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Prosperity Through Trade

POLITICIANS MUST SHOW COURAGE AT TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Lahore, Pakistan - April 18, 2007 – “Canadian political leaders of all political stripes must show greater vision and courage in international trade negotiations,” stated Alanna Koch, President of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA).

Koch and CAFTA Vice-President Darcy Davis are currently in Lahore, Pakistan for the Cairns Group Farm Leaders meeting. CAFTA is a member of the Cairns Group Farm Leaders. Farm leaders are meeting in conjunction with Cairns agriculture and trade ministers in an attempt to map out a successful path forward for the Doha round of World Trade Organization negotiations.

“CAFTA is pleased to be a member of the Cairns Group Farm Leaders,” stated Davis. “The voice of Canadian farmers who are dependent on international markets has been a valuable addition to the Cairns Group. Farmers from around the world have a similar interest in an ambitious outcome to the Doha round. CAFTA is pleased to be able to further that goal by supporting the Cairns Group Farm Leaders communiqué.”

That communiqué states, in part that *“farm leaders told Cairns Group ministers that we remained disappointed that the negotiations had not yet been successfully concluded and that we believe the key reason for this remains a lack of political leadership and vision from WTO members with highly protected agricultural sectors.”*

“Too many countries remain focused on protection, rather than on the benefits of trade liberalization,” stated Koch. “This includes successive Canadian governments and policy makers of all political stripes. Substantial trade liberalization must become the principal Canadian objective.”

“CAFTA is disappointed that the Canadian Government cannot support the Cairns Group Ministerial Communiqué in its entirety,” noted Davis. “This is extremely disappointing for Canadian agri-business and export dependent farmers. We believe that this decision does not reflect the needs of Canadian agriculture. CAFTA is also concerned that Canada’s inability to focus on the goal of ambitious trade liberalization may materially harm the future of the Doha round.”

“I understand that the political reality of a minority government makes bold decisions difficult. However, the future viability of many Canadian farms and businesses depends upon a successful outcome at the WTO. We call upon the government of Canada to show courage during the negotiations and support the ambitious objective outlined by Cairns Group ministers and farm leaders,” concluded Koch.

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