

Future Food Security and Global Trade: CropLife International presents Recommendations to WTO ahead of 13th Ministerial Conference

Brussels, 31 January 2024: CropLife International, the industry body representing global plant-science innovation and trade, has today published six recommendations in support of the upcoming 13th World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference (MC13).

Taking place at the end of February in Abu Dhabi, MC13 comes at a time when the risks associated with an increasingly defragmented global trading system have the ability to inhibit progress towards both food security and climate goals. Global trade of agricultural commodities has been severely disrupted by the cumulative effects of the pandemic and conflict, resulting in record food inflation and price volatility for consumers. Subsequently, food insecurity, especially for the least-developed, has been on the rise. Global trade is now a key enabler to achieve recovery and stability.

Making a positive contribution to global food security is the shared goal of Governments and NGOs alike. With this imperative, and as the priorities for discussions are established and dialogue begins, CropLife International puts forward six recommendations to the Ministerial Conference, and calls on Member governments to:

1) REINFORCE CODEX

- Strengthen the centrality of science- and risk-based assessment as the basis for SPS measures
- Adequately and sustainably resource the Codex Alimentarius as the international standard for food safety, and
- Ensure the sustainable funding of partnerships such as the STDF which boost inclusivity.

2) OPPOSE UNILATERALISM

- Refrain from unilateral trade measures, committing to a rules-based, multilateral trading system, thus
- Enabling fair trade and removing unjustified non-tariff barriers.

3) UPHOLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Renew focus on sustainable goals and outcomes rather than prescriptive approaches
- Recommit to an open, inclusive, and cooperative approach.

4) RESTORE DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

- Implement a fully-functioning dispute resolution system as a central pillar for an effective multilateral trading system, and thus
- Hold to their commitment from MC12 to work “towards developing a common understanding...to address the dispute settlement function”.

5) PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION

- Recognise innovation as key productivity driver, enabling global access to affordable and nutritious food
- Include innovation as an imperative part of the solution to sustainable food production in MC13 outcomes addressing food security, trade and climate change.

6) SAFEGUARD TRIPS

- Recognise and safeguard TRIPS as the key framework to secure effective IP protection, including the protection of regulatory data.

Emily Rees, President and CEO of CropLife International, said: *“As we work towards our shared goals of food security, climate resiliency and equality, it’s imperative that the frameworks which underpin our vision are enabling ones - fostering innovation, protecting investment, providing for proportionate and future-proof regulatory certainty, disabling counter-productive restrictions.*

The upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference provides opportunity to make substantive progress and effect a tangible difference. CropLife International and its members stand ready to enable innovative, science-based solutions, working alongside all our partners in the agrifood industry, and offer our recommendations to this end.”

The full text of CropLife International’s *Recommendations to MC13* can be found [here](#).

About CropLife International: As a global voice and leading advocate for the plant science industry, we champion innovative technologies that help farmers grow more food on less land sustainably. We represent six of the world’s leading multinational R&D companies in the plant science sector by protecting intellectual property to foster a culture of innovation, advocating for trade and regulatory policies that facilitate access to new technologies, and ensuring the responsible and effective use of plant science innovations.

For further information, please contact
Virginia Lee
Director of Communications
virginia.lee@croplife.org