



Trade Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative
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NGO and Civil Society Support for U.S. WTO Doha Agriculture Proposal for Bold Reform: Fighting Poverty and Improving the Environment

What They Are Saying:

"This is no time for dancing around and dillydallying on the Doha trade deal. This calls for real political leadership. Finally, an American proposal has injected some much needed momentum. Now, other players must show their cards and up the ante because the stakes could not be higher. We need a trade round which demonstrates to the poorest and marginalized that wealthier nations are serious about sharing opportunity and ensuring that trade benefits the poorest, especially in Africa – where, for example, job losses in apparel are at an all time high."

-Bono, U2 Lead Singer, Co-Founder of DATA (debt AIDS trade Africa)

"We welcome the United States' proposal as a first and important step to jump-start trade negotiations. We hope other nations will engage thoughtfully and arrive at a trade deal for development that boldly breaks down trade-distorting subsidies and market access barriers in rich countries that, at the moment, rob poor countries of their dignity by preventing them from trading their way out of poverty."

-Jamie Drummond, Executive Director, DATA (debt AIDS trade Africa)

"Mr. President...I was heartened by your words to the United Nations General Assembly on September 15, 2005 in which you called for a global effort against global poverty. I agree that a successful Doha Round will secure 'increased wealth from increased trade.' I also agree that this will require a commitment, especially from the United States, to reduce tariffs and other barriers on farm goods...Currently, trade in agriculture is a stumbling block in the negotiations, and the poor stand to lose out most of all. In this context, I urge you to fight not just for the interests of the people of the United States in current negotiations, but to protect the interests of the poor around the world who have too little access to the negotiating table."

-Most Reverend William S. Skylstad, Bishop of Spokane, President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

"Humane Society International (HSI) believes that the United States Trade Representative (USTR) has taken an important step forward in the WTO Agriculture Negotiations by proposing to cut trade-distorting domestic support subsidies, and encourage non-trade distorting programs aimed at promoting environmental, conservation and animal protection programs (Green Box). This is a good first step and we applaud the effort, but much more needs to be done to ensure that this proposal will actually result in benefits for the environment, small farmers and animals."

-Patricia Forkan, President, Humane Society International

"This bold U.S. offer presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to re-assess the purpose of public financial support to agriculture and to re-align that support with things that strengthen the future for farming and respond to taxpayers' expectation of farmers to produce clean water, wildlife habitat, healthy foods, food security and energy independence... Taking some of the enormous savings from cutting trade-distorting subsidies to fund these public goods will strengthen American agriculture and help build public support for future investments in this vital industry. In addition, such a realignment of U.S. farm policy will help move trade negotiations forward leading to a successful Doha Round of trade liberalization, which in turn, will strengthen American agriculture and benefit consumers and economies around the world."

-Ralph Grossi, President, American Farmland Trust

"President Bush has proposed major changes in U.S. agricultural policies that are important for establishing a more just global trading system. This is a courageous and necessary step in the right direction."

-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

"To his credit, Rob Portman, U.S. trade representative, has grasped the leadership mantle by tabling farm proposals that would require substantial changes in current US programs and cuts in current levels of subsidy disbursements... Peter Mandelson, the EU trade commissioner... has been stymied on the crucial issue of agricultural tariff cuts and quota expansion..... For the Doha round to advance, Mr. Mandelson needs the authority to emulate Mr. Portman."

-Jeffrey J. Schott, Senior Fellow, Institute for International Economics

"The world's best hope for eliminating poverty – the continued liberalization of global trading rules – faces great risks in the next few weeks ... With its proposals to significantly reduce tariffs and increase access to its markets, the U.S. has taken a leadership role in calling for reform of its own system of trade-distorting agricultural subsidies, price supports, and import restrictions... The EU's Trade Commissioner, Peter Mandelson, and most EU countries appear ready to meet the U.S. challenge with their own set of proposals. Unfortunately, they may be hamstrung by France – by far the largest beneficiary of EU farm support and the most resistant to change. The farm battle is one that must be won."

-Fran Smith, Adjunct Scholar, Competitive Enterprise Institute