

**PROPOSAL BY BURKINA FASO ON THE NEGOTIATIONS  
ON AGRICULTURE**

**I. OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURE IN BURKINA FASO**

In Burkina Faso, as in most of the sub-Saharan countries, agriculture and livestock farming are key sectors of the economy, alone accounting for close to 40 per cent of GDP and some 80 per cent of the country's total exports.

Burkina Faso signed the WTO Agreements on Agriculture with a view to taking advantage of the opportunities they afforded. In that context, stimulating the competitiveness of agriculture and livestock farming is currently one of the Government's priority strategies.

The country's strategic orientations focus on strengthening the market economy, professionalizing the operators in these two sectors, and enhancing their competitiveness through the rational exploitation of the comparative advantages of the products at the subregional and international levels.

It should be borne in mind that in this context, food security is also one of the priority targets of Burkina Faso's agricultural policy. As such, it is among the factors governing the national interest measures relating to economic liberalization in general and multilateral trade in particular.

The country's agricultural policy is inspired by two main goals:

- Steady strengthening of economic growth through the promotion of agricultural exports;
- strengthening of general food security through increased food crop production, improved income levels (poverty alleviation) and easier physical access to food.

Burkina Faso's export supply remains directly dependant on meteorological conditions which seriously affect agricultural output, while export revenue depends on the international prices of cotton and other basic agri-food products.

The income generated by Burkina Faso's exports is overly dependant on a single crop, cotton, which accounted for almost 72 per cent of export revenue in 1997. Other products, in order of importance, are: livestock products; live cattle, hides and leather (6 per cent); oilseeds (5 per cent); fruit and vegetables (2 per cent).

## **II. EXPORT PRODUCTS**

Seven subsectors covering priority products can be considered as having significant export potential:

- Livestock and meat;
- hides and leather;
- cotton;
- gum arabic;
- oilseed products;
- fruit and vegetables.

In order to improve the integration of the different products in the world trading system, it is essential to focus on the development of the different subsectors and take full advantage of the potential of products identified as having priority.

This means identifying and eliminating the numerous barriers to trade in these products.

Burkina Faso's proposals for each one of these subsectors are set forth below.

## **III. MARKET ACCESS**

### **Fruit and vegetables:**

- Duty-free admission of fruit and vegetables from the LDCs;
- immediate abolition of export subsidies for fruit and vegetables, the leading export item of most LDCs;
- adoption of a sectoral development policy.

### **Livestock and meat:**

- Duty-free admission of red meat and cattle from the LDCs;
- duty-free admission of cattle and meat by-products from the LDCs.

### **Hides and leather:**

- Duty-free admission of hides, leather and by-products thereof from the LDCs.

### **Rice:**

- Abolition of export subsidies for rice, the leading import item for most LDCs for the period 2001-2010;
- Implementation of a support programme for this subsector over the same period (2001-2010).

**Cotton:**

- Evaluation of the implementation of the developed countries' commitment;
- duty-free admission of cotton from the LDCs;
- substantial reduction of domestic support in the developed countries;
- maintenance of the right of state trading enterprises in the LDCs to operate on the international market.

**Medicinal plants:**

- Protection of plants and traditional know-how;
- facilitation of technology transfer to the LDCs and the exploitation of generic drug patents.

**IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENTS ON AGRICULTURE**

- Make the provisions on special and differential treatment specific and binding for the developed countries;
- progressively eliminate subsidies;
- help the LDCs to comply with sanitary and phytosanitary standards by creating and/or strengthening scientific infrastructures;
- take account of the multifunctionality of agriculture: need to protect small farmers and family farming as well as food security;
- give the LDCs permanent access to the special safeguard mechanism in order to protect their weak production infrastructures under the special and differential treatment clause.

In the context of current negotiations, the following issues should be fully addressed to ensure the urgent resolution of both the short- and long-term food security problems of LDCs and Net-Food Importing Developing Countries:

- Create an inter-agency revolving fund to assist LDCs and Net-Food Importing Developing Countries with their food import bills in accordance with future price increases above a certain threshold, on condition that imports are from open and competitive markets;
- regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of the reform programme on LDCs and Net-Food Importing Developing Countries, and elaborate appropriate instruments to address concerns of those countries within a specified time-frame. Food aid should be in fully grant form;
- establish a mechanism to ensure that food aid would not disrupt domestic production in recipient countries;

- provide further technical and financial cooperation especially in regard to: enhancing agricultural productivity; infrastructure building; product diversification; transfer of new technology; market information dissemination; and export development;
  - ensure that the implementation of the Marrakesh Decision is a binding commitment under Article 16 of the Agreement on Agriculture.
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