

**Committee on Agriculture
Special Session**

SIXTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Report by the Chairman, Stuart Harbinson, to the Trade Negotiations Committee

I. STATUS OF WORK

1. The Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture, which is pursuing negotiations under paragraphs 13, 14 and other relevant provisions of the Doha Ministerial Declaration as agreed by the Trade Negotiations Committee (TN/C/M/1), held its sixteenth formal meeting on 24 January 2003. The agenda as set out in WTO/AIR/2005 was adopted.

2. The Chairman presented a report on his own responsibility concerning the main features of the discussions at the 22-24 January informal Special Session. In accordance with the agreed work programme, these comprised a comprehensive and substantive review of possible modalities, based on the Overview paper circulated on 18 December 2002 (TN/AG/6).

3. The Chairman's report will be included in the Secretariat summary report on the sixteenth formal Special Session (to be issued as TN/AG/R/6). A number of statements were made by participants in the formal meeting regarding the negotiations and the various issues and questions raised by the Chairman in the Overview paper. Participants' statements and contributions will also be reflected in the Secretariat summary report.

II. OUTSTANDING ISSUES

4. The Special Session addressed a heavy agenda. Although a number of ideas were raised that will help efforts to move the process forward, very little headway was made in building bridges between positions. At this late stage in the run-up to 31 March, this is a matter of serious concern.

5. Overall, Members are still far apart on many of the critical issues set out in the Overview paper. They include the methods to be applied by Members in preparing their draft Schedules and the levels of ambition concerning the depth of further reform. Outstanding issues also include a variety of matters relating to the rules and disciplines of the Agreement on Agriculture. In addition, certain collateral issues have been raised by a number of Members but, so far, there is no agreement on how, or in some cases whether, these matters should be addressed.

III. FURTHER WORK

6. A considerable effort will have to be made by Members in order to meet the end-of-March deadline.

7. In accordance with the agreed work programme, a first draft of a modalities document will be prepared and circulated for consideration at the next Special Session on 24-28 February. Subsequently, a second draft will be prepared and circulated for consideration at the Special Session scheduled to take place on 25-31 March, on which occasion the modalities are to be established.