

**Some of the organizations and social movements  
involved in OWINFS include:**

Africa Trade Network  
Alliance for Democracy - U.S.  
Alternative Information & Development Center – South Africa  
Arab NGO Network for Development – Lebanon  
ATTAC  
Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network  
Caribbean Gender and Trade Network  
COASAD - Cameroon  
Corporate Europe Observatory  
Council of Canadians – Canada  
The Development Fund – UK  
EcoNews Africa - Kenya  
Focus on the Global South  
Friends of the Earth International  
IBON Foundation Inc. – Philippines  
International Gender and Trade Network  
International Forum on Globalization  
OXFAM Solidarity – Belgium  
Polaris Institute – Canada  
Public Citizen – U.S.  
Public Services International  
Research Foundation for Science, Technology, Ecology – India  
RMALC – Mexico  
Solon Foundation – Bolivia  
Third World Network  
Via Campesina  
Working Groups Against MAI & Globalisation - Turkey  
World Economy, Ecology & Development - Germany  
World Forum of Fisherpeoples  
World Development Movement – UK

(for a more comprehensive list, please visit our website:  
[www.ourworldisnotforsale.org](http://www.ourworldisnotforsale.org))

# The Our World is Not for Sale Network:



Linking Social Movements,  
NGOs and Activists in the  
Fight Against Corporate  
Globalization and the World  
Trade Organization

[www.ourworldisnotforsale.org](http://www.ourworldisnotforsale.org)

The “Our World is not for Sale” (OWINFS) network is a loose grouping of organizations, activists and social movements worldwide fighting the current model of corporate globalization embodied in global trading system. OWINFS is committed to a sustainable, socially just, democratic and accountable multilateral trading system.

OWINFS grew out of the international campaigns against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Linkages are also made between **all** the various pieces of the corporate-driven trade agenda, from the WTO to regional and bilateral agreements. OWINFS members are all part of national and regional campaigns fighting unfair trade agreements, including the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Plan Puebla Panama (PPP).

While there are incredibly strong and diverse country-based-campaigns working on these issues around the world, it became clear that in order to contest for power against the multinational corporations and other proponents of the neo-liberal model that have been dictating global trade policy, there is a strong need to better coordinate and link these various initiatives. OWINFS supports and stimulates initiatives and collaboration among organizations and social movements in order to make our international strategies against WTO and trade liberalization more effective.

OWINFS works to develop and link campaigns around the world toward the end of reshaping the corporate-dominated trade agenda to support human rights, environmental sustainability and democratic principles. OWINFS acts as a “hub” for social movements and NGOs working on globalization issues who are interested in sharing analysis and coordinating action efforts internationally. The active participation of OWINFS members is what drives our collective work forward. We coordinate efforts on conference calls and make decisions by consensus. There is no formal network “staff”—rather member groups volunteer to carry out agreed upon tasks. A strength of the network is that individual movements and organizations can work together where it is strategic and helps advance their initiatives, and are free to dedicate as much or as little time to the network as makes sense for them in order to meet their objectives.

**Our efforts include:**

- Convening regular international conference calls, meetings and e-mail discussions that provide movement leaders with the opportunity to share and develop ideas and strategy.
- Organizing delegations of social movement actors to Geneva, Switzerland where the WTO is headquartered, to lobby negotiators and to provide them with critical analysis of the impacts of existing and proposed WTO policy.
- Organizing international press conferences, days of action and demonstrations in order to pressure government leaders and trade negotiators to roll-back harmful trade policy provisions, and to cease to craft more agreements that undermine the public interest.

OWINFS has two “flagship” statements that reflects our basis of unity. The first is “**No New Round – Turn Around.**” This is an international statement written in advance of the 1999 WTO Ministerial in Seattle — calling on WTO member-nations to reject expansion or a “new round”—and, instead, to roll-back harmful WTO provisions and policies. This statement was signed by nearly 1500 organizations in the run-up to the Ministerial.

The second statement is the “**Our World is not for Sale: WTO – Shrink or Sink!**” This international “sign-on” statement, prepared after the Seattle Ministerial, lays out eleven transformational demands aimed at the WTO. Active OWINFS members have signed onto the statement.

In addition, OWINFS has developed specific and more detailed statements around issues such as protecting basic services, namely, “**Stop the GATS Attack Now**” [available at [www.polarisinsitute.org](http://www.polarisinsitute.org)], and challenging the fundamental lack of democracy within the WTO.

Groups who are working on globalization issues can become active in OWINFS by visiting our web-site: [www.ourworldisnotforsale.org](http://www.ourworldisnotforsale.org). Our background information and statements can be found at this site, as well as links to the organizations and social movements throughout the world who are part of our network. For more information and questions about OWINFS, please e-mail [OWINFS@citizen.org](mailto:OWINFS@citizen.org).

---

**What is the WTO?**

---

The WTO was established in 1995. It includes 145 countries and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The WTO has been used to push an expansive array of policies on trade, investment and deregulation that exacerbate the inequality between the North and the South, and among the rich and poor within countries. The WTO enforces some twenty different trade agreements, including the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

The powerful industrialized countries within the WTO, as well as multinational corporations, are pushing for a broad expansion of the WTO’s scope to include even more areas of our daily lives and governments’ operations. At the next WTO Ministerial, scheduled for September 10-14, 2003 in Cancun, Mexico, there will be strong pressure on developing countries to accept the launch of negotiations on the so-called “new issues”: government procurement, investment, competition and trade facilitation. Large-scale liberalization of economies in these areas will force developing countries to relinquish many of the economic development tools that industrialized countries used to build their economies and create jobs. Furthermore, existing provisions of the WTO—as well as ones currently being negotiated, would effectively lock in the so-called “structural adjustment programs” of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) permanently.

The WTO is inherently undemocratic. Its trade tribunals, working behind closed doors, have ruled against a stunning array of national health and safety, labor, human rights and environmental laws, which have been directly challenged as trade barriers by governments acting on behalf

of their corporate clients. National policies and laws found to violate WTO rules must be eliminated or changed or else the violating country faces perpetual trade sanctions that can be in the millions of dollars. Since the WTO's inception in 1995, the vast majority of rulings in trade disputes between member nations have favored powerful industrialized countries. Consequently, many countries, particularly developing countries, feel enormous pressure to weaken their public interest policies whenever a WTO challenge is threatened in order to avoid costly sanctions.

The official website of the WTO is [www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org).

---

### **"WTO: Shrink or Sink!" – A Critique of the WTO**

---

OWINFS' Shrink or Sink (SoS) statement lays out eleven transformational demands on the WTO and offers a fundamental critique of the way the WTO operates. It advocates a clear civil society agenda for the WTO that is directed both to the institution and the member-country governments themselves. The "Shrink or Sink" statement has been signed by hundreds of organizations worldwide.

#### **Some of the main points in the statement are:**

##### ***Stop the anti-democratic practices of the WTO***

The WTO is supposed to operate by consensus where each member country has equal say. The reality is very different. At the 4<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial in Doha, Qatar in November 2001, this was apparent. Key decisions were made in small "by invitation only" meetings and the U.S., EU, Canada and Japan (known as the "Quad" countries within the WTO) drove most of the agenda, despite opposition from countries in the South. In the run-up to the Cancun Ministerial, "Mini-Ministerials" are being organized in Australia, Japan and Egypt. Despite the fact that key decisions and discussions that affect **all** WTO members are on the agenda for these meetings, only a certain group of countries is invited. The powerful Quad countries will participate in all of the Mini-Ministerials, as will a small number of developing countries and the WTO Secretariat. The Mini-Ministerial process – aimed at forging consensus for the 145-member WTO with only a handful of countries - is fundamentally flawed and demonstrates the undemocratic nature of the WTO.

##### ***Stop the GATS Attack!***

Initiated in February 2000, far-reaching negotiations are taking place which aim to expand the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) regime which could subordinate democratic governance in countries throughout the world to global trade rules. These GATS 2000 negotiations are taking place behind closed doors with little or no consultation of the sectors most affected by them.

The existing GATS regime of the WTO, initially established in 1994, is already comprehensive and far reaching. The current rules seek to gradually phase-out all governmental "barriers" to international trade and commercial competition in the services sector. The GATS covers every service imaginable including public services in sectors that affect the environment, culture, drinking water, health care, education, social security, transportation services, postal delivery and a variety of municipal services. Its constraints apply to virtually all government measures affecting trade-in-

services, from labor laws to consumer protection; including regulations, guidelines, subsidies and grants, licensing standards and qualifications, limitations on access to markets, economic needs tests and local content provisions.

For many countries in the South, this invasion of peoples' basic rights is not new. Over the last several decades, the structural adjustment programs of the IMF and the World Bank have been used to force many governments in the South to dismantle their public services and allow foreign-based healthcare, education and water corporations to deliver services on a "for profit" basis. Under the proposed GATS rules, developing countries could experience a further dismantling of local service providers, restrictions on the development of domestic service providers, and the creation of new monopolies dominated by corporate service providers based in the North. By dramatically increasing market control by corporations and by threatening the future of public services, the GATS 2000 agenda could trigger a global assault on the commons and democracy both in the North and the South. Moreover, the binding enforcement mechanisms of the WTO will ensure that this agenda is not only implemented, but rendered irreversible.

##### ***Stop Corporate Patent Protectionism - Seeds & Medicine are Human Rights, not Commodities***

All intellectual property policies must allow governments to limit patent protection in order to protect public health and safety. This is especially essential in relation to life-saving medicines and life forms. The patenting of life-forms and their parts, including microorganisms, must be prohibited in all national and international regimes. Current intellectual property rules in trade pacts, such as the WTO's Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) agreement, obstruct consumer access to essential medicines and other goods, lead to private appropriation of life forms and traditional knowledge, undermine biodiversity, and keep impoverished countries from increasing their levels of social and economic welfare. There is no basis for inclusion of such intellectual property claims in a trade agreement.

At the Doha Ministerial, the WTO agreed to non-binding language stating that the TRIPs agreement should not prevent WTO members from taking measures to protect the public health. Since the language was non-binding, the reality is unfortunately that the TRIPs agreement still makes it hard to make affordable medicines available to people. In addition, pharmaceutical companies are angling to weaken and destroy even this non-binding pro-public health interpretation at the Cancun Ministerial.

##### ***No Patents on Life***

The patenting of life forms and their parts, and other intellectual property rights over biological resources must be prohibited in all national and international regimes. Genetic diversity is not a category of private property, and biopiracy or theft of traditional knowledge must be stopped.

##### ***Food is a Basic Human Right: Stop the Agriculture Agreement Fraud and Calamity***

The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) is fraudulent because the subsidies going to export oriented industrial farming have not been reduced (but instead have gone up), whereas the small farmers are suffering from import liberalization wiping

out their livelihoods and incomes. To avoid further calamities to millions of small farmers, action must be taken immediately to drastically reduce or remove support for export-oriented agriculture and to reverse import liberalization.

Measures taken to promote and protect genuine food sovereignty and security as well as to promote small farmers practicing sustainable agriculture must be exempted from international trade rules. The trading system must not undermine the livelihood of peasants, small farmers, artisanal fishers and indigenous peoples that support local economies.

The basic human right to food can only be realized in a system where food sovereignty is guaranteed, meaning the right of peoples to define their own food and agricultural policies as well as the right to produce their basic foods in a manner respecting cultural and productive diversity. For more information see [www.peoplesfoodsoverignty.org](http://www.peoplesfoodsoverignty.org).

### ***No Investment Liberalization***

The WTO Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS) Agreement must be eliminated. All countries and especially third world countries must have the right to use policy options (such as local content policy) to increase the capacity of their own productive sectors, especially small and medium enterprises. One of the outcomes of the Doha ministerial was to open the door to possible negotiations on the so-called “New Issues” (investment, competition policy, procurement and trade facilitation) despite opposition from countries in the South. This will be one of the main points of controversy in Cancun, as the EU and Japan in particular continue to push for these negotiations. OWINFS opposes any attempts to start negotiations on investment rules, investment framework or an investment agreement of whatever kind in the WTO.

### ***Prioritize Social Rights and the Environment***

Trade liberalization encourages richer countries to consume more and poorer countries to export more. The end result is an increasingly polluted environment (through spiraling waste and transport-related pollution levels, for example) and the alarmingly rapid loss of irreplaceable natural resources. Furthermore, the WTO and other free trade agreements, which drive this destructive process, also include rules that undermine hard-won national and international legislation designed to protect peoples' environment. The “environment” will be a key negotiating topic for governments meeting in Cancun. It has been placed on the agenda by the EU in a very limited way, but there is little prospect of any real change, since the WTO's raison d'être is to increase the pace of the overall liberalization process.

---

### **The Mobilization Towards the Cancun Ministerial**

---

The 5<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial will be held in Cancun, Mexico from September 10-14, 2003. Over the last several years, an enormous amount of work has been done in the hemisphere toward the end of defeating the FTAA. The WTO Ministerial presents a great opportunity to make linkages between the WTO and the FTAA. There is a great deal of overlap in the content of current and pending negotiations, and both promote a failed model of corporate-driven globalization.

The FTAA is a proposed trade and investment agreement that seeks to expand the failed North American Free Trade

Agreement (NAFTA) model and create a “one-size-fits-all” international commercial regime from Canada to Tierra del Fuego. The agreement would include 34 countries (all nations in the Western Hemisphere except Cuba). The FTAA process is divided into nine main negotiating groups on the following topics: Services, Agriculture, Investment, Dispute Settlement, Government Procurement, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Competition Policy, Market Access and Subsidies, Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Duties. The FTAA would also include a provision that would allow corporations to sue governments directly if they feel like their profits have been undermined due to for example an environmental or health regulation. Under NAFTA, several lawsuits from corporations have already been filed where literally billions of dollars are sought as compensation for these laws and regulations aimed to protect the public. The official website of the FTAA secretariat is [www.ftaa-alca.org](http://www.ftaa-alca.org). The next FTAA Ministerial will take place in Miami, Florida in the fall of 2003

In Mexico there is an nationwide ad-hoc group composed of social movements, NGOs, labor unions and students who have come together to plan for the next WTO Ministerial in Cancun. This group includes social movements and NGOs based in Cancun itself. Several members of this Mexican ad-hoc committee are also members of OWINFS.

In the run-up to the September 2003 WTO Ministerial, social movements and NGOs throughout Mexico and the rest of the Americas will be working to build on the political momentum that has been generated around the FTAA, and to channel that activism toward initiatives that challenge both the FTAA and the WTO. Popular education materials and workshops (in Spanish and indigenous languages) are being developed and demonstrations across the Americas are being planned on key cross-cutting issues within the WTO and FTAA—such as agriculture and services. In the Cancun region, social movements and NGO's are organizing people to better understand the links between the services negotiations in the WTO and the FTAA—and the local impacts they are confronting around the privatization of basic services, and the forced imposition of an industrial style of tourism that promotes large-scale multinational corporate ownership structures over local ownership and control.

For more information on the work of the Ad-Hoc Mexican Organization Committee, please contact: Ana de Ita of CECCAM at [anadeita@laneta.apc.org](mailto:anadeita@laneta.apc.org).

***OWINFS is calling for a fair and sustainable system of trade. Fundamental human and workers' rights must be respected, promoted and realized, as must the environment, health, education, indigenous peoples' rights, development, safety, food sovereignty and animal welfare.***