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### **Support of the Netherlands to Capacity Building in Developing Countries**

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#### **1. Introduction**

I would like to put the support of the Netherlands to capacity building in developing countries in the context of globalization and liberalization.

To start with globalization: especially during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, consumer preferences have markedly shifted in the direction of higher quality products that are safe, authentic and produced under acceptable health, environmental and social conditions. This shift towards experience and credence attributes not only implies higher product standards, but also more emphasis on process characteristics. Markets have therefore changed from primarily bulk supply to differentiated products for a variety of consumers. Private business has responded quickly and introduced stricter standards in processing and more extensive labelling to communicate non-observable product attributes effectively to consumers. Since the Marrakesh agreement this process of globalization takes place in the context of rules established by the WTO. Although considerable progress has been made since the Second World War through various rounds of GATT negotiations in lowering explicit barriers to trade such as tariffs, only since the WTO trade in agricultural products came for the first time under the discipline of the multilateral trade rules. The most recent Uruguay round in particular resulted in significant commitments to liberalize trade. In particular, significant reductions in tariffs were achieved for tropical agricultural products that are of the greatest interest to developing countries.

Liberalization of agricultural markets has been on the agenda of policy makers and international organizations since the beginning of the 1980's. To a large extent this reflected the growing recognition that widespread government intervention in markets was much less effective than previously expected, while negative side effects resulted in misallocation of resources, reduced economic growth and often adverse impact on equity and environment. Gradually, policies in the industrialized world became increasingly oriented towards less government interference, and were characterized by a simultaneous shift from national to supranational regulations. Developments in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and China took a dramatic change towards more freedom for individual and communal market participants. In much of the developing world, policy reforms under structural adjustment programs led to a redefinition of the government in relation to

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agricultural markets. As a result of these national and international developments, agricultural markets world-wide entered a long-term process of liberalization. As tariff barriers have declined, however, the emphasis placed on non-tariff barriers has increased, both due to the global proliferation of non-tariff measures and because of wider recognition of the impact non-tariff barriers can have on trade. There is now concern that such technical measures can act, either explicitly or implicitly, as a barrier to trade in a similar manner to tariffs and quantitative restrictions. This is a particular issue for developing countries in view of their lower technical capabilities and the importance of agricultural exports. Attempts have been made to overcome the trade distortive effects of sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical requirements through the WTO's SPS and TBT Agreements.

It is evident that developing countries are constrained in their ability to export agricultural products to developed countries by SPS requirements. Indeed, a number of developing countries consider SPS requirements to be one of the greatest impediments to trade in agricultural products. This reflects the fact that developed countries typically apply stricter SPS measures than developing countries and that SPS controls in many developing countries are weak and overly fragmented. Furthermore, in certain circumstances SPS are incompatible with prevailing systems of production and marketing in developing countries. As a consequence, wholesale structural and organizational change may be required in order to comply, and the associated costs can act to restrict trade in a similar manner to tariffs. The problems developing countries have in complying with SPS requirements reflect their wide resource and infrastructure constraints that limit not only their ability to demonstrate compliance. A particularly acute problem is access to appropriate scientific and technical expertise. Indeed, in many developing countries knowledge of SPS issues is poor, both within government and the food supply chain, and the skills required to assess SPS measures applied by developed countries is lacking.

This paper intends to show the efforts of the Netherlands to support capacity building in developing countries in order to overcome these institutional constraints.

## **2. Efforts of international organizations**

Before giving this information I would like to give a short overview of efforts of international organizations to support developing countries to capacity building on food safety in order to put the efforts of the Netherlands in a proper international perspective. The Netherlands supports these efforts of international organizations.

To start with the FAO, the FAO assists efforts to strengthen the physical and institutional trade-related capacities of developing countries. Examples of such support include establishing or adapting legislation, regulations and systems to comply with the WTO agreements relating to agriculture; upgrading domestic SPS/TBT mechanisms to strengthen capacity to meet the standards and norms of the international market place. In particular the FAO assists in:

- the strengthening of national veterinary services to provide them with the capacity and skills to adopt and apply risk analysis techniques effectively;
- the development of national food legislation, taking into account the SPS and TBT Agreements;
- the establishment and strengthening of national food control systems for both imports and exports;
- the updating of national plant and animal quarantine programmes.

WTO, UNCTAD and ITC Secretariats, in collaboration with the staff of the IMF, the World Bank and the UNDP, have an Integrated Framework for trade related technical assistance, including

human and institutional capacity-building, to support least developed countries in their trade and trade-related activities. The aim is to assist the least developed countries to enhance their trade opportunities, to respond to market demands, and to integrate into the multilateral trading system. Trade-related technical assistance activities may encompass institution building to handle trade policy issues, including enhancing capacities to make and implement trade policy consistently with WTO obligations.

Also the World Bank seeks to assist developing countries to find solutions to trade-related food safety problems. The World Bank can assist developing countries to formulate the necessary policy, regulatory framework, and establish institutions and national capacities to meet and implement their WTO commitments. The goal is capacity and institution building that will lead to effective action with shared benefits. A public/private collaboration can result in the formulation of interest groups and associations, possibly on a regional basis, that will influence regulators to adopt systems that will facilitate production and trade. A regional approach can be cost-saving solution for countries to cooperate as a region to fund research, laboratories and certification systems.

### **3. Technical assistance of the European Union**

As the Netherlands is a Member State of the European Union (EU) I would like to give some information on the technical assistance of the EU to developing countries.

External assistance programmes managed by the European Commission have tripled over the last 10 years to reach 12.3 billion Euro in 2000. The European Commission currently delivers more than 10 per cent of total development assistance world-wide. External aid programmes are managed by it directly and constitute 62 per cent of all its accounts. EC grant aid exceeds concessional loans granted by the World Bank. Examples of this assistance are the following:

- a Pan African Programme for the Control of Animal Diseases for the ACP countries except the Southern African Region. The target group consists of all actors involved in the livestock-farming sector. The aim is to establish lower-cost national and continental epidemiological surveillance networks for the main animal diseases, provide the countries with the capacities needed to organize economically and technically justified control programmes and develop effective and sustainable distribution of veterinary products and services.
- a Special Framework of assistance for traditional ACP suppliers of bananas. The target group consists of certified banana farmers and related people in rural areas, growers associations, public authorities and private sector companies. The aim is to assist in the development of sustainable and viable banana industry, which can withstand competition from other ACP banana producing states and Latin American producers; to assist former banana growers in switching towards other activities.
- a Pesticides Initiative Programme for all ACP-countries. The target group consists of producers and exporters of fruits and vegetables in the ACP countries. The aim is to assist the target group to comply with EU sanitary and phytosanitary rules.
- a Southern Africa Animal Disease Control for the SADC countries. The target group consists of national and regional animal health authorities. The aim is to reinforce the capacities of the countries in the region to control animal diseases, to monitor the circulation of animals and animal products and to exchange epidemiological information at national, regional and international level.

- a Regional Animal Health Programme for Egypt, Israel, Jordan and West Bank Gaza. The target group consists of veterinary services. The aim is to promote a closer co-operation of the national veterinary services in the region in order to improve the animal health situation and make the control of animal diseases more cost efficient.
- Four seminars on SPS and trade related issues organized by FAO and financed by the European Commission for Jamaica, Cameroon, Zambia and Ethiopia.

To illustrate the technical assistance of the EU to developing countries I will elaborate on one example. The example is a project to strengthen the capacity in ACP countries for fishery product health conditions. The specific purpose is to improve the access of ACP fisheries products to the world market, by strengthening the capacity for sustainable export health controls and improving production conditions in an estimated 17 ACP countries, 10 of which are situated in sub-Saharan Africa. Particular attention is to be paid to ensuring that products from small-scale fisheries are not excluded from the global market, and to strengthening regional networks of veterinary and health professionals in the sector. The focal point is the loss of access to international markets for fishery products through a lack of capacity to respond to requirements for strengthened health controls. Many ACP countries lack the legal, technical, financial and organizational resources to meet the import health conditions required by these developed country markets. In addition to lack of adequate official control, industry itself is often unable to respond to the higher level requirements due to the lack of technical skills, capital for investment in upgraded establishments and weak or non-existent infrastructure in productive regions. The activities of the project will therefore support ACP countries in institutional strengthening of competent authorities through training and technical assistance for improved organizational structure, legislation and financial sustainability. Supporting technical institutes will also be strengthened, as well the inspection and control agencies. The analytical capacity of official testing laboratories will be developed with the supply of new equipment, training and the introduction of suitable systems of quality assurance. Appropriate residue monitoring plans for fishery products will also be introduced.

#### **4. Efforts of the Netherlands: the Center for the Promotion of imports from Developing countries (CBI)**

Firstly I would like to give information on the results of a study on technical non-tariff barriers affecting trade opportunities for developing countries, the case of fresh fruit and vegetables. This study has been prepared by the Center for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI) in the Netherlands.

Increased demands of European consumers with respect to food quality and safety have resulted in more strict regulations and standards, reflected in the framework of "Good Agricultural Practice". This framework requires companies to have a good management system in place to deal with quality, hygiene and environmental matters. It puts forward demands on the company's registration system, stock material used, soil treatment, pesticides and fertilizers used, post-harvest treatment, processing and packaging, waste management, environmental management and workers' health and safety.

As first impact studies of new European regulations on pesticides have pointed out, the horticultural sector of developing countries is likely to be seriously affected, as responsibility in food safety matters is increasingly weighing heavily on the companies. European buyers ask suppliers for increased guarantees on pesticide levels.

Producers of fresh fruit and vegetables mentioned the following problems:

- not being familiar with the regulations and the interpretation thereof;
- the administrative burden and the lack of technical assistance to identify and implement necessary measures;
- difficulties in complying with environmental and health regulations, such as MRLs. These producers find it hard to avoid using pesticides. In some countries products are still fumigated for decontamination, a treatment not allowed for products entering the EU. Alternative treatments are often not available.
- variations in product definitions and specifications.
- increasingly, labelling requirements for consumer products in the EU are partly passed on to producers and exporters in developing countries. Importers and food manufacturers require thorough product specifications for application, instructions for storage and processing, and information on quality assurance (HACCP or ISO-certification).

As regulations on residues of pesticides and heavy metals are becoming more and more strict, it is crucial for producers and Trade Promotion Organizations in developing countries to have up-to-date information on the regulations and solutions in terms of improved techniques and treatments. Although the Center for the Promotion of Imports from Developing countries and other organizations are providing assistance in this respect, much more (international) effort is needed to help developing countries to adopt and implement food safety control systems, such as HACCP.

One of the important bottlenecks for the export of organic food by developing countries is the high costs of mandatory certification for producers to enter the international market. When a producer or a group of producers applies for certification, several inspection missions follow in which the production system is judged and recommendations are made for improvement. Since very few developing countries have an accredited local certified, the inspectors often come from Europe or the USA.

Payments have to be made directly after an inspection mission. These initial investments only start to pay back after the first harvests have been sold as organic. After certification, at least one inspection mission is conducted annually. Certification by international certifiers is relatively expensive, since European fees and travel costs have to be paid. For many producers the costs of certification are a major threshold for venturing into the international market. International certification costs a maximum of 5 percent of sales value, but where local certification bodies exist it reduces to 2 percent of sales value.

Conversion from conventional farming to organic farming takes about two to three years. During this period a farmer may not sell his production under the organic label and cannot take advantage of the higher prices normally associated with organic products. The transition is even more difficult for developing country producers as they, generally, do not benefit from specific State aid as is the case for farmers in developed countries.

Developing countries face an additional difficulty. As emphasized by the certification body Ecocert International, the European Union regulation corresponds to the European situation, but the African reality is far different. A clear definition of the production unit is not always easy. It is, for example, sometimes difficult to make developing country operators aware of the differences between traditional farming and organic farming using specific farming techniques. Finally, developing countries' lack of infrastructure results in slowing down organic production because of the limited shelf life of the products.

The Center for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries initiated a new programme, which aims to enhance the fresh fruit and vegetable sector in selected African countries through technical assistance in the field of farm and export management. Aim of the programme is to address some of the critical Technical Non-Tariff Barriers and to build up local institutional capacity. The programme is expected to benefit a great deal from the experience obtained through a similar farm and export management programme for cut flowers that is currently implemented in eastern and southern Africa.

Key elements of the initiative are:

- Identification of national and international organizations (public and private) offering assistance in the field of fresh fruit and vegetables;
- Preliminary assessment of strengths and weaknesses of eligible and qualifying African countries, opportunities and threats, qualifying countries' policies towards the sector, current export markets, analysis of main competitors for the selected countries;
- Comparison of qualifying African countries and interesting product/product mix; interest of European importers, auctions and supermarket chains in the products of these countries based on interviews regarding attitudes, experienced problems and bottlenecks, continuity, requirements and preconditions, business practice and terms of the trade;
- Further elaboration of regional and country-specific strategies for the selected developing countries, on the basis of feasibility studies, identification missions and needs assessments. These strategies entail close consultation with other actors, for integrated approaches are required to overcome bottlenecks and problems related to exports of the selected products: tariffs and quota; certification and labeling; quality and grading standards, health, safety and environmental issues;
- Elaboration of GAP/EurepGap; seeds and propagation material; cultivation; harvest; primary processing; packaging; storage and transport; equipment and technology; personnel and facilities; documentation; education and training ; knowledge/training centres, experimental farms; quality guarantees, testing and laboratories;
- Elaboration of solutions: institutional capacity for exporting fresh fruit and vegetables; assistance by other organizations and possibilities for assistance in farm and export management; opportunities for partnerships and business-to-business arrangements; regulations and assistance for getting access to EU markets, including buying/selling missions and/or trade fairs.

## **5. Efforts of the Netherlands: the EUROPE SADC INITIATIVE**

Secondly I would like to give information on the EUROPE Southern African Development Community (SADC) INITIATIVE. This initiative has been taken within the context of the trade liberalization objectives of SADC Member States. These objectives are enshrined in the Protocol on Trade that entered into application on 1 September 2000. The coming into implementation of the Trade Protocol underscores the urgent need of Member States to harmonize SPS measures required to increase trade in agriculture and agro related products and for development of improved food safety standards. While SADC has made substantial efforts in recent years in setting standards of trade in non-agricultural products, especially manufactured goods and textiles, standards and grades required for trade in agricultural commodities need to be put into place to guide both intra-SADC and/or external trade in agriculture for the economic benefits of a wide range of regional stakeholders, especially smallholders who depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

With globalization and increased trade both within SADC and with the outside world, issues of food safety have also taken on renewed prominence. In many developing countries, a major cause of child mortality is unsafe food caused by poor sanitation and lack of clean water. Food safety issues are not only of importance for the consumers of the developed nations, where SADEC products are sent, but also for exporters of SADC Member States who are required to meet quality and safety standards in a more competitive global market place. Within SADC itself, food safety is now clearly a critical factor in domestic nutrition and health of the citizens of Member States. Given the limited resources and low technology base of some SADC Member States, special efforts must be made to guarantee and certify the safety of export products, in an efficient manner, while ensuring that food products available for the consumption of citizens of the Member States also meet improved safety standards.

The SADC Trade Protocol specifies that Member States shall base SPS measures on science, in accordance with the WTO Agreement. They should also harmonize such measures, so that food safety and SPS concerns are mitigated for the implementation of the Protocol. However, there is little information on the extent to which individual Member States are in compliance with international standards or whether the steps that must be taken to meet these standards have been taken. In many countries these efforts are hampered by technological and capacity constraints, the lack of clear information and data for undertaking such assessments and monitoring their outcomes, and the lack of trained staff and modern laboratories to scientifically confirm compliance with required standards.

The EUROPE/SADC INITIATIVE is a Dutch initiative aimed at achieving further regional co-operation in the area of agriculture between countries in the EU and SADC. This has become necessary as a result of current agricultural developments. The Netherlands have co-operated with the United Kingdom and Portugal. At this moment also the European Commission, Sweden and Belgium are included in the cooperation.

This initiative also contributes to international agreements on food security and sustainable agriculture made at the World Food Summit in 1996, Agenda 21 and the Maastricht Conference 'Cultivating our Futures' (September 1999) and the 8<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (April-May 2000). The emphasis was among others on the following elements: international regional co-operation in the area of agriculture can contribute to the implementation of the "World Food Summit Plan of Action"; regional and international co-operation through private and public partnerships between developed and developing countries must be strengthened. In this way a contribution can be made to the realization of food security at the individual, household, national, regional and international levels. A Dutch NGO helped to get this initiative off the ground and is still acting as a focal point for cooperation with farmer's organizations and NGOs. In the coming decades the challenge will be to achieve food security for a growing world population. Studies have shown that within the next thirty years food production should be doubled. Key words here are sustainability, production increase and equal access.

In many developing countries agriculture is the driving force for the economy and rural development. In these countries 60 to 70% of the working population is employed in the agricultural sector. Agriculture is therefore of crucial importance for the achievement of food security and the fight against poverty. And it helps to achieve stability in these countries and regions. Food shortage and over-exploitation of natural resources can be a source of conflict. Agricultural developments are closely linked to international nature policy. Thus, for example, the global problem of deforestation can only be resolved when alternatives can be found in agriculture.

The issue of capacity-building and institution-building is in this respect of utmost importance. Capacity-building and institution-building not only have to serve as the base for a

strong development of the agricultural sector and rural development, but can also contribute to a strengthening of market-access of products of developing countries.

The regional approach of the initiative is very important: a strengthening of the co-operation in the field of agriculture between developing countries in various regions is essential for further agricultural development and a strong position on the global market. The initiative aims at a political dialogue and institutional co-operation in the field of agriculture between the ministers of agriculture in the Countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the EU in the field of a number of concrete themes. This means co-operation directed to furthering sustainable agriculture and food security. An integrated approach of governments, farmers' organizations and non-governmental organizations is used. This co-operation could be realized under the umbrella of annual structural consultations between the ministers of agriculture of the EU and the SADC. The co-operation will in first instance be focused on the political dialogue in the field of agriculture and a work-plan in the field of co-operation and assistance, focused on capacity-building and institution-building.

The following four topics are identified: Food Security; Food Safety; Trade in agricultural products and Sustainable agriculture. Considering the results of the international meetings on sustainable agriculture and food security mentioned above these topics cover most of the ground on which fruitful consultations between ministers of Agriculture from EU- and SADC-member states could take place. However, these are very broad areas and there is a certain risk that the results of the cooperation just do reflect the intentions and commitments agreed upon in the conferences mentioned above. On top of that there is a need to formulate some action-oriented items on which the two regions can cooperate in an concrete manner.

In the framework of the initiative a conference will be organized, hosted by the Government of Namibia and financially assisted by the Netherlands. That conference would take place in Windhoek, Namibia, from October 14<sup>th</sup> till October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Ministers of Agriculture from both regions would participate. Unfortunately this conference has been delayed for different reasons. The four topics mentioned above will be discussed in an general way, but also with a view of identifying the necessary action-oriented items for concrete cooperation. One of that items could be the development of necessary capacity and institutional frameworks in developing countries to comply with the requirements of developed countries and thereby enhancing the market access of developing countries. Interregional cooperation is of the utmost importance in these matters. The goal of the conference is to have an initial exchange of ideas on policy aimed at institutional co-operation which promotes sustainable agriculture and food security and to work these ideas out in some detail. The results of the conference should include apart from the intentions to continue the political dialogue some action-oriented items on which the two regions could cooperate in an concrete manner. This co-operation will involve governments, agricultural organizations and NGOs.

## **6. Efforts of the Netherlands: ASEM seminars on quarantine/SPS**

Thirdly, I would like to give some information on the ASEM seminar on quarantine/SPS in The Hague in September 2000.

The central theme of seminar was the use of Risk Analysis to underpin SPS measures. This seminar covered veterinary matters, phytosanitary matters and food safety. During the last seminar it has been decided that the general exchange of information in the general seminars had been completed and that what was needed subsequently was an analysis in depth which could be done more appropriately in specific workshops. Therefore this workshop in Bangkok is limited only to food safety. Subsequently a workshop on veterinary matters will be held in the Netherlands and a workshop

on phytosanitary matters will be held in China. Lastly a wrap up workshop on all three subjects will be held in the Netherlands. All three will be held in 2002. Representatives of seven Asian countries, six countries of the European Union and the European Commission and of four International organizations attended the ASEM seminar in The Hague. Moreover, representatives of the business sector participated in a special session, focused on impediments to trade caused by SPS measures.

The seminar was opened by the Minister of Agriculture, Nature management and Fisheries of the Netherlands, the Chief Administrator of the State Administration of Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China and the Director of the Agricultural Regulatory Division from the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives of Thailand. The seminar was divided into 3 parts: the first part consisted of a plenary session, the second part consisted of workshops in the different fields (veterinary matters, phytosanitary matters and food safety) and the third part consisted of a plenary session to draw recommendations.

In the first plenary session representatives of the Codex Alimentarius, IPPC and OIE gave presentations on the use of Risk Analysis in their respective fields of work. An official of the WTO secretariat gave a presentation on the benefits to trade of the WTO/SPS agreement. In the second part of the seminar presentations were given and discussions were held on specific items. This was done in working groups on veterinary matters, phytosanitary matters and food safety. In the Food Safety Working Group, presentations were given by France, China, Thailand, the European Commission and Belgium. France gave a presentation "Specific Risk Analysis case: vibrio in seafood, China on "Risk Analysis and HACCP", Thailand on "Application of Risk Analysis: stevia", the European Commission on the dioxin crisis and Belgium on "CONSUM, the post Belgian dioxin era: a new approach for feed and food control". In addition to the representatives who gave a presentation the meeting of this group has been attended by Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom, the European Commission, the Codex Alimentarius and the WTO.

As regards Risk Analysis in general it has been stressed that, although Risk Analysis is a relatively new concept, the principles of Risk Analysis have been used in regulatory processes of several ASEM partners for many years. ASEM partners were of the opinion that the Risk Analysis approach is a very useful tool for the protection of the health of consumers and improving transparency. However, concerns were made on the implementation of the three elements of Risk Analysis.

As regards Risk Assessment, this was considered the most difficult element. Problems in carrying out risk assessments arise from lack of quantified data, lack of relevant research and lack of statistical validity in published research. Also accurate exposure assessment was considered highly difficult. It was suggested that Risk Assessment be carried out by international expert bodies of FAO and WHO such as JECFA and JMPR in order to save resources and acquire overall acceptance.

As regards Risk Management, even though according to the proposed draft Codex working principles for Risk Analysis there should be a functional separation of Risk Assessment and Risk Management in order to ensure the integrity of Risk Assessment and reduce any conflict of interest between Risk Assessment and Risk Management, it was agreed that the Risk Managers should communicate with the Risk Assessors in order to explore management options, as may also be suggested by the Risk Assessors. It was reported by several ASEM partners that the infrastructure of their regulatory system has been restructured towards an integrated management system incorporating all related institutions covering the whole food chain.

As regards Risk Communication, the ASEM partners expressed concerns over the quality and the timing of Risk Communication.

Subsequently the Food Safety Working Group discussed the recommendations of the past two seminars in order to determine progress. It was concluded that the ASEM process has led to closer consultation between ASEM partners in the works of SPS in the WTO. Co-ordination meetings were held prior to the SPS-meetings. Most ASEM partners attended these meetings and considered this exercise useful and worthwhile to continue. It has been useful to build understanding, to exchange information and to have further discussions. Closer consultations have also been held between ASEM partners in the work of the Codex Alimentarius. ASEM partners considered this too to be useful.

Let me just recall shortly the recommendations of the Food Safety working group: The Food Safety Working Group recommends that a workshop to enhance capacity building on practical application of the Risk Analysis concept be held in the coming year. This workshop should concentrate on Risk Assessment (exposure assessment) and Risk Communication. Also a workshop on the principles of equivalence should be conducted. The Food Safety Working Group recommends the ASEM partners to participate actively in the discussions on the Precautionary Principle in the Codex Committee on General Principles, especially in the electronic drafting group. And also to assist Japan in its work on Risk Analysis on foods derived from biotechnology in the Codex ad hoc Task Force on Foods derived from Biotechnology.

What have been the results of these recommendations? I think three conclusions can be drawn:

1. All ASEM partners have been actively involved in the work of the Codex Task Force on Biotechnology in March in Chiba. Thanks to our host Japan, substantial progress has been made. All ASEM partners have been actively involved in the discussions on the Precautionary Principle in the Codex Committee on General Principles in Paris and the Codex Alimentarius Commission in July in Geneva. During the meeting of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in July in Geneva a co-ordination meeting of ASEM partners has been held. Information has been exchanged on items important for the respective partners.
2. A workshop on the principles of equivalence is not yet be planned.
3. Last but not least: thanks to our host Thailand, the first recommendation of the seminar of The Hague has been realized: a workshop on the practical application of the Risk Analysis concept, in particular on Risk Assessment. It has been decided not to include in this workshop Risk Communication. This topic deserves eventually separate attention.

## **7. Lessons and conclusions**

This paper started with analysis of the context of globalization and liberalization. I have worked on the assumption that globalization is a irreversible process and consequently support to capacity building should take account of this fact. This assumption applies equally to liberalization. In 1995, agriculture was included in the international trade agreements for the first time since the signing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) after the Second World War. The WTO agreements contain a system on trade in agricultural products. All sorts of quantitative border control measures have been translated into tariffs and subsequently a political decision has been taken to decrease the tariff level globally. There is consensus world-wide that this system is an achievement and should therefore not be abandoned. However, attention will be given to qualitative border measures. And it is precisely here that support to capacity building comes into the picture.

Following the examples of support to capacity building in developing countries by international organizations, the European Union and the Netherlands, we can draw the following lessons and conclusions:

- support should be given for a longer period;
- support should concentrate on regions made up of different countries;
- support of international organizations should be integrated;
- support of the EU should complement the individual programmes of EU Member States;
- support of individual developed countries should continue, as this support is based on the expertise in those countries and special historical relations.