

"TRADE IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

JOINT STATEMENT [OF UNDERSIGNED MINISTERS] BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA XX DECEMBER 2017

In order to face the challenge of producing more food in a safer and sustainable way, farmers must be able to access the full range of tools and technologies available for agricultural production. Yet, our farmers' choice of safe tools is increasingly undermined by regulatory barriers that lack a sufficient scientific justification, and this is having substantial negative impact on the production of, and trade in, safe food and agricultural products. We believe in both protecting human health and facilitating access to food - both goals of the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). Having in mind the importance of transparency and predictability to international trade, we call on all Members to strengthen the implementation of the WTO SPS Agreement by reinforcing the work of relevant international standards organizations and ensuring the scientific basis of SPS measures is sound. The development and application of sound SPS measures is needed to support farmers' choice in tools that can expand agricultural production and facilitate access to food and agricultural products, and also to safeguard human, animal and plant health.

In this regard, we recognize the work undertaken by the WTO SPS Committee to examine pesticide-related issues that have an adverse impact on international trade in food and agricultural products, and to achieve consensus on collaborative actions to reduce that impact on trade, particularly on the agricultural exports of developing countries. We affirm the central importance of risk analysis to assess, manage, and communicate risks of concern associated with pesticide use in order to protect public health while enabling the safe use of pesticides and facilitating trade in food and agricultural products. We support the voluntary actions by Members put forward by Kenya, Uganda and the United States (G/SPS/W/292/Rev.2) to increase the capacity and efficiency of Codex in setting international standards on pesticide maximum residue levels (MRLs); to improve transparency and predictability in Members' setting of national MRLs; to achieve greater harmonization across national and regional MRLs; and, to enable greater access to alternative pesticides and pesticides for minor-use crops, particularly in developing countries.

We acknowledge the productive work of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) in building knowledge and capacity for developing countries in the area of pesticide MRLs. We will work jointly in the SPS Committee to monitor the effectiveness of the voluntary actions and the STDF work in addressing trade concerns related to food and agricultural products and to propose further collaborative, consensus actions as appropriate".