

Our World Is Not For Sale Network

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Contact: Bryan Buchanan (202) 454-5108



April 21st - Another Doha Round Deadline Failure: Why Yesterday's Solution to Yesterday's Agenda is No Longer In Demand in Today's Global Economy

Most reports on the inability of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to conclude Doha Round negotiations focus on disagreements between China and the United States on "sectorals," or they focus on emerging resistance to new market access demands from the U.S. But an under-recognized and extremely significant story is the underlying cause of the breakdown: the growing realization that the Doha Round – and the corporate globalization model of the WTO itself – offers no solution to the global employment, food, and financial crises. In fact, the rules embodied within the WTO actually help set the stage for these types of crises. New documents just released on April 21st fail to address these problems, leaving the Doha Round ever farther from a conclusion. Thus, a global agenda of job-led growth and sustainable development necessitates pruning WTO constraints on national policy space.

The following are attributable quotes from members of Our World Is Not For Sale, a global network of organizations and social movements working to stop the expansion of the WTO:

Lori Wallach, Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, USA, lwallach@citizen.org

"Doha Round talks have been mired for almost 10 years because this agenda is an expansion of the same old WTO model, yet people in numerous countries already have been damaged by that and, thus, governments have no appetite for more. Issuing new texts for the Doha Round is like putting new clothes on a moldering corpse, and no country needs be blamed for Doha's demise because it was born fatally ill."

Gyekye Tanoh, Third World Network-Africa, Ghana, politicaleconomy@twnafrica.org

"The global financial and economic crisis has demonstrated Africa's urgent and overriding need to transform its agriculture and to industrialize to move away from its dangerous dependence on exporting primary commodities to the rest of the world. A fair and equitable international trade regime must prioritize and support this. However, driven by the agenda of the rich industrial countries, the deadlocked Doha talks aim to enshrine the exact opposite of what Africa needs. Doha proposes to chain Africa to its tragic past. To move forward to a better future, Africa must move away from Doha."

Adhemar Mineiro, Brazilian Network for People's Integration, Brazil, adhemarmineiro@hotmail.com

"Insisting on the Doha Round and its set of liberalization packages won't contribute to economic recovery. On the contrary, excessive financial and trade liberalization are roots of financial turmoil and crisis. Let's forget Doha and find together real new paths for development."

Aftab Alam Khan, ActionAid, Pakistan, aftab.alam@actionaid.org

"The world is witnessing a broken food system. The food crisis of 2007/8 plunged 155 million additional people into the miseries of hunger. Last month, the UN highlighted the FAO price index at the highest level

(236 value) since 1990. Food-importing poor countries are the hardest hit. In this context, support to smallholder agriculture – in developing countries – is essential for greater food production. Poor countries need to protect their national agriculture to revitalize food production and job security for poor farmers. The current Doha negotiation package fails to ensure such support. Instead, the Special Safeguard Mechanism has been weakened to an extent that a Doha conclusion would exacerbate the fragile food system.”

Deborah James, facilitator of the Global WTO campaign of OWINFS

"Were the Round to be once again suspended - hopefully permanently – it will be a great victory in preserving policy space for true job-led growth and sustainable development strategies. But, OWINFS will continue to call attention to the WTO for three reasons. First, the WTO will obviously continue to exist in its current form, regulating global trade in the interests of corporations; second, because there are many countries that are undergoing accession processes, and this is an expansion of the WTO (countries such as Yemen, Sudan, Russia, many Pacific Island nations, Central Asian countries); and third, because there are several areas of the WTO – including government procurement and domestic regulation – which operate outside of the single undertaking of the Doha Round."

Rangarirai Machemedze, Southern and Eastern African Trade, Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI), Zimbabwe, rmachemedze@seatini.org

"The WTO has, from day one, become a conduit for international capital to pillage the economic and social resources of poor developing countries under the guise of trade agreements. It is now time that we put a stop to this corporate-led trade terrorism and bury it once and for all.”

Maude Barlow, Council of Canadians, Canada, reachable through Stuart Trew, strew@canadians.org:

"Rich countries promised the 2001 Doha round of WTO talks would be about development. The refusal of the United States, EU, Canada and others to live up to that promise guaranteed the talks would be doomed to failure from the start. It's time to take the huge amount of thought and energy going into the WTO and channel it to solve much more important problems, top among them the current global water, food and climate crises, and extreme poverty and inequality."

Sanya Reid Smith, Third World Network, Switzerland, sanya@twnetwork.org

"LDCs are the poorest countries in the world with low levels of health and education and high vulnerability to natural disasters. This is supposed to be a development round. Yet the LDCs are not benefiting as they should and, in fact, many of them would be harmed by this Round."

John Hilary, War on Want, UK, JHilary@waronwant.org:

"All studies show that concluding the Doha Round of trade talks will be disastrous for working people across the world. War on Want believes now is the time to ditch the talks, not to jeopardise global economic recovery with another dose of market deregulation."

Dr. Krishan Bir Chaudhary, Bharatiya Krishak Samaj (Indian Farmers Organisation), India, bharatiyakrishaksamaj@gmail.com

"The WTO is only for agri-business corporations not for the welfare of small and marginal farmers. In India, agriculture is not the business, it's a way of life of 700 million farmers. The developing countries will become the dumping ground of heavily subsidized agro-products from developed countries. Where is the equal, level playing field? More than 200 thousand farmers have already committed suicide in India.”

Susan George, Transnational Institute, France, susangeorge@free.fr

"Every single economically successful county – from the United States to Great Britain to South Korea – became successful through protectionism until its farms and industries were strong enough to face competition. Now, they tell weaker countries to open up everything right away. That's called 'Do as we say,

not as we did.’ It may be ‘free’ trade, but it’s not fair.”

Monica Di Sisto, Fair (a fair trade organization), Italy, monicadisisto@gmail.com:

"The Italian government recently asked the EU commission to be 'less naïve' and avoid opening up more of our markets without any reciprocal agreement. As the OECD recently stated, we practically cancelled our official development aid (ODA) because of the deep economic crisis we're suffering, and we're trying through the Doha agenda to recover market space potentially damaging the poorest countries to protect corporate interests. This is the moment to stop this fake development round and to think about how to exit the crisis together, with a fairer trade, both in the South and in the North."

Adam Wolfenden, The Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG), Fiji, pang_campaigner@pang.org.fj

"The Doha Round is anything but a development round. For small countries like the Pacific Islands, we need to focus our energies on trade policies that support our unique cultural, environmental and economic situation. The failure of this round and the WTO in general should be a warning to all countries in the Pacific, especially Vanuatu and Samoa, who are considering accession. The ship has all but sunk; our ability to determine our own trade futures shouldn't go down with it."

Jacques Berthelot, Solidarite, France, jacques.berthelot4@wanadoo.fr

"The Doha Round cannot be concluded in 2011 or in any future year on the basis of the draft modalities on agriculture of 8 December 2008 because the present EU and U.S. domestic negotiations on their next CAP and Farm Bill have never alluded to the implicit commitments they have taken in considering these modalities as a good base to continue the negotiations. At best, the EU and U.S. claim that their trade-distorting farm subsidies comply with their Uruguay Round commitments – which is not true because of their boxes-shifting sleight of hand – but they have never hinted in their domestic debates at commitments to cut by 54% on average their agricultural tariffs and by 70% (U.S.) and 80% (EU) their ‘overall trade distorting domestic support’ allowed during the 1995-2000 base period.”

Alejandro Villamar, the Mexican Action Network on Free Trade (RMALC), Mexico, avillamarc@HOTMAIL.COM:

- a) “We are opposed to the WTO’s guillotine, which falls on the thin neck of the Mexican economy. Mexico’s experience shows that free trade ideology and its measures do not unleash development and prosperity but social inequalities and destabilization.
- b) “In the current global crisis, ‘free market’ is clearly now one old fashioned mantra. We need to address the systemic crisis with less ideology and more realistic fair, just and sustainable cooperation, and new regulations.
- c) “For the above reasons we demand the cancellation of the current WTO trade negotiations and that they are moved to within UNCTAD. Convene a major global conference to establish a new framework for trade that is inseparable from the imperatives of just, equitable and sustainable development. A comprehensive framework that considers the most important commitments of global summits on social development, environment and climate change, gender and human rights, Millennium goals, etc.”

Frédéric Viale, Association for Taxation of Financial Transactions and Aid to Citizens (ATTAC), France, frederic.viale@free.fr

"The crisis the world is facing now shows that the ‘one size fits all’ rules promoted by WTO are totally irrelevant. Free trade and neoliberalism for all is not the solution; they’re part of the problem."

Devinder Sharma, India, hunger55@gmail.com:

“How long will the developed countries go on befooling the world? WTO has outlived its utility. It is time to pull down the shutters on a Wrong Trade Organisation.”

Thomas Deve

“Agriculture is life and must not be subjected to negotiations by people who do not care for poor peoples’ livelihoods.”

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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 the global trading system. OWINFS is committed to a sustainable, socially just, democratic and accountable multilateral trading system. www.ourworldisnotforsale.org