



**INFORMAL MEETING OF
EU AGRICULTURE MINISTERS**

(TAORMINA, 22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

PRESIDENCY WORKING DOCUMENT

SUMMARY

**THE EUROPEAN UNION AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AFTER
CANCUN : COMMON OBJECTIVES FOR AGRICULTURAL POLICIES,
FOOD SECURITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AFTER CANCUN :

COMMON OBJECTIVES FOR AGRICULTURAL POLICIES, FOOD SECURITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

1. In view of the results of the recent Cancun meeting as well as the widely-held opinion that trade liberalisation alone cannot solve the many problems and remove the inequalities that exist in the world, the EU should propose the renewed and intensified use of accompanying, non trade-distorting policies and measures which:
 - a) will help to tackle the large number of problems already existing;
 - b) will serve to counter potentially negative effects of further liberalisation.
2. In so doing, the EU would build on:
 - the recent changes to the Common Agricultural Policy;
 - the reductions in export restitutions carried out during the period 1991 – 2002;
 - the rural development perspective outlined at the Cork Conference;
 - the Cotonou Convention, which offers many agricultural systems in the Third World free access to the European Market.
3. In spite of the many differences between developing countries, new EU members and those of long standing, there is considerable convergence at more basic levels. In both the EU and developing countries it is possible to discern a set of *commonly shared values* which consider the role of agriculture and the countryside within society as a whole. These commonly shared values are as follows:
 - a) the responsibility to protect public health by ensuring adequate, safe supplies of food and water, even in times of adversity;
 - b) the responsibility of each country to develop, maintain and defend its own agriculture and the possibility for each citizen engaged in it to earn a decent living;
 - c) the requirement and duty to offer opportunities for emancipation to the disadvantaged (the “have-nots”, the hungry and the poor), especially through access to and the possession of land;
 - d) the requirement and duty to protect agricultural activities in areas (especially those with complex and fragile eco-systems) which would otherwise be marginalised and subjected to ecological and/or social desertification;

- e) the national (and sometimes supranational) responsibility to create the conditions required for ongoing agricultural growth and development – in essence, the need to construct adequate and efficient institutional support structures;
 - f) the public task of organising and implementing Rural Development (RD) policies that promote and sustain rural areas fit to live in. Policies of this kind focus on the interfaces and links between agriculture and other sectors and include the creation of multifunctional enterprises;
 - g) the need to guarantee the required levels of education, training and research in the field of agriculture and rural development.
4. These commonly shared values are to be translated into new combinations of accompanying policies, in *both* the EU and developing countries. These new combinations aim to:
- a) protect locally based and sustainable agricultural systems that play a crucial role in the maintenance of fragile ecological system and in the development of rural economies lacking other alternatives;
 - b) diversify agricultural production, with the emphasis on high quality products that meet societal needs and simultaneously generate both employment and income in the countryside;
 - c) further develop human capital and institutional structures, especially where these are urgently required to support points (a) and (b);
5. Both within the EU and developing countries, there is considerable diversity in terms of primary production, processing and trade arrangements. What is important is to strengthen and expand such forms of production and processing, together with those trade arrangements which not only offer better prospects for the farmers and rural population concerned, but which are more sustainable and more in tune with society's needs in general. Many of the accompanying policies and measures required to do so are already available. What is important now is to realign these in order to strengthen favourable production systems and trade agreements such as those described.
6. This would mean encouraging the EU actively to:
- a) support the development and strengthening of those forms of agricultural production *within* the EU that are in harmony with legitimate societal needs and values and which at the same time allow room for development in developing countries;
 - b) promote those forms of marketing arrangements that favour primary producers in both EU and developing countries.

7. In addition, the EU could propose further measures to assist developing countries. In this respect it is proposed to:
- c) support actively the creation and development of high quality production systems in developing countries and, more generally, the creation and dissemination of farming methods that are in harmony with local, regional and national needs in developing countries. This should be done by creating adequate systems for extension, applied research and training and by then developing marketing channels which allow access to EU markets. Special attention should be paid to the production of GMO-free products. This support should not be structured along “transfer of technology” lines, but should aim to release the existing endogenous development potential which lies within local, regional and national farming systems;
 - d) develop training and saving systems that would allow migrants working in EU agriculture to set up agricultural businesses of their own in their home country, should they wish to return. At the same time, schemes to support new migrants wishing to work in EU agriculture should also be developed;
 - e) help developing countries to diversify their trading channels and reduce dependency on northern markets. Trade between developing countries needs to be strengthened, encouraging the emergence of regional markets within and between Third World countries;
 - f) assist with the development of services (new forms of energy, transport, drinking water facilities, processing plants, irrigation systems, market infrastructure, forestation, research, etc.) that would foster rural development in developing countries. Rural development of this kind should generate as much (temporary) employment as possible and seek to maximise the use of local resources in their development and maintenance;
 - g) create privileged marketing channels for high quality products exported to the EU by developing countries;
 - h) assist actively in the construction of new food production systems in developing countries, which emphasise the importance of food security and self-reliance (along with investment in infrastructure). Priority should be given to those countries and regions where food shortages and famines are most prevalent. By means of such a strategy, dependence on short term food aid could be reduced. Moreover, systems of this kind need to be attractive to young people and to acknowledge and enhance the role of women in agricultural (and particularly domestic agricultural) production;
 - i) develop an international system of propriety rights that takes account of genetic resources, the origin of products, the democratic right of national and regional authorities to defend their preferred forms of agricultural production and processing and, finally, the right to exclude prohibitive forms of monopolisation;
 - j) empower local entities to promote rural development through the creation of local partnerships (using the bottom up approach as developed in the Leader Initiative), as well as the creation of cross border networks to develop and share knowledge.
 - k) take part in the voluntary international Alliance Against Hunger promoted by FAO.