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STATEMENT ON THE REFORM OF THE MULTILATERAL RULES ON AGRICULTURAL TRADE

The following communication, dated 25 February 2024, is being circulated at the request of the delegations of Argentina, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

We, the Ministers of Argentina, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, met in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on 25 February 2024, at the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference (MC13) of the World Trade Organization (WTO):

1. *Reaffirm* the "Statement on the Reform of the Multilateral Rules on Agricultural Trade" endorsed by our countries at the Twelfth Ministerial Conference of the WTO ([WT/MIN\(22\)/17-JOB/AG/236](#)), and *recall* the communication submitted to the General Council on Food Security through Agricultural Reform ([WT/GC/W/893](#)).
2. *Welcome* the recent Ministerial meeting of Latin American countries held in Santiago de Chile and the strengthening of coordination among our delegations in Geneva, and *reiterate* our commitment to work together, with a view to furthering the reform of the multilateral rules on agricultural trade at the WTO.
3. *Stress* that, in order to address the international trade challenges we face, it is essential to abide by WTO Agreements and strengthen the rules-based multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core.
4. *Recall* that one fifth of all the food consumed globally is imported, and that addressing food insecurity through a balanced and healthy diet is a challenge for all Members.
5. *Underscore* that, over the last two decades, the Latin American and Caribbean region, composed of developing countries and where the agricultural sector plays a vital role in sustainable development, has accounted for 40% of all net food exports globally, making it the main supplier of safe, nutritious, high-quality and sustainably produced food for the rest of the world.
6. *Express our concern* about the restrictive and potentially discriminatory effect on trade of trade-related environmental measures adopted recently by some WTO Members. The adoption of a unilateral approach to address global issues should be avoided, as should the implementation of measures that create unjustified and unnecessary barriers to international trade, and that deepen the global food security and nutrition crisis. We agree multilateral cooperation is important in a context of multiple global environmental challenges.
7. *Regret* the lack of clearer progress, which should be commensurate with the importance of agriculture for developing and least-developed countries, before the opening of MC13. Reform pursuant to Article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture is imperative for any effective and pragmatic WTO response to sustainable development challenges, including global food insecurity.

8. *Emphasize* that our countries, especially the smallest and most vulnerable ones, are now facing the consequences of agricultural market distortions created by other Members. We note the opportunity to discuss alternatives to address imports of subsidized products in the context of the agriculture negotiations.

9. *Recognize* the complexity of the agriculture negotiations and the importance of continuing to address these issues as part of the reform stipulated in Article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture, through ambitious, holistic and balanced negotiations, taking into account the interests of all Members.

10. *Call* for a decision at MC13 that provides political guidance, technical parameters and guidelines for the negotiation process in order to move forward on domestic support, market access, public stockholding for food security purposes, and the Special Safeguard Mechanism for Developing Countries.

11. In order to arrive at modalities for the Fourteenth Ministerial Conference (MC14), the following elements should be considered:

- a. Modalities for a substantial, progressive and gradual reduction in all forms of domestic support, including support that allows the concentration of trade-distorting subsidies. Efforts should be proportionate and take into account Members' responsibility for distortions in international markets.
- b. Analysis of the Green Box and its criteria, in order to prevent production- and trade-distorting effects, bearing in mind the objectives of food security, rural livelihood security and environmental protection.
- c. Better market access conditions for food and other agricultural products, with a view to creating new and better opportunities in order to produce safe and nutritious food, and to foster sustainable and resilient agri-food production systems.
- d. A transparent and effective special safeguard mechanism that takes into account the specific needs of developing country Members.
- e. Effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries that takes into account each Member's realities, needs, capacities and level of development.
- f. Alignment of the regulatory framework, bearing in mind the interests and sensitivities of all Members, as well as the situation of Members from the region that made wide-ranging reduction commitments upon accession to the WTO.

12. *Recognize* the region's hard work in and contribution to the negotiations in the run-up to MC13, and *reaffirm* the willingness of the Latin American countries that have endorsed this statement to bridge the gaps between the interests of all Members, especially developing and least-developed countries, in order to adopt comprehensive agriculture modalities at MC14.
