

developing countries alike. The Cairns Group expects that contracting parties will enter into binding commitments on an effective programme for the liberalization of agricultural production and trade.

6. The Cairns Group recognises that proposals related to non-trade concerns such as food security need to be taken into account in negotiations to achieve the long term objective outlined in paragraph 2 above. However proposals which contemplate the long term retention of restrictions and distortions clearly would be inconsistent with that objective and contravene the Mid-Term Ministerial Agreement. The aim therefore should be to identify means to meet non-trade concerns which are not trade distorting in nature.

7. The Group also recalls its position as stated in its earlier framework proposals (GNG/NG5/2/21 and 69) which aims at the full integration of trade of trade in agricultural products into the generally applicable provisions within the GATT system.

Nature of the Reform Process

8. The Cairns Group envisages a reform process, over a period of 10 years or less, which is comprehensive, integrated and equitable, which provides no scope for the raising of protection levels for any product except under carefully circumscribed safeguard provisions, which provides for time limits by which obligations must be met, and which provides for liberalisation obligations on policies to which contracting parties are irreversibly committed. To give effect to these criteria, the liberalisation process must apply to all measures affecting agricultural trade, directly or indirectly, to all contracting parties and to all agricultural products.

9. To achieve these ends, liberalisation commitments should

- be formula-based in proportion to base period protection and support levels and apply universally across products and participants;
- be consistent with the objectives of special and differential treatment as spelt out in the Punta del Este Declaration and the MTR Agreement;