

## WAGENINGEN DECLARATION

### TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL AGRO- FOOD CHAINS AND NETWORKS FOR DEVELOPMENT

At the occasion of the opening of the academic year at Wageningen University on 6 September 2004, representatives from farmers' organisations, public agencies and private enterprises from the North and the South gathered to discuss the potentials and challenges of international agro-food chains and networks for enhancing sustainable development.

Further liberalisation of international trade does not guarantee access to markets by smallholders from the South. Quality demands and phytosanitary regulations tend to impose new restrictions. Therefore, joint actions are required to enhance incentives for investment and innovation, to reinforce the business climate in developing countries, to improve competitiveness of local farms and firms, and to nurture the development of local entrepreneurship.

Efficient and equitable supply chains for agro-food products can substantially benefit from stable networks and mutual relations between producers, processors, traders and retailers. Public-private partnerships are vital for capacity development and shaping adequate access conditions. Knowledge institutions and voluntary organisations can facilitate co-innovation between chain partners and support synergies between public and private partners.

The following critical issues and challenges have been identified:

- To develop market outlets for products from the South
- To enhance business-to-business relationships between suppliers from the South and customers from the South and the North
- To enhance capacity with local producers and increase economies of scale
- To improve access to market information and logistical systems
- To support the upgrading of quality and safety of agro-food products with particular attention to smallholders
- To develop new products with higher value-added in developing countries
- To identify prospects for branding, labelling and certification of products
- To build transparency and trust within intercultural settings.

The participants of the Wageningen Conference on Agro-Food Chains and Networks for Development call upon governments and the entrepreneurial sector to join forces in a partnership programme for co-innovation towards sustainable food chains in order to contribute to reducing poverty and unemployment in developing countries and bringing the world closer to the Millennium Development Goals.