



Mr. Pascal Lamy
Centre William Rappard,
Rue de Lausanne 154,
CH-1211 Geneva 21,
Switzerland

Geneva, 13 April 2008

Re: Geographical Indications and the Doha Development Agenda

Dear Secretary General,

The Organization for an International Geographical Indications network – oriGIn – is closely following the ongoing trade negotiations and would like to express its appreciation to the WTO Secretariat for its efforts to move the agenda forward.

OriGIn – a worldwide network of GIs producers representing some 80 organisations and more than two-million producers – does believe geographical indications have a tremendous potential to promote sustainable development for local producers and communities – as the experience of our members clearly shows.

However, current WTO rules on GIs are unbalanced and do not offer GI producers effective legal remedies to prevent and stop abuses. Abuses have been increasing over the years and, in this context, millions of jobs, as well as the reputation of traditional products in both developed and developing countries, are at stake.

OriGIn urges negotiators to agree on the extension of the protection conferred to wines and spirits by Article 23 of the TRIPs Agreement to all GI products. With regard to the multilateral register for GIs, OriGIn considers that a register should be opened to all products, be legally binding and truly multilateral, therefore compulsory for all WTO Members.

We are watching with concern the continuous efforts by some WTO members to block any deal on GIs. We are of the opinion that the spirit of the Doha Round - as set forth in the **Doha Development Agenda** – would be betrayed should this position prevail.

The Doha Declaration stresses “the need for all our people to benefit from the increased opportunities and welfare gain that the multilateral trading system generates”. Ensuring that all products benefit from the protection currently enjoyed by wines and spirits and establishing a register with legal value open to all products, would contribute to meet the high expectations raised around the world by the Doha Development Agenda. Any regime *de facto* consolidating “first class” and “second class” producers enjoying different standards of protection would constitute a discrimination that runs against the Doha spirit. Millions of GI products in Europe, as well as in developing and least developed countries, would not understand nor support such a decision.



I take this opportunity to reiterate oriGIn's availability to strengthen the cooperation with the World Trade Organisation to promote and secure better protection of GIs worldwide.

I remain at your disposal for any further information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Luis F. Samper". The signature is written in a cursive style and is located below the "Yours sincerely," text.

Mr. Luis Fernando Samper
President of OriGIn

On behalf of oriGIn's members