

Commerce Minister's Statement for the G-33 Meeting at MC-10
14th December, 2015

Fellow Ministers, esteemed delegates,

It is a great pleasure to address such a diverse group of fellow developing countries, we are together to pursue agriculture reforms for the benefit of our small farmers.

G-33 members because of their diversity are in a very good position to share our experiences.

Multilateral trading system for agriculture remains imbalanced, we started our journey with a stronger footing through Uruguay Round but our small farmers are still facing high level of distortions in agriculture trade.

Agriculture contributes 21% of Pakistan's GDP, declining agricultural commodity prices are a challenge for the farmers and very high commodity prices is a challenge for the poor consumers. Government has to deal with both dimensions through different policy instruments.

Pakistan recognizes the need to feed the hungry and give cash support to vulnerable but these instruments have to be carefully designed and monitored so that we do not end up hurting each other's small farmers.

It is an irony that while no country has formally utilized Public Stockholdings interim solution, Pakistan has suffered distortions in trade. Pakistani farmers, 93% of those have less than 5 acres of land are hurting because of unintended consequences of decisions made in Bali.

In my view the real value of this group's work would be in constantly analysing, sharing and learning from each others policies and different approaches used for food security, livelihood security and rural development.

Sustainability in agriculture is the biggest challenge of present times, therefore removing distortions in agriculture is no longer a matter of choice. G-33 has probably the largest number of small farmers in the world; therefore it should be the strongest voice against distortions in agriculture.
