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U.S. GROUPS CALL ATTACKS ON G-23 SHAMEFUL

Non-governmental organizations from the United States issued the following statement today strongly criticizing U.S. attacks on the "Group of 23," the group of developing countries working together at the WTO to transform the body's farm trade rules. The groups also expressed support for the additional blocs of countries in the WTO who have come together to demand additional farm rule changes to safeguard the livelihoods of poor farmers (called the Alliance for Strategic Products and Special Safeguard Mechanisms):

"We are outraged by threats and attacks made by the United States against the Group of 23 developing countries in the WTO seeking important changes to the WTO's farm trade rules. The U.S. efforts to pressure developing countries to leave the G-23 are shameful and deplorable.

We call on the U.S. to stop these shameful attacks and to refrain from using bilateral pressure as a means to strong-arm other nations, including backroom coercion, calls from the White House and threats to terminate other trade benefits and stop on-going negotiations with these nations. We support the members of the G-21 and the Alliance for Strategic Products and Special Safeguard Mechanisms in their efforts to stand up to this U.S. pressure, which today caused Brazil to issue a statement calling for the end of the distracting and divisive tactics.

It is outrageous that the U.S. is attacking efforts to change WTO agricultural policies so that developing countries can safeguard their small farmers and ensure food sovereignty for the growing number of hungry people worldwide. The U.S. must end its opposition to policies that would eliminate the massive dumping of agricultural products into developing countries."

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