

Meeting: "The G20 at Leaders Level"
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Agriculture Subsidies and the Doha Round: A Role for the G20

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Introduction

Since its inception, the agenda of the G20 has focused primarily

- countries belonging to both the G20 and the G20

In the second place, the G20 can become an appropriate forum for discussing debt and trade issues

The controversy over cotton subsidies that acquired unprecedented attention during the meeting in Cancun may be an issue in which Canada could weigh in as a neutral broker, given its long history of support of development programs and developing countries. The questions surrounding cotton subsidies, especially in the 3.S., will not easily be swept under the rug without some concessions to the four West African countries that have tabled a request for compensation. Subsidies on cotton increased by \$700M from \$1.1 to \$1.8 following the enforcement of the Uruguay Round Agreement and prior to the passage in Washington of the current tariff. West African countries whose foreign exchange earnings are dependent on cotton exports may not be legally entitled to the compensation they are advocating but some form of compensation will need to be devised to increase the legitimacy of agreements that allow such egregious disparities. Under current rules, the 3.S. was not only able to increase support by such huge percentages but also increased its share in world cotton exports from one-fourth to one-third.

, building the process

In order to move the agenda suggested above, the G20 needs some changes. It has not been free from criticism. Gerry Heileiner has denounced its lack of legitimacy, its restricted agenda and the fact that it was a 3.S.-originated initiative. Despite these flaws, the G20 leaves room for its non-G7 members to lead initiatives and promote a wider agenda and for it to become a transmission belt of agenda-moving ideas.

How could the refurbished G20 gain legitimacy and play an active role in order to unlock trade subsidies negotiations? Building consensus among those G20 members advocating the removal of the most egregious forms of distorting trade subsidies appears a key task, in order to achieve this goal. Increasing the G20's legitimacy is also crucial. To do this, the following items should be taken into consideration:

- Regional Development Organizations should be invited to the group, in order to incorporate regional views about the issues at stake, and also as a means of increasing the group's representativeness among countries excluded from the negotiating table. Besides, regional banks could counterbalance the IMF and the World Bank, where industrialized country power is larger.
- Think tanks that serve as policy entrepreneurs, such as the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, IIPSA (South Africa), OAS (Latin America), IPEAC (Brazil) and, etc.