only proceed once we all have the same level of comfort and confidence on all the agriculture issues. This suitable level of comfort can only be achieved through another new revised draft text on SPs & SSM. After all, we have all committed to the substance driven process in our negotiations.

The G-33 stands ready and recommends that serious and intensive work in the weeks' ahead shall be convened within our negotiating group. Conflicting meetings must also be considered for small delegations. All this, with the sole objectives of continuing an inclusive and constructive dialogue among Members, building better understandings as well as convergences – which would result in a more balanced, accurate and comprehensive new revised draft text, beneficial for the next level of negotiations. In this particular endeavour, Chair, the G-33 supports all your future efforts.

As for the duration of these discussions, in light of the wish of the Membership to put substance over process, the G-33 stands ready to engage in intensive negotiations well into the early part of June.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman,

The G-33 would like to touch upon the aspect of transparency on SPs, which have been put forward by a few Members. For the Group, transparency is indeed very important and it should therefore be transpired in all issues and elements of the Doha Round negotiations. Nevertheless, transparency on SPs, exclusively before we can even agree on the full modalities – would not be constructive at all. By this kind of proposal, how can we expect that we could advance or reach possible convergences, firstly, on other fundamental elements of SPs & SSM.

As a logical consequence and as envisaged in its mandate - transparency on SPs, shall only be materialized once we all have an agreement on the modalities. The G-33 is therefore fully committed that at the momentous stage where we all have agreed on the agriculture full modalities, the fullest transparency on SPs will be accorded to the whole Membership.

Again, Mr. Chairman, please be assured of the G-33's full support and confidence in all your efforts - to further facilitate our next round of negotiations and eventually delivering a new, more balanced and workable revised draft modalities text.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.