**PREFACE**

At the ninth WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia, Ministers formally signed off on their first multilateral trade deal in nearly two decades by agreeing on a small package built around a new trade facilitation agreement, some elements of agriculture and select development-focused provisions. Building on the Bali success, members are now set to revisit the rest of the Doha trade talks. In addition to a rather narrowly defined work programme under the Committee on Agriculture to find a permanent solution to the controversy around public food stockholding, Members have agreed to design a "clearly defined" work programme on the remaining Doha Development Agenda (DDA) issues. Such a work programme should build on the decisions taken at the Ministerial, "particularly on agriculture, development and LDC issues, as well as all other issues under the Doha mandate that are central to concluding the Round." In doing so, Ministers recalled the need expressed at the 2011 Ministerial to explore different negotiating approaches, while respecting the principles of transparency and inclusiveness, and to look at ways to overcome the most critical and fundamental stumbling blocks.

How WTO Members will define such a work programme remains unclear at this stage. While some insist on the need to take a piecemeal approach, carefully calibrating ambition and do-ability in a balanced package, others have privileged plurilateral or critical mass agreements as illustrated by negotiations already under way in a number of areas, including services with the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) or on environmental goods, through the green goods initiative launched by a group of 14 WTO Members. Yet, regardless of the approach taken, it is clear that the work programme will have to tackle the so-called "DDA core issues", which have been put on hold since 2008, starting with the highly controversial agriculture talks. In doing so, Members will need to assess the extent to which going back to the 2008 draft texts as a basis for further negotiations is both possible and desirable in the light of recent changes in the global agricultural landscape.

While the overall objectives defined in the Doha negotiating mandates may very well remain relevant, several WTO Members have argued that the draft modalities developed since then essentially reflect a reality prevailing in the late 1990s and early 2000s. At the global level, global value chains and the proliferation of regional trade agreements have changed the way in which global agricultural trade takes place. At the same time, production shortfalls, combined with high energy prices, declining growth rates of cereal yields and rising global demand for food and biofuels have resulted in a series of food price spikes. Trade-related policy responses such as export restrictions or biofuels subsidies and mandates have further exacerbated price increases on world markets. Responding to the new world environment, large agriculture producers and major trading nations are reforming their agricultural policy – with the impact on other countries often only considered as an afterthought. While market access has been characterized by a downward trend in applied tariffs, as a result of unilateral liberalization and regional trade agreements, several emerging countries have increased their subsidies to farmers very rapidly, as illustrated by the Bali controversy around the government purchase of food at administered prices for public stockholding. Meanwhile, OECD countries have introduced new forms of support measures ranging from environmental payments to crop and revenue insurance schemes.
This has prompted several WTO Members to call for new data and updated information on agricultural trade, a move interpreted with suspicion by other countries who fear that such a quest would be used as a rationale to extract more concessions from them. For these countries, starting WTO negotiations from scratch after so many years of hard work would probably result in 'throwing out the baby with the bath water'. Beyond this controversy, however, there is little doubt that any informed conversation ultimately needs to build on a sound understanding of this new global reality and its implications for future multilateral disciplines in agriculture.

As a contribution to this process, this volume builds on the most recent analysis of global trends and domestic policy reforms in agriculture to inform negotiations on a post-Bali agenda on agriculture in the WTO. It features a series of short papers and articles by leading experts and thinkers that systematically cover all the elements of the agricultural negotiations under the three pillars of market access, domestic support and export competition. The pieces presented here essentially draw on existing cutting edge research and analysis commissioned by the ICTSD through its regular work programme and the E-15 process, or generated by partner institutions and experts. By putting them together and making them widely available in a concise, non-technical and solution-oriented manner, it is our hope that this volume will constitute a timely and critical input in the definition of the work programme envisaged in Bali.

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