



Incorporating Gender Considerations for the Designation of Special Products in WTO Agriculture Negotiations

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I. Introduction

Over the past few decades there has been increasing attention paid to the gender dimension of poverty and development¹, particularly in relation to the role of women in agricultural processes and the impact of agricultural trade liberalization on women. Some organizations like FAO have started talking about the “feminization of agriculture” in the developing world, based on the facts that women represent 66% of the economically active population working in the sector and are identified as major providers of food and income for their families and communities in rural areas. Nonetheless, statistics have also demonstrated that women tend to be disproportionately poor and disadvantaged; representing over 70% of the poorest² global population with low level of ownership, control and access to productive and economic resources, assets and markets.

Policy makers, International Development and Financial Organizations, NGOs and the International Community as a whole are confronted with these figures that shape not only the global gender reality, but also outline socioeconomic development overall. It is therefore essential in designing and implementing strategies to significantly improve the lives of women, men and children to integrate gender considerations and formulate gender-sensitive policies at national, regional and multilateral levels, including in trade liberalization processes. Trade policies require an approach that recognizes the interconnections between trade and other macro and micro level policies, which involve gender relations, human development and socioeconomic processes.

The international trading system, through the implementation of the Doha Development Agenda, could play a role in providing opportunities to achieve economic and social development, particularly in developing countries and among their most vulnerable groups. The recently agreed paragraph 41 of the July framework³ provides developing countries with the possibility to:

- Define Special Products (SPs) that would permit them to designate certain crops based on principles of food security, livelihood and rural development. Developing countries would have the opportunity to protect these crops by using appropriate tariffs.

While the definition of SPs poses challenges and opportunities for Developing countries, it should not be understood as the mechanism to solve systemic trade distortions such as the continuing use of trade distorting subsidies and dumping practices by the North. Determining appropriate criteria in order to identify key agriculture products subject to special protection should be seen as a protective tool required by developing countries in order to protect their economies and local markets from

¹ Although the need has been recognized since at least the adoption of the World Plan of Action by the International Conference on Women in 1975 (UN 1975; Narain 1999), increased attention within the UN system has been drawn to the issue of gender-sensitive indicators in the aftermath of the World Summit for Social Development and the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. FAO 2000.

² According to the *1995 Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), out of 1.3 billion people living in absolute poverty, over 70 percent are women. The economic crisis of the 1980s, structural adjustment programmes, armed conflicts and drought, are believed to have affected women more severely than men, leading to what has been termed by the United Nations as the "feminization of poverty".

³ Paragraph 41 of Annex A of the General Council Decision states: “41. Developing country Members will have the flexibility to designate an appropriate number of products as Special Products, based on criteria of food security, livelihood security and rural development needs. These products will be eligible for more flexible treatment. The criteria and treatment of these products will be further specified during the negotiation phase and will recognize the fundamental importance of Special Products to developing countries.”

dumping practices and import surges of the North. The use and implementation of this instrument could also be seen as a concrete manner to make effective the Principle of Special and Differential Treatment (SDT).

This brief paper aims to contribute to national discussions in the process of defining SPs by putting forward some reflections and recommendations in regard to the current situation of women in agriculture and the need to integrate gender-sensitive trade policies in negotiating processes in order to ease negative impacts of trade liberalization, particularly for small farmers and rural poor, women being a significant percentage within those groups. It is mainly intended for informative and advocacy purposes among civil society, particularly for small farmers and agricultural social movements, but also for assisting policy makers and trade negotiators in current negotiations.

The paper has the following structure: Section II provides an overview of the situation of women in agriculture at the global level, Section III deals with particular aspects of current WTO negotiations, including the position of the G33 in regard to SPs; Section IV analyzes the process of defining SPs by suggesting the use of some indicators, including gender considerations. In this section some analysis is also dedicated to the issue of defining SSM; Section V presents some general concluding remarks.

II. Situation of Women in Agriculture

Agriculture is the keystone for economic and social development in the majority of developing countries; it represents a source of livelihood and household maintenance and is of critical importance for the preservation of the environment, genetic resources and biodiversity. Around 50 developing countries depend on the exports of three or fewer mainly agriculture commodities, which not only represent more than half of their exports earnings⁴, but also play a major role as a source of employment as well as a vital means for fulfilling food security⁵ and rural development needs of their population.

According to the FAO, rural women are responsible for half of the world's food production and have a prominent role in agriculture at all levels, in home farm production critical to household maintenance as well as in commercial agriculture mainly oriented to export crops. They produce between 60 and 80 percent of the food in most developing countries and are also the main producers of the world's staple crops - rice, wheat, maize - which provide up to 90 percent of the rural poor's food intake. Women contribute significantly to secondary crop production, such as legumes and vegetables⁶, which provide essential nutrients for their families and are often the only food available during the lean seasons or in case the main crop fails. Women are fundamental for guaranteeing food security and household maintenance not only for their own families, but also for their community in general.

⁴ Sao Paulo Consensus Document. Assuring Development Gains from the International Trading System and Trade Negotiations. UNCTAD XI Conference. Sao Paulo, Brazil 13-18 June, 2004.

⁵ It is important to have a clear idea of the meaning of food security, which has been a flexible concept in continuing evolution, from simply meaning "avoiding hunger" to the point of taking into consideration a wide variety of socioeconomic and technical elements, such as physical and economic access to healthy food as well as elements of dietary preferences of populations that would require different levels of policy implementation. The most updated definition of food security is that negotiated in the process of international consultation leading to the World Food Summit (WFS) in November 1996, in which several levels and factors were taken into account to formulate a comprehensive and complex concept: "Food security at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels [is achieved] when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." Household food security is the application of this concept to the family level, with individuals within households as the focus of concern.

⁶ FAO web site on gender and food security <http://www.fao.org/Gender/en/agri-e.htm>

Women's Dominant Role in Agriculture

In **India**, agriculture and allied industrial sectors employ as much as 89.5% of the total female labor force. Women provide one half of the labour in rice cultivation and have a key role in the production of major grains and minor millets. In addition they play a crucial role in ensuring supplies of food not only for house hold purposes, but also as food vendors and post-harvest processors of livestock and fishery products.

In **China**, women account for more than 50 percent of the labour engaged in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fisheries. The country has experienced a “feminization of agriculture” as male agricultural laborers have migrated to urban areas. As women’s source of income is primarily from low-productivity agricultural production, the wages of male migrants support households in the rural areas.

In **Benin** about 70% of the female population lives in rural areas, where they carry out 60-80% of the agricultural work and provide up to 44% of the work necessary to feed their families. Women are responsible for all household tasks, including water fetching, firewood gathering, food processing and preparation. Traditionally excluded from statistics, this work is not calculated in the GDP.

In **Tanzania**, ILO estimates that women comprise 54% of those economically active in agriculture. Approximately 98% of rural women classified as economically active are engaged in agriculture. Women farmers also contribute substantially to both commercial and subsistence agriculture, including livestock and fishing, as casual labourers and unpaid family workers. Women carry the major responsibility for both subsistence agriculture, especially food crop production, and domestic work.

In **Honduras**, rural women play an important role in agriculture, especially in the peasant and small farmer sectors, working an average of four hours a day in crop and livestock activities. Women are responsible for establishing a survival strategy for the household unit. About 20% of rural households are headed by women, who bear the entire responsibility for agricultural production.

SOURCE: FAO fact sheet information: <http://www.fao.org/Gender/en/agrib2-e.htm>

Notwithstanding women’s contribution to global food security, women farmers are commonly underestimated and ignored in development strategies and trade negotiations processes. They have experienced few concrete benefits and in several cases have even been adversely affected in their living and development conditions as result of the implementation of trade liberalization processes. There is a general idea among politicians, trade officials and negotiators that trade liberalization will reduce poverty equally for men and women, it is also believed that market access will promote development and improve the conditions of men and women evenly. Accordingly, the design and implementation of trade policies at national and multilateral level are gender-blind in their orientation; but not gender-neutral in their effects⁷.

Women are frequently neglected in economic, trade and development policies and planning because of socio-historical patterns in regard to gender-based division of labour. “The role of women is generally associated with non-economic and unpaid work, most of which takes place within the so-called reproductive economy. However, it is the reproductive economy that supplies labour and social capital to the economy and transmits social and cultural values to communities, even when such a

⁷ Williams, Mariama. Gender Mainstreaming in the Multilateral Trading System. Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003.

contribution is not registered in systems of national accounts (since no market value is attributed to the labour involved)...⁸

Socio-historical standards and stigmatization of the role of women lead as well to a lack of gender-disaggregated data⁹, particularly in agricultural activities, which is one important obstacle for policy makers when taking into consideration the gender dimension and performing an in-depth analysis of the impact of current trade processes on women as a group. According to studies of FAO: “Gender bias and gender blindness persist: farmers are still generally perceived as 'male' by policy-makers and development planners. For this reason, women find it more difficult than men to gain access to valuable resources such as land, credit and agricultural inputs, technology, extension, training and services that would enhance their production capacity. A lack of available gender-disaggregated data means that women's contribution to agriculture in particular is poorly understood and their specific needs ignored in development planning.”¹⁰

A common feature of women's work in the majority of rural areas of the developing world is the underestimation and lack of economic remuneration for their work and contribution to household and community maintenance, as well as to the macroeconomic level. Women have extensive work loads with dual responsibility for farm and household production. They are mostly responsible for the education and care of children and elders and they represent the highest percentage of illiteracy at the global level. In many countries women's control and use of land is determined by their relationship to males in terms of marriage, divorce or widowhood, which also has an impact on their social security¹¹.

Relevant Organizations such as FAO and ILO have started to include research and analysis of gender-disaggregated data in the design and implementation of specific projects and programs.¹² These organizations have recognized that gender-special circumstances and concerns must be taken into consideration and integrated into their programs of work and implementation of projects if they are to be successfully undertaken. Governments have also increasingly recognized the need for an integrated and coherent policy framework, including trade policy that is sustainable, gender-sensitive and human development-based.

From a gender perspective it is important that trade policies, programs and mechanisms:

- promote sustainable human development,
- enhance social policies that protect the most vulnerable sectors,
- promote economic and social advancement of women and men taking into consideration differences and special circumstances in countries' needs, activities and ability to compete,
- recognize and develop processes that seek to overcome the special constraints that women face in the economy and trade relations due to gender biases and gender inequalities.

⁸ Tran-Nguyen, Anh-Nga and Beviglia Zampeti, Americo. *Trade and Gender Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries*. UN-Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality Task Force on Gender and Trade. United Nations. New York and Geneva, 2004.

⁹ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has recently noted that, concomitant with an increase in gender awareness worldwide, there is both a lack of information on women's contribution to development and an increasing demand for gender-specific statistics at national and regional levels from a widening range of stakeholders engaged in research and decision-making on socio-economic development issues FAO 1999.

¹⁰ FAO web site on gender and food security <http://www.fao.org/Gender/en/agri-e.htm>

¹¹ Williams, Mariama. *Gender Mainstreaming in the Multilateral Trading System A Handbook for Policy-makers and other stakeholders*. Preface Page XIV. Commonwealth Secretariat 2003.

¹² FAO web site on gender and development: http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/FAOINFO/SUSTDEV/PEdef_en.htm

III. Overview of WTO Trade Negotiations on Agriculture

After the breakdown of the 2003 Cancun WTO Ministerial, mainly caused by the profound divergences between developed and developing countries over key contentious agricultural questions, WTO members agreed in July 2004 on the so-called July Framework, which put the Doha negotiations back on track by establishing negotiations of modalities in core areas, including Agriculture. With the July Framework Agreement, members outlined the negotiating road that should be followed towards Hong Kong, which basically reaffirms the commitment of all members to give support to the development objectives and programs of work adopted in the Doha Ministerial.

The language of the July Framework, particularly the Agriculture Annex, is rather vague and procedures are imprecise on how to carry forward controversial issues such as:

- the elimination of all forms of export subsidies and domestic support systems,
- the definition of a formula for tariff reductions,
- the treatment of inappropriate use of food aid to cover practices of dumping food on global markets, particularly in developing countries.
- the identification and efficient implementation of provisions for achieving effective and integral SDT for developing countries. A concrete example of this is the language established in paragraphs 41 and 42 of the Annex on Special Products (SPs) and Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM).

While ambiguous, paragraphs 41 and 42 of the July Framework Agreement are proposals put forward by developing countries and could become positive political and technical instruments within the multilateral trading system for enabling developing countries governments:

- To protect agricultural products on which their food security, farmers' livelihoods, household maintenance and rural development depend.
- To integrate effectively and coherently developmental and negotiating concepts within the context of trading negotiations by formulating trade policies that foster the right of governments to protect¹³ and the concept of food sovereignty¹⁴, which also involve the notion of food security and rural development. These concepts could become effective by using SDT, a principle that all WTO members recognize as integral and necessary in all areas of trading negotiations.
- To develop and design trade policies that are coherent with international agreements that promote human development, including women's development and rights, by integrating gender-sensitive trade policies into the broader multilateral trade agenda.

However, it is important to reiterate that the designation of SPs and SSM should not be understood as the mechanism to solve global trade distorting practices, particularly dumping¹⁵, which impinge on the

¹³ **The Right to Protect:** refers to governments' rights and responsibility to defend farmers and all citizens from import surges and dumping practices, including inappropriate food aid practices and to constituencies' right to put pressure on governments to move in this direction. Developing country governments must therefore have sufficient flexibility to adopt the kind of policies that best suit national conditions. These must be supported by increased accountability to the public to guarantee that the poor and most vulnerable fully benefit from such actions.

¹⁴ **Food Sovereignty:** refers to the Peoples', Countries' or State Unions' right to define their agricultural and food policy. This concept aims to promote agro-ecological movements at the national level which protect genetic resources, to defend local food production and to promote local and community agricultural trade. It also stresses the importance of promoting domestic law to defend local trade and markets as an alternative to the current legal frameworks that are mainly oriented to promote agro-exports activities.

¹⁵ Dumping is one of the most negative of all current distortions in global trade practices. Levels of dumping hover around 40% for wheat, between 25% and 30% for corn (maize) and levels have risen steadily over the past four years for soybeans, to nearly 30%. These percentages mean that wheat, for example, is selling for 40% less

development of local agriculture and are detrimental to achieving food and livelihood security at household and national levels. Defining SPs and SSM is a defensive mechanism put forward by developing countries in order to protect their local markets, but its use only demonstrates the need of developing countries to react in order to defend them from offensive and continuing trade distorting global practices, particularly from the North.

SPs should be understood as:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A protective instrument put forward by developing countries in order to defend their local producers and markets from trade distorting practices, such as dumping and import surges ➤ A political and technical instrument to integrate effectively and coherently developmental and negotiating concepts within the context of trading negotiations by formulating trade policies that foster the right of governments to protect and the concept of food sovereignty |
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SPs should not be understood as:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The mechanism to solve global trade distorting practices, particularly dumping ➤ The mechanism to guarantee food security and rural development |
|--|

3.1 G33 position on SPs

The G33 is a group of over 42 developing countries¹⁶ concerned about the effects of trade liberalization on small farmers and rural development. Members of the G33 are considered within current WTO negotiations the main demandeurs for the implementation of SPs and SSM. The G-33 believes that SPs and SSM constitute a fundamental component of the needed flexibilities in the current negotiation to address developing members' food and livelihood security, and rural development concerns. In this regard, the Group holds that, to be an effective instrument, SPs provisions in the revised agreement on agriculture must have the following parameters:¹⁷

- Developing countries must be able to decide themselves a percentage of tariff lines to be considered as SPs,
- SPs must be a stand alone provision,
- There must be no tariff reduction commitment for all SPs,
- There must be no new tariff reduction quota commitment on all SPs,
- Products considered as SPs must also have access to SSM.

than it costs to produce. For cotton the level of dumping for 2001 rose to a remarkable 57% and for rice it has stabilized at around 20%. These calculations do not include many costs that are still not considered in traditional economics, such as the contamination and depletion of natural resources such as soil and water. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP). *United States Dumping on World Agricultural Markets*. WTO Cancun Series paper No. 1. Page 2.

¹⁶ The G-33 is also known as the SP/SSM Alliance to champion the concepts and provisions of Special Products and Special Safeguard Mechanisms. The Group comprises 42 developing countries of the WTO: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Botswana, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Korea, Mauritius, Mongolia, Montserrat, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, The Philippines, Peru, Saint Kitts, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

¹⁷ G33 Issue Statement calling for better treatment of SP and SSM in July agriculture text. Geneva, 28 July 2004

IV. The Process of Defining SPs

4.1 Defining SPs, possible indicators

Developing countries have the challenge to determine what criteria are to be used in order to define SPs. It is important to keep in mind that identifying SPs would ultimately require a combination of several social, economical, financial and cultural indicators in order to appropriately reflect the needs and circumstances of each country. Moreover, probably not all SPs identified at the national level would have the same level of importance or sensitivity and therefore would not require the same degree of protection in relation to tariff reductions. This section is intended to provide some inputs that could be helpful to assist national discussions by presenting some elements that developing countries may take into consideration for defining SPs.

According to the July Framework Agreement, the definition of SPs should be based on criteria of food security, livelihood security and rural development. These very comprehensive concepts, agreed by the international community, provide a good base to further elaborate the key products that need to be protected according to the special circumstances of each country. In the process of identifying SPs, two main questions should be asked: a) Who are the key socioeconomic groups to protect? and b) What kind of products are to be protected?

A. Who are the key socioeconomic groups to protect?

Applying concepts of food and livelihood security and rural development, the main groups to protect should be the most vulnerable, those with less access to productive and economic resources, who will be mostly affected by processes of trade liberalization. Those are traditionally, the small farmers, rural poor and landless peasants. Within these groups, women are crucial stakeholders because of their significant participation in the agricultural sector, their lack of access to economic and productive resources and their responsibilities as the major food providers for their families and communities.

A wide range of indicators should also be considered to identify the characteristics and needs of the socioeconomic groups to be protected. These indicators could be:

- A. The income level, based on the earnings to cover essential dietary needs according to FAO and UNDP standards. Different sources of information could be applied, such as national, UNDP and World Bank statistics.
- B. The level of access to economic and productive resources. This could be measured by credit facilities and infrastructure conditions in which products are traded in local markets.
- C. The regional context, based on characteristics and special development needs of geographical regions within each country. It is important to identify sensible regions according to their poverty level, so that policies could be designed taking into consideration the different realities and impacts of their implementation in most vulnerable areas.
- D. The ratio of females-males economically-active in agriculture in order to assess the multiplication effect that their incomes generate for their families and communities. A qualitatively and quantitatively disaggregated gender assessment of the situation would be necessary to prioritize intended beneficiaries.

The integration of gender analysis should be understood as a crosscutting indicator running through all the possible indicators to consider. It has been demonstrated that women have the lowest incomes at the global level and less access to economic and productive resources. They are the most marginalized group, particularly within vulnerable geographical regions. At the same time, the need to integrate gender-differentiated analysis in the design of policies, including trade strategies and mechanisms, is increasingly recognized. The impacts of such policies (negative and positive) are not neutral on the sectors they affect. It is undeniable that consequences of trade liberalization on women will not only

be detrimental to their development as a group, but also to their families and communities because of their historical reproductive and multiplier role in society.

B. What are the products to protect?

Identifying domestic products that should be protected as SPs would require as well the combination of more than a few considerations such as:

- A. The most important products for socioeconomic and trade growth, according to national figures on the economic value of the product to the total agricultural GDP. It is also important to consider the economic implications of the products at the regional level. For example, maize crops could be extremely important in several regions of the country, but not for one particular region with a high level of poverty, where that crop could be plantains.
- B. The level of importance of products for social and cultural development; for example, by taking into consideration the nutritional needs and preferences of the population.
- C. The ratio of females-males economically-active in the production of domestic crops. Differentiated gender analysis is required to assess quantitatively and qualitatively the contribution of females-males as providers of food and livelihood security for their families that depend on the production of a specific crop. This crop would be key to protect in order to guarantee household food security.
- D. The identification of agricultural substitute products. Protection to and from substitute products could be seen in two ways: The protection that governments should offer to secondary domestically-produced crops that could become, during lean season, the highest economic value to the total agricultural GDP or could also be used as the main nutritional product to satisfy the dietary needs of the population, particularly in rural areas. The other aspect is protection from substitute products; that is, when main domestic products are displaced from local markets by foreign-produced imported substitutes¹⁸ which are cheaper than the main products. For example maize, as the main domestic crop product, could be replaced by cheap imported wheat.

4.2 Defining an SSM

The designation of an SSM would permit developing countries to increase tariffs temporarily on key products to be able to protect their domestic farmers from short-term fluctuations in prices and/or from import surges. The discussion of the designation and implementation of an SSM basically focused on two main issues: a) the definition of key products intended to be protected because of their level of economic and development importance and b) the structure of the safeguard mechanism itself.

Some developed members argue that the designation of an SSM should be limited to SPs; but most developing countries, particularly G33 members, state that the application of an SSM should be available to all agricultural products and used whenever periods of extremely depressed international prices and/or import surges negatively affect domestic markets. Another element that justified such coverage is the use of general safeguard provisions under Article XIX of GATT and the Agreement on Safeguards, which are available to all WTO members and for all types of products. However, GATT's general safeguard provisions require from Members a complicated procedure in order to prove the causal link between the import increases and the damage caused to national production. This makes the practical use of this provision by developing countries difficult, due to their lack of institutional capacities and the characteristics of their agriculture sector¹⁹.

¹⁸ Bernal, Luisa. Paper on Guidelines for Approaching the Designation of Special Products in Developing Countries. 2004.

¹⁹ All Members could request the use of general safeguard provisions under Article XIX of GATT, but they have to prove injury or threat thereof to the domestic industry and establish through an investigation based on

Very few concrete steps have been made in this area; so far, the only provision on the use of an SSM has been established through paragraph 42 of the July Framework: “A Special Safeguard Mechanism will be established for use by developing country Members,” Such vague language merely reflects the enormous contradictions existing over this topic among developing and developed members.

The definition of SPs will certainly require the use of an SSM in order to guarantee effective protection of these products. As one commentator noted: “Once SPs are very well identified at the national level and the significance of particular agricultural products has been determined on the basis of food and livelihood security and rural development concerns, it would be difficult to argue that such products may not be protected by the SSM”²⁰. However, the use of an SSM should be broader and could also be applied to products that are highly subsidized in their countries of origin and not necessarily defined as SPs of the import country, i.e. dairy products, poultry parts, certain fruit and vegetables, sugar, etc²¹.

Considerations for the use of an SSM will again require an in-depth analysis of several internal factors to reflect a positive *win-win* situation, both for the development and trade objectives. Nonetheless, the outcome of the process should, as a matter of urgency, prioritize key elements such as food security, livelihood security and rural development.

4.3 G33 position on SSM

The G33, has stated that the “SSM is an integral part of the SDT provisions under the market access pillar. As such, the SSM constitutes a fundamental element for addressing the existing imbalances in the Agreement. In this context, the SSM should provide developing countries and least developing countries with an effective and flexible treatment to address their distinct susceptibilities to import surge disturbances and the ruinous effects of down swings in prices.”²²

The G33 put forward “general parameters” that should guide the negotiations of modalities on SSM. These are the following:²³

- The safeguard measure shall be automatically triggered
- The safeguard measures shall be available to all agricultural products
- The safeguard measure should be available to address situations of import surges and swings in international prices. Therefore, price and volume-triggered safeguards shall be contemplated.
- Both additional duties and quantitative restrictions shall be envisioned as measures to provide relief from import surges and declines in prices.
- The mechanism shall respond to the institutional capabilities and resources of developing countries; hence it should be simple, effective and easy to implement.

objective evidence that there is causal link between increases in imports and the injury or threat thereof to the domestic industry. In consequence, theoretically all developing countries have access to these provisions; in practice however, many lack the institutional capacity to implement in a rigorous manner the detailed procedural requirements to apply the safeguard measures. Furthermore, the nature of agriculture in many developing countries, characterized by large numbers of subsistence and small farmers, makes it difficult to meet the conditions established in the Safeguard Agreement to prove the causal link between increased imports and injury, necessary for invoking the measure. G33 Statement on Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) for use by developing countries.

²⁰ Bernal, Luisa. Paper on Guidelines for Approaching the Designation of Special Products in Developing Countries. 2004.

²¹ FAO (2003). Analysis on trends in imports.

²² G33 Statement on Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) for use by developing countries on 14. 12. 2005.

²³ G33 Statement on Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) for use by developing countries on 14.12.2005.

V. Concluding Remarks

The process of identifying SPs will not be an easy task for developing countries. A lot of elements and considerations should play a role in defining: (a) the key socioeconomic groups to be protected, (b) the most important products for economic and trade growth, (c) the level of importance of these products for social and cultural development and (d) the level of protection and flexibility required for such products. The design and implementation of gender analysis and gender-sensitive policies should be integrated when defining all the above elements if agricultural trade policies are to be effective and coherent with international agreements that promote human—including women's—rights and ecological sustainability.

The history of the international trade negotiations has frequently demonstrated the difficulties encountered by developing countries at national and global level when committing to and implementing processes of trade liberalization in several critical sectors. They are faced with economic, technical and political restrictions. If they are to avoid repeating history, developing countries need to prepare themselves better this time and organize their work and priorities in a more consistent manner. They need to implement a bottom-up approach that reflects their real internal needs and circumstances, particularly by ensuring the integration and observance of core developmental and negotiating concepts that should be used as a basis for defining trade international agreements.

Developed countries, should also respect special needs and priorities of developing countries so that the world trading system could be used in such a way that developing countries are given both strong incentives and better opportunities to use trade integration more actively for development. The current negotiating context could be used as one instrument to promote development and gender equalities, but political commitments are needed to coherently design and implement the international trade and development agenda, so that non-trade-distorting practices and practical development mechanisms such as SDT are effectively implemented to narrow existing gaps between developed and developing peoples.