

## President Lula blames French farmers lobby

### **Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva blamed the stalemate in World Trade Organization, WTO, talks on pressure from France's influential farmers.**

According to President Lula, French farmers are determined to keep to the agriculture subsidies and payments that distort international agriculture trade and harm farmers in poorer agricultural nations such as Brazil.



"We are seeing that no matter how democratic European countries are, when it comes to discussing agricultural subsidies...France has a lot of trouble making a positive decision, even despite the United States' flexible stance" President Lula said Wednesday in a speech in Brasilia.

"In France, the problem is more political than economic. French farmers wield a lot of clout at election time, and many people are afraid to take up the issue in an election year" added the Brazilian president.

"We believe that without the elimination of subsidies, we are not going to enable poorer countries to make a quality jump to a more egalitarian and fair world, a jump that would allow those countries, especially African ones, to emerge from the desperate state of poverty to which they have been subjected over the past 400 years".

With only a few weeks to the WTO Doha round meeting in Hong Kong, the lack of consensus on elimination of agriculture subsidies threatens success in the coming December talks.

The subsidy-elimination proposals put forth by the Group of 20 of developing nations, led by Brazil and India, and supported by United States, have been turned down by the European Union, which wants less drastic cuts.

This week President Lula addressed a letter to British Prime Minister Tony Blair asking for help to address the European Union agricultural subsidies issue, and thus helping to reduce world poverty and lift the hopes of millions of submerged.