

Civil Society Declaration on the G-20 Ministerial Meetings at Bhurban, Pakistan

September 8, 2005

We, the representatives of farming communities, social movements and the civil society organizations in Pakistan, are gathered here in Bhurban to demonstrate our solidarity with the G-20 and express our concerns and demands about WTO Agreement on Agriculture.

We welcome the honorable delegates of the G-20 Ministerial Meeting being held at Bhurban from September 8 to 10, 2005. This meeting is taking place at a crucial point in time when only three months are left for the Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting and there is no tangible movement in the Doha Round negotiations so far. We hereby adopt the following resolution and place it before the G-20 Ministerial Meeting for its record and consideration.

Aware that the G-20 has emerged as an influential group within the WTO and the emergence of the G-20 has raised the hopes for a better deal for the Third World;

Aware that since there was no first approximation in July 2005, the rich countries and forces within WTO would certainly rush to achieve the first approximation in October General Council and a successive agreement in Hong Kong;

Aware that there will be a new wave of informal, exclusive and non-transparent meetings in and outside the WTO.

Aware that such practices would undermine the capacity of poor countries to fully engage in the negotiation process;

Aware that consumers in the developing countries lose as a result of trade practices such as subsidized dumping by Northern producers which causes immense turbulence in Southern food markets and undermines local food production ;

Aware that WTO policies also harm the non-farming indigenous communities which still depend on commons, pastures, forests and natural waters for their livelihoods and cultures. The WTO-backed extended agriculture in fact encroaches upon the livelihoods of these communities like Kihals (riverine community) and Musalis (desert community) in Pakistan;

We recognize that Agreement on the Agriculture (AoA) has two fundamental problems:

First, it does not differentiate between the structural characteristics of the agriculture system of rich countries and that of the poor countries despite significant differences between the two. For instance, majority of population in poor countries (70%) is engaged in agriculture as against only 3% in rich countries. Majority of the poor countries have subsistence agriculture system compare to the commercial and market oriented agriculture system in rich countries.

Second, it contains implementations related loopholes that enabled rich countries to increase the subsidies by 9 percent after 1995 instead of reduction in subsidies.

We therefore believe that poor countries should avail this opportunity of AoA Review to rectify and overcome these fundamental problems;

We accordingly urge the G-20 to reject the aforementioned WTO negotiations package that contains, inter alia, the following anti-development elements:

- a. The expansion of Blue Box
- b. 'Sensitive Products' for rich countries
- c. The conditions for the elimination of export subsidies

We urge the G-20 to categorically reject the current anti-development package and to undertake necessary efforts to bring a TRUE DEVELOPMENT agenda on the negotiation table that must include the following:

- Immediate end of trade distorting domestic subsidies
- Immediate end of export subsidies and export credits in a way that the national reform programs in the rich countries do not impede the elimination of export subsidies
- A substantial numbers of special products and special safeguard mechanisms to be treated according to the situation of the respective poor countries
- Green box review to eliminate all trade distorting parts of subsidies
- Elimination of blue box
- Elimination of tariff peaks and tariff escalation

We further urge the G-20, as the leaders of developing countries, not to accept any agreement on agriculture that misses out the above-listed critical points;

We emphatically demand that the G-20 should strengthen its relationship with other groups such as G-90, G33 and the LDCs since the rich countries would certainly try to continue their strategy of divide and rule the poor countries in order to strike an unfair deal;

We specifically demand that India and Brazil should leave the FIPs (Five Interested Parties) and take side with the farmers of the poor countries. The July 2004 Framework transpires that the exclusive processes such as green rooms, mini-ministerial meetings and FIPs do not yield pro-development elements;

We strongly urge that G-20 should learn from past experiences and must not accept any deal that compromises the interests of poor communities. The EU and the US are likely to strike an informal or formal deal on agriculture (like Blair House in Uruguay Round and Joint Agriculture Statement before Cancun) to impose on other member of WTO before the Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting;

We urge the G-20 that it should reject demands of rich countries to compromise on NAMA and GATS in response to reduction in subsidies and tariffs. In fact, poor countries had already agreed on TRIPs and Services during Uruguay Round in response to the promises of subsidies and tariff reduction in rich countries. Such hopes however never materialized;

We urge the G-20 to also realize their responsibility to represent the vulnerable communities of their countries, such as small farmers and farm workers, in the Doha Round negotiations rather than only taking care of interests of the agri-business;

Hence, we call upon the G-20 to build defensive as well as offensive strategies that seek to promote the interests of vulnerable communities of the poor countries and to further strengthen the unity and solidarity among the poor nations. The South Asian Parliamentarians also demanded this during the recently held South Asian Parliamentarians Forum on WTO in Islamabad – Pakistan;

We sincerely appreciate the openness of the G-20 to civil society organizations. Some of the organizations present here have had the opportunity of meeting the Ministers of G-20 in Sao Paulo (June 2004) and in Delhi (March 2005). We earnestly hope and expect the continuation of this positive and constructive practice in future as well.

Finally, we would like to avail this opportunity to convey our thanks to the G-20 for providing us the time and space to express our concerns and positions.

In Solidarity!

1. WTO Watch Group – Pakistan
2. Sustainable Agriculture Action Group – Pakistan
3. ActionAid-Pakistan
4. Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) – Pakistan
5. Sungi Development Foundation – Pakistan
6. TheNetwork for Consumer Protection – Pakistan
7. Oxfam GB – Pakistan
8. Roots for Equity – Pakistan
9. Shirkat Gah – Pakistan
10. Green Circle Organization – Pakistan
11. South Asia Partnership-Pak – Pakistan
12. Labor Party of Pakistan
13. Kissan Bacho Tahreek– Pakistan
14. Caritas – Pakistan
15. Lok Sanjh – Pakistan
16. Society for Alternative Media and Research – Pakistan
17. Pakistan Kissan Ittehad – Pakistan
18. Damaan Development Organization – Pakistan
19. Khahori Sindh Rural Development Organization – Pakistan
20. Roshan Khayal Zamindar Tanzeem – Pakistan
21. Hari forum – Pakistan
22. Azad Hari Union – Pakistan
23. Hari Mazdoor Union – Pakistan
24. Goth Singhar Foundation – Pakistan
25. Hari Hamdard Sangat – Pakistan
26. Sabzi Abadgar Welfare Association – Pakistan
27. Tharparkar Hari Mazdoor Tanzeem – Pakistan
28. Council for Social Development – Pakistan
29. Sujag Welfare Society – Pakistan
30. Ujala Development Forum – Pakistan
31. Anjuman Behbood-e- Khawateen – Pakistan
32. Sawera Foundation – Pakistan
33. Sachi Sooch – Pakistan
34. Ehsas – Pakistan
35. Youth Welfare Council – Pakistan

36. Anjuman Tarqi Huqooq-e- Niswan – Pakistan
37. Anjuman Tahfuz-e- Khawateen – Pakistan
38. Sanjhi Sookh – Pakistan
39. Farmers community – Pakistan
40. Ideal welfare society – Pakistan
41. Thal Development Society – Pakistan
42. Be-Was Kissan Committee – Pakistan
43. Ameer Foundation – Pakistan
44. Farmers Development Foundation – Pakistan
45. Community Development Organization – Pakistan
46. Ittehad Kashistkaran – Pakistan
47. Kissan Development Forcum – Pakistan
48. Hari Kissan Ittehad Mastung – Pakistan
49. Green Society – Pakistan
50. Health & Rural Development – Pakistan
51. Village Shad Abad Welfare Organization – Pakistan
52. Human Development Center – Pakistan
53. Fisherfolk Forum – Pakistan
54. Khwendo Kor – Pakistan
55. Pakistan Welfare Society – Pakistan
56. Human Resource Management & Development Center – Pakistan
57. Badin Rural Development Society – Pakistan