

## **US won't shift agriculture position despite WTO cotton ruling**

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Agence France Presse

WASHINGTON : The United States is not altering its position on agriculture in free-trade discussions at the World Trade Organization despite a WTO that US cotton subsidies violate existing rules, a US negotiator said.

"I don't think this gives us less power to negotiate," said US trade negotiator Allen Johnson in a telephone conference call from Geneva, where WTO talks are progressing slowly.

The United States said last week it would appeal a WTO decision that US cotton subsidies are unfair under global trade rules, in a case brought by Brazil.

Although some countries see the cotton case as a first step toward curbing farming subsidies in wealthy countries, Johnson said the case still faces appeal and that negotiations on overall subsidies are continuing.

"We just don't want a unilateral reform, we want overall reform in a lot of countries," he said.

The 147 member countries are trying to strike a deal on relaunching current round of trade liberalization talks before the end of July, although the negotiations have bogged down over divisions between rich and poor countries on agriculture.

The US says it is willing to end export credits that the European Union says are the same as export subsidies if it is done under an overall deal in WTO talks.

Johnson said Washington prefers a negotiated settlement to further WTO litigation.

"I do think that there is a genuine interest on the part of not just us but many of the other countries to try to address reform across the board in many countries through a negotiated solution," he said.

- AFP