

The Uruguay Round has only 58 days to run. The date of 15 December is a real deadline. It cannot be extended. The remaining two months must be used to ensure that the Round succeeds.

All participants in the negotiations have a responsibility to ensure that the task succeeds. The Cairns Group fully supports the efforts of GATT Director General Peter Sutherland and commits itself as always to work positively and constructively within this urgent timeframe to achieve a genuinely trade liberalising outcome.

Ironically at this critical stage, some of those who have most to gain -- amongst the larger industrial countries -- appear to be the most reluctant to make the final effort required to positively conclude the Round. Narrow interest groups in these countries must not be allowed to frustrate the successful conclusion of the negotiations.

It remains as clear now as it has been since the Punta del Este Declaration of 1986 that the major industrial countries bear the prime responsibility for showing the necessary leadership and flexibility to bring the Uruguay Round to a successful conclusion.

The Uruguay Round will bring major benefits to the world economy. Failure will entail great economic and political costs. This is the right time to move forward and speedily resolve the outstanding issues.

The Round must be concluded on the basis of a multilaterally agreed, balanced global package. The Cairns Group rejects, as it has done since 1986, the notion that agriculture could be set aside in order to conclude interim or partial agreements.

The negotiations on agriculture cannot be completed without the full involvement of the Cairns Group and all the other parties concerned. As major stakeholders in world agricultural trade the Group insists that agriculture is not simply a trans-Atlantic affair.

Successful completion of the task in agriculture will require the negotiation of commitments which expand market access. It will also require rapid and final acceptance of all the Draft Final Act provisions to liberalise agriculture trade. These include quantity and budgetary based reductions in export subsidies and the commitments on trade-distorting domestic support measures.

The Cairns Group endorses the negotiated agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures. It forms a substantial part of the package and should not be re-opened.