

Focus-on-Trade is a regular electronic bulletin providing updates and analysis of trends in regional and world trade and finance, with an emphasis on analysis of these trends from an integrative, interdisciplinary viewpoint that is sensitive not only to economic issues, but also to ecological, political, gender and social issues. Your contributions and comments are welcome.

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A world-wide volley of anti-WTO events marked day one of the 4th WTO ministerial meeting in Doha. In Thailand (home of the next WTO secretary general Supachai Panitchapak), farmers and workers kicked off several days of events with a rally outside the US embassy, featuring fireworks and burning chilies. The report follows. Further west in Geneva, Aileen Kwa reports on the anger and despair of developing countries in the wake of last minute railroading of a “clean text” for Doha. And live at the ministerial, Walden Bello describes the scene, simply, as “desperate.” To be continued...

Please contact us c/o CUSRI, Wisit Prachuabmoh Building, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10330 Thailand.
Tel: (66 2) 218 7363/7364/7365, Fax: (66 2) 255 9976, E-Mail: admin@focusweb.org, Website: <http://focusweb.org>.
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THAI FARMERS, AIDS ACTIVISTS MARCH ON US EMBASSY

By Nicola Bullard

BANGKOK, 9 November – In one of the first protests on the international day of action against the WTO, more than 1,500 farmers, jasmine rice producers, trade unionists and HIV/AIDS activists marched from Bangkok's World Trade Centre to the US Embassy.

Watched by about 100 police and embassy security, the protestors called for the WTO to get out of agriculture and an end to patenting of life and drugs. Leaders from the Assembly of the Poor, Thailand's largest social movement, farmers organisations from around the country and the national AIDS networks, presented petitions to the US embassy representative Mr Win Dayton demanding US action on drugs and rice patenting, and a change to the US position on WTO negotiations.

Meanwhile, one well-known farmer leader speaking from the rally truck expressed his for the loss of life on September 11, but said that the US has killed people everywhere. Patents on drugs kill people, he said, and patents on rice make the farmers suffer. "The US will create bin Laden allies in Thailand with its policies on drugs and rice," he warned.

Rice is the soul of Thai culture and sentiments here are running high since it was revealed that the International Rice Research

Institute (IRRI) had illegally given germ of Thailand's 'hom mali' (jasmine) rice to US researchers. Jasmine rice growers fear that if scientists patent a variation on the famous scented rice, their exports could suffer. Thailand currently produces 30 per cent of all internationally traded rice.

Pricing of HIV AIDS treatment drugs is also a hot issue. Only five per cent of Thailand's 750,000 AIDS sufferers can afford treatment, yet the government's efforts to allow the production of generic drugs have met with heavy diplomatic and economic pressure from the US, which has sent a string of trade envoys claiming that the changes breach bilateral agreements and are "unacceptable to the US."

Thai workers were also out in force. Over one hundred unionists from the national carrier Thai International were protesting at further privatisation of the airline. Khun Boonchuey, a ground-crew technician, said "When the companies privatise, people lose their jobs and in Thailand there is no job security, no social safety nets. We are left with nothing."

Junya Yimprasert, co-ordinator of the Thai Labour Campaign agreed. "Trade policies, she said, "do not protect the workers and they cause many people to lose their jobs."

Hundreds of state employees, autoworkers, maritime, transport and

services workers joined the rally, responding to the ICFTU call for an international day of action.

SALT AND CHILLI

The US embassy is in the heart of Bangkok's financial and diplomatic district and one of the few tree-lined streets in the hot sprawling city. After several hours of standing, the workers and farmers settled in the shade to eat and drink, watched by well-dressed office workers and embassy staff. One man approached a group of protestors introducing himself as an American working for a TNC. "I have one question," he said. "Why do you think you can protest about patenting when Thailand has been violating copyright for years? Right now, you can buy a Harry Potter CD at the local market for 150 baht [about \$4]. Tell me, what gives you the right to complain about copyright?"

Kingkorn Narinthrakul, who works with peasants in the North of Thailand, wasn't surprised at this idiotic comparison between entertainment CDs, life saving drugs and farmers livelihoods and replied politely "Does this make anyone die? And besides, it's the only way the poor people can see Harry Potter."

Before marching off to Lumpini Park for an afternoon of music and speeches, villagers set off firecrackers and burnt chili and salt – a ritual which locals believe brings bad luck to bad people. The smoke wafted into the embassy.

POWER POLITICS TO CRIPPLE WTO MINISTERIAL

by Aileen Kwa*

GENEVA, 9 November - The WTO Ministerial convenes this evening with the majority of developing countries deeply unhappy with the process of negotiations leading up to the Doha meeting and dissatisfied with the substantive issues on the agenda. To say the least, the Geneva preparatory process has kicked this ministerial off on the wrong-foot.

Last night (8 November) the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) met and reiterated their position on not accepting any negotiations on new issues. An African delegate said: "We have been polite, patient and diplomatic in communicating our concerns on the proposed negotiations in new areas. It is now time for us to be vocal and ready to say NO with a capital N." (see South Bulletin, Doha Highlight, No. 1, 9 Nov 2001).

The Chairman of the General Council, Stuart Harbinson, and the Director General, Mike Moore transmitted to Doha what many developing country delegations have termed a "one-sided" draft declaration. In the covering note attached to the draft, dated 5 November, two items stand out, if only for their (unintended) irony. Moore and Harbinson state that

"The substantive preparatory process under this mandate was conducted in informal meetings in which we made transparency and inclusiveness a top priority."

To add insult to the injury caused in Geneva, they also claimed in the cover note that "On the basis of the consultations held from the beginning of the process, it was clear that the overwhelming majority of Members did not wish to repeat the method of preparation followed prior to the Seattle Ministerial Conference. The latter was a process driven by formal proposals which resulted in an unwieldy compendium which could not be refined. Instead, Members clearly preferred a method whereby the Chairman and the Director General would produce, on the basis of consultations, their best approximation of a compromise solution among the differing positions of the membership."

For the majority of developing country members, these statements could not be further from the truth. While both Moore and Harbinson are congratulating themselves for the good work done so far, they have in fact been primarily responsible for stonewalling developing countries, ignoring their positions completely, and forcing through a document that could not be more biased against the interests of developing countries. Unlike the Seattle text, this "clean" text belies disagreement in nearly all areas. The most controversial is that it promises to start multilateral agreements on investment (a la MAI), competition, transparency in government procurement, trade facilitation and industrial

tariffs.

The African Group and LDCs have made it patently clear in their preparatory regional meetings, as well as in their many statements here in Geneva, that these new negotiations are not in their interests. However, the EU, the US and their allies purport to know better the interests of these poor countries. In the coming days in Doha, Ministers from developing countries will be cornered, pressured, threatened, strong-armed or bribed into accepting what they know is not going to benefit them. Other national interests will be put on the line (access to certain markets, financial and food aid) and it remains to be seen whether they will resist the pressures.

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES STONEWALLED IN PREPARATORY PROCESS When the second draft declaration came out on 27 October, many developing country delegates in Geneva had reacted with shock and frustration. The first draft had already not reflected their positions. Instead of bringing more of their positions on board, the second draft further ignored them. While even the Chairman, Harbinson, had acknowledged that half the Membership were against introducing investment and competition agreements, this second draft removed the square brackets in these sections. The option not to start negotiations was dropped, leaving only text agreeing to the commencement of negotiations by the 5th

Ministerial.

Many developing country delegates in Geneva were very angry. Mr Chifamba, the delegate from Zimbabwe (and co-ordinator of the African Group) said that he was "shocked, although not surprised because we have always been marginalised anyway."

Quick to react, Nigeria issued a strongly worded statement to the General Council, (which they asked others to help distribute widely). It said,

"Nigeria finds the revised text released by the Chairman of the General Council unsatisfactory because it is one-sided. The text generally accommodates in total the interests of developed countries while disregarding the concerns of developing and least developed countries. It is empty of contents on the issues of interest of developing countries including issues of Implementation, Special and Differential Treatment (S&D), LDC Issues, Subsidies and Countervailing Measures and TRIPS and Public Health..."

"For instance, while not giving much in Implementation that has been on the table since the conclusion of the Uruguay Round Agreements, it pushes vigorously the New Issues in favour of major delegations... The text shows not much regard for our countries. We request the Chairman to indicate alternative views from the developing and least

developed countries in order to send a balanced document to Ministers...

"It is rather unfortunate that the Chairman has decided to adopt this non-inclusive attitude by side-tracking the views of the developing and least developed countries. Nigeria considers it a serious omission that the Draft has not projected the crucial differences in our views. This portends that there is no level playground in the WTO if one side only is heard in arguments and on issues that affect all our countries..."

When the General Council convened formally on 31 October, however, Harbinson held firm that he would make no changes to the text, no matter how many delegations protested. In fact, he even pointed out that he did not wish to engage in detailed substantive discussion!

His remarks in the opening of the meeting were as follows:

"These texts clearly do not purport to represent agreed elements in any way at this stage, although we may be closer to agreement in some areas than in others. However, nothing can be considered to be agreed definitively in the absence of agreement overall, and that is a decision that will be for Ministers to take in Doha. As far as the process in Geneva is concerned, it is our judgement that we have taken it as far as we possibly can, and that further consultations will not take us any closer to improving the texts. For the same reasons, and while I clearly do not want to limit the right of delegations to

speak, I believe it would not help the process for delegations to engage in a substantive discussion in the General Council at this stage on specific portions of the text.

"The Director General and I do not plan to revise these texts further. We intend to transmit them to Ministers on our own responsibility..."

The deep anger and frustration of delegates was palpable at this final General Council meeting.

Tanzania, representing LDCs said

"... the current Draft falls short of the kind of text we would be comfortable with as it has not sufficiently accommodated our major preoccupations. Certainly, we did not expect all our proposals to be accepted in toto as part of a consensus text, but we did expect our major proposals or reservations to be reflected, even if they were to be put in square brackets or as separate options to be considered. I commend your effort in trying to avoid the kind of text we had for Seattle with so many brackets and options, but at least in that text it was clear what was accepted to the membership and what were the differences which had to be addressed by our Ministers... The Draft text which we now have is seemingly clean but as you have admitted in your introductory remarks and in the cover page, this is not an agreed text in any part at this stage, and this

means that even if there are no physical brackets on any part of the text, there certainly are many 'mental' brackets to be untied in Doha. In that sense, this text may perhaps be more complex and more difficult for Ministers to use for consensus than if the differences in key areas were made more explicit."

Egypt also expressed their frustration. Pointing out problems with the process, they said

"...transparency, as we have repeated in the many occasions we had to discuss this important issue, is not only a matter of flow of information or expression of a Member's opinion, as important as these maybe. More crucial, it should guarantee the participation of all Members in the process of decision-making and ensure a sense of ownership by all Members of the final outcome.

"We thought it is important to start with this note because we are deeply astonished that the Revised Draft Declaration issued on the 27th October seems to ignore many of the views and positions expressed by my delegation, as well as - according to our notes - those of many other developing countries." Egypt then went on to say that in fact, the process and agenda so far seems to reflect that only 'mere lip-service' is being paid to development concerns.
RULES-BASED BUT THE

WATCHWORD IS 'FLEXIBILITY'

A key concern of many developing countries in the last leg of their fight leading up to Doha had been over the legality of transmitting a draft declaration that did not contain brackets, but which was also not a consensus document. Was it in fact according to the rules in the book for the Chair to transmit "on his own responsibility," a seemingly clean text carrying the General Council stamp?

India, at the 31 October meeting took a strong view about the strategy that had been used to "manufacture" a "clean" text and transmit it to Doha. The Indian delegate said: "By opting for a text which does not bring out the differences in crucial areas, especially in respect of new issues, you are probably forcing many of us to put the entire text in square brackets.

"Mr. Chairman, I have very serious problems with the suggestion that your text should be transmitted as it is to the Ministers. Such a course of action, we strongly feel will not be appropriate. I do not think it is fair to cause any disadvantage to any Member of the Organisation through a Chairman's text. WTO is a forum for negotiations. Sometimes, we acquiesce when a Chairman comes out with a text after wide-ranging consultations. Today, we are dealing with a momentous issue, which will have tremendous

impact on the commercial, economic and social life of billions of people. This is, therefore, not an ordinary issue. While we appreciate your constraints, I must say that it is not possible for me to acquiesce in a situation where a draft ministerial declaration is transmitted to the Ministers without reflecting concerns and objections from a large number of countries including mine. You will recall, Mr. Chairman, the Seattle text that was transmitted with the consensus of the General Council contained various options relating to various issues in square brackets. I know that it has been a fashion to criticise that text saying that it was unmanageable. However, that text had the merit of not prejudicing anybody's position. We feel that by opting for a clean text without appropriately reflecting the different positions at least on major issues, we have swung to the other extreme."

The delegate of India went on to suggest that if appropriate revision of the text is not considered possible, then there should be a "clear covering letter as an integral part of the Draft Ministerial Declaration explaining the main differences encountered and options suggested on critical issues during the preparatory process."

At the same meeting, Jamaica, too, was very vocal on the matter of legality and the transmission of such a

controversial text. Their ambassador said that "for a rules-based organisation, there was a lot of informality at a crucial stage." He "wondered" at the way in which the rules are put in place. "In other international organisations, procedures are very precise."

Incredibly, when reacting to this comment, WTO spokesperson Keith Rockwell said that their research showed that there was a level of "inconsistency" in the procedures about whether the Chair and DG could in fact transmit such a text, but that the watchword was "flexibility" (see SUNS 1 Nov 2001).

'RULES-BASED' BUT FINAL DECISIONS BASED ON POWER

As the process came to a close in Geneva last week, and bags were being packed for Doha, delegates from the South were barely able to contain their disappointment, frustration and helplessness. The general sense was that they had over-stretched themselves, participating in all aspects of the substantive negotiations, but that they had been ignored. When it comes to the crunch, it seems that the most important decisions - even in this rules-based organisation - are in fact made based on the playing out of power politics.

A delegate from an African LDC country said "We all know what's going on, the substantive issues are not the issue

now."

Echoing the same sentiment, a Caribbean representative said, "It is not a question of substance. Nobody can say that we have not participated. We have done so, and we have simply been ignored. The text does not take our interests into account. We will not have a third draft, not because we have no time. The text came out on Saturday. By Monday, we sent a letter by 20 developing countries to make changes in implementation. And he (the Chairman, Stuart Harbinson) simply said no. We all know why he said that, because our ministers will have a difficult time."

Voicing concerns about the process of negotiations that will take place in Doha, she continued:

"Nobody will know how he will chose the Chair (of the negotiating groups). Will they be his friends? Who will chair these groups, how many working groups are we going to have? We are in the worst possible situation, and it is a question of politics, not a lack of arguments."

Her concerns seem to be spot-on. As of today, in Doha, six working groups and their Chairs have already been set up, with the majority of Membership not knowing how these groups and Chairs were chosen (see South Bulletin, Doha Highlight-No. 1, 9 Nov 2001).

IN CONCLUSION

Behind the ceremony of the Ministerial opening is an intense fight over power. The rich countries are banking on their military, economic and political might to coerce developing countries to an agenda that would benefit their corporate interests. Developing countries have power in numbers and in moral authority— since they are the ones the rich claim to speak for— and, unfortunately, the searing legacy of the Uruguay Round Agreements which is still wreaking havoc in their countries.

* Aileen Kwa is a policy analyst with Focus on the global South. She is based in Geneva.

TRADE SUPERPOWERS TURN ON HEAT AS WTO MINISTERIAL OPENS

By Walden Bello*

Desperate is the only word to describe the antics of the trade superpowers on the eve of the Fourth Ministerial of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Doha, Qatar. Tremendous pressure is being exerted on developing countries to endorse a new round of trade negotiations, and the weapons include manipulation of the WTO's undemocratic system of decision-making and blunter forms of trade blackmail.

INTENSE SECURITY

The meeting at the Sheraton Hotel is taking place in the midst of massive security preparations that has turned this city of over 600,000 into high security zone, to the consternation of ordinary Qataris, many of whom claim that the US is exaggerating the dangers of holding the conference in this Gulf city. The security arrangements has isolated the conference site and is making transportation to and from hotels an exercise in resourcefulness for many delegates.

An armed attack on Wednesday, November 9 by an allegedly deranged Qatari gunman on a munitions base used by the US on the outskirts of Doha has heightened the tension. Even before that incident, the office of the US Trade Representative had moved to gather representatives of US NGOs from their separate lodgings to join the US official delegation

logistical tie-ups to US warships waiting in the Gulf for possible evacuation of American delegates. There has been more than enough space in the hotel since the number of people in the official US delegation has shrunk from about 300 to 40. In perhaps the most important global trade negotiations in a decade, neither the US Secretary of Commerce nor the Secretary of Agriculture is present, nor is there a representative of Congress.

Such a dramatic shrinkage of numbers is not confined to the US delegation. The Canadian delegation, usually one of the biggest, is down to 50. Says Maude Barlow, a noted critic of her government's trade policies: "People were suddenly all getting sick or disabled at the last minute, and to try to cover the cost of the government plane, they even invited me for the ride to Qatar."

DIFFERING PRIORITIES

The smaller number of key actors from the US and other members of so-called "Quad" (European Union, Canada, and Japan) is not, however, likely to change the dynamics of the conference.

The majority of developing countries want the Ministerial to focus on matters related to the implementation of the

commitments made under the Uruguay Round. This position was laid out in a recent declaration of the Group of 77, which identified "104 implementation issues" that needed to be "meaningfully resolved, with urgency before the Fourth Ministerial Meeting and without any extraneous linkages."

Developing countries have been groaning under the weight of implementing the 28 different agreements that comprised the Uruguay Round agreement while the big trading powers have refused or been slow to implement their commitments to provide greater market access in agriculture and textiles to developing countries or cut back the massive subsidization of their agricultural interests.

The European Union and the United States, on the other hand, have put some of their differences aside—temporarily—to present a common front for a new round of trade negotiations that would focus on expanding the mandate of the WTO to cover the so-called "new issues" of investment, competition policy, government procurement, and trade facilitation. Essentially, these are the same issues that formed their common agenda prior to the disastrous WTO Ministerial in December 1999. Learning from Seattle, the EU and US have de-

emphasized their disagreement on agricultural trade issues, and the US apparently does not intend to make the linkage between trade and labor standards—a key point of conflict with developing countries in Seattle—an issue in Doha.

CONTROVERSIAL DRAFT DECLARATION

The proposed draft declaration for the Ministerial meeting is an example of the sort of underhanded tactics that the big trading powers are resorting to. According to Aileen Kwa, a Geneva-based analyst who monitors the WTO for Focus on the Global South, the draft does not emphasize the developing countries' stated priorities of implementation issues, the "Special and Differential Treatment" of developing countries, greater access to developed country markets, and reviews of the agreements on Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs), Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), and services (GATS).

Instead, the draft projects an alleged consensus on negotiations on the issues of competition, investment policy, government procurement, and trade facilitation that are the priorities of the minority of rich and powerful trading countries.

"Despite clearly stated positions that the developing countries are unwilling to go into a new round until past implementation and decision-making are

addressed,” says Kwa, “the draft declaration favorably positions the launching of a comprehensive new round with an open agenda.”

The draft has been openly denounced by Nigeria as “one-sided” and “showing not much regard for our countries.” Bitter complaints from the poor countries prompted Stuart Harbinson of Hong Kong, chair of the WTO General Council, to walk out of a briefing in Geneva last week. Many governments are incensed that the draft fails to acknowledge the strong stand they have made on the principle that nothing in the Trade Related Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS) shall prevent them from taking measures to protect public health by overriding patents.

The draft was a product of consultations conducted among an inner circle of about 20-25 participants—the so-called Green Room process that effectively excludes most of the members of the WTO. In the lead-up to Qatar, this exclusive process has already held two “mini-Ministerials,” one in Mexico at the end of August and another in Singapore on October 13-14. How one gets invited to these meetings is very murky. Kwa cites the case of one ambassador from a transition economy who was promised an invitation to a Green Room meeting by the WTO Secretariat but never got one.

Then there was the case

of an African ambassador who wanted to attend the Singapore mini-ministerial: When he approached the WTO secretariat for an invitation, he was told that they were not hosting the meeting. When he tried the Singapore mission in Geneva, the response was that they were simply coordinating the meeting and were not in a position to send out invitations.

Developing country disaffection with the Green Room process was one of the reasons the Third Ministerial collapsed in 1999. At that time, Charlene Barshefsky, then US Trade Representative, admitted that the WTO decision-making process was non-transparent and inequitable and had to be changed. Stephen Byers, the UK Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, was even more emphatic, saying that the “WTO will not be able to continue in its present form. There has to be fundamental and radical change in order for it to meet the needs and aspirations of all 134 of its members.”

That moment of candor was, however, forgotten quickly as the developed countries realized that in an organization like the WTO, where the developing countries are in the majority, the big powers can only dominate through such non-democratic mechanisms as the Green Room and the so-called “Consensus System.” Barely two months after Seattle, Mike Moore, WTO

director general, told developing countries at the UNCTAD X gathering in Bangkok in February 2000 that the green room/consensus system was “non-negotiable.” And there the matter has lain since.

CAPITALIZING ON TRAGEDY

The trade superpowers have not wasted any opportunity to push for a new trade round. The smoke had not yet cleared from the ruins of the World Trade Center in New York before US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, seized on the tragedy to press for even greater trade liberalization via the WTO and other mechanisms, asserting that free trade was one of the best ways of countering terrorism. Others have been more brazen: at a recent conference in Budapest, David Hartridge, an influential senior official at the WTO Secretariat, openly declared that the September 11 terrorists and activists against corporate-driven globalization shared a propensity for “violent behavior” and warned people from going to Geneva for demonstrations against the WTO in mid-November because “there will be violence.”

While the developing countries held the line in the months after the disastrous collapse of the Seattle Ministerial in December 1999, many observers fear that their resolve might now be weakening in the face of concerted pressure from the developed countries. Aside from being subjected to the WTO’s

exclusionary decision-making process, some countries are being bludgeoned more directly. According to Shefali Sharma of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), the US has sent letters to Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and several other countries revoking their preferential trade status on some trade agreements owing to their opposition to liberalization of government procurement, which is at the top of the US agenda for the Ministerial.

LAST HURRAH?

The powerful trading countries may well get their way and ram through a declaration that agrees to a comprehensive round of trade negotiations in Doha. But the greatest obstacle to trade liberalization may no longer be the developing countries but the global economy itself, which is contracting very quickly owing precisely to the interlocking of economies brought about by globalization and liberalization. In both developed and developing countries, pressures to save domestic industries, focus on domestic-demand-led growth, and counteract the vulnerabilities of export-led economies at a time of a deep global recession will probably stymie any significant movement toward more liberalization. The Fourth Ministerial may well turn out to be the last hurrah of the WTO and the project of radical economic globalization of which it was the crown jewel.

NO TO A NEW ROUND IN DOHA STATEMENT OF THE WORLD FORUM ON THE WTO, BEIRUT 5-8 NOVEMBER 2001

*Walden Bello is executive director of Focus on the Global South, a research, analysis, and advocacy program based in Bangkok, Thailand, and professor of sociology and public administration at the University of the Philippines.

Between the 5th and the 8th of November 2001, on the eve of the 4th ministerial meeting of the WTO in Doha, a world forum on globalization and global trade was held in Beirut.

The meeting was attended by civil society representatives from five continents to take a position on the Doha meeting of the WTO and its agenda. The meeting also discussed new global developments and the atmosphere of militarisation and war that is currently dominating all aspects of life on the planet.

After numerous sessions and workshops, the participants declare the following:

The importance of the Doha meeting is in the fact that it will be the first global meeting after the September 11 attacks and after the start of the war on Afghanistan. It is also held for the first time in Arab country, not far from besieged Iraq and from Palestine, where the Palestinian are facing a continuing Israeli occupation.

This new reality should make us cautious against pressures on developing countries to make more concessions. We refuse any use of global trade or its mechanisms as a tool in the current declared war.

Seven years since the creation of the WTO has given us ample time to examine the promises of prosperity, development, opening up of markets to the products of developing nations, and the numerous benefits that the latter would have enjoyed from joining the organization. What really happened was completely the opposite. Economic stagnation spread to include more and more countries. Developing countries faced huge losses in their economies and exchange. Protectionist measures in the countries of the global north remained an obstacle to the products of the South. Agriculture and food security was hit with tremendous losses and damage. The technological divide between north and south became unprecedented, while barriers to the transfer of technology became stronger, and the workforce was barred from free movement.

The implementation of WTO agreements and its mechanisms has shown that it is completely biased in favor of big multinationals and global capital. The WTO does not give any consideration to international justice, nor to the interests of developing countries, not to the people of the global north themselves. It goes completely against development, and

peoples' rights of development, this explains the emergence of a global movement opposed to the existence of the WTO, its role and mechanisms.

The rhetoric of the free market is an ideology biased in favor of global capital. What the WTO seeks is in complete opposition to the principles of social justice, human rights, and international charters. Our criticism of the WTO is based on what humanity had agreed upon decades ago: the UN charters for human rights. The Human Rights declaration of 1986 states, in its first article, that the human right for development requires the complete implementation of the right of self-determination. That includes the complete and unconflicted sovereignty of people over their natural resources and wealth.

The WTO aims to become a trading authority above countries and nations, thus practically eliminating their ability to formulate social, economic, and financial policies that achieve development. The WTO also removes the authority of national legal systems in all areas that fall within its scope. This drains the right for development, and the majority of economic and social right of people and individuals, from

their meaning. It deprives people from political, institutional, and legal tools that would allow them to create national development policies and the means to achieve them.

The rules at work in the WTO aim to make trade an absolute and comprehensive principle. They push development, human rights, and the interests of people to the side, where they are readapted to global trade and not the opposite.

The creation of a global organization with such power and authority is a dangerous issue in itself. It becomes more and more ominous in light of the current push to militarize globalization and the unipolar hegemony on the global decision.

Based on the above, the participants in the World Forum in Beirut, and at the conclusion of their discussions, declare the following positions to the 4th ministerial meeting in Doha on the 9th of November 2001:

1) We refuse a new round of negotiations in the WTO and any inclusion of new issues on the agenda, especially those connected with investment, competition, government procurement, and other issues that will overwhelm the meeting and puts the delegates of developing countries in a position where it is impossible for them to follow negotiations on all those issues at the same time.

2) We call for the

reevaluation of previous agreements in light of the practice of their implementation that showed a great bias against the interests of developing countries. This includes the reevaluation and the correction, or the annulment, of harmful agreements, or those that were signed under pressure or ignorance. Those being factors that eliminate will and corrupt the contract.

3) We call for the cancellation of agreements on intellectual property that inhibit developing countries from providing adequate health care to their people; that block the transfer of technology, and that protect the interests of supranational organizations and facilitates their pilfering of cultural and genetic heritage of developing countries.

4) We call for the exclusion of agriculture from the scope of the WTO and the ban on dumping practiced by multinational corporations. This means the lift of agricultural subsidies in industrialized countries, and the opening up of their markets to the agricultural products of developing countries. It also includes the right of developing countries to create national policies to develop and protect their agriculture and farmers. It also means the refusal of any measures that aim to monopolize the production of seeds through patents and genetic modification.

5) We refuse to basic services (water, health, education, etc.) in trade agreements, since these are connected directly to the well being of people. These should remain under the control of people through their national institutions and not market forces and the purpose of quick gain.

6) We refuse the inclusion of labor standards in WTO agreements and call for the adherence to the standards of the ILO.

7) We refuse any transgression of international environmental treaties, and we call for the adherence of trade agreements and practices to the respect of environmental safety and health standards.

8) We refuse the internal mechanisms of the WTO, especially its conflict resolution process, since they are neither democratic, nor transparent, nor do they provide equal representation in the decision-making process. We call for new mechanisms based on those conditions and the abilities of developing countries.

Global economy and global trade should follow the bases of the consolidation of global justice and equality. They should allow all countries to benefit from economic, scientific, and technological advancement. This way global trade will strengthen peace and global stability and not become an instrument in the creation of conflict and war.

Our world is not for sale and peoples' lives and well being are not a material for trade.

The global protest movement that succeeded in stopping the meeting in Seattle two years ago, because of the accumulation of the struggle and coordination and solidarity between its components, is now capable of stopping the new round in Doha and in enforcing the respect of peoples' rights and the rights of developing countries in particular to achieve development, social justice and peace.

Changing the location of WTO meetings from one country to another in order to avoid what happened in Seattle in 1999 will not solve the problem. What we demand is that the WTO changes its mechanisms and content, not the location of its meetings. If the WTO does not do so, then any meeting, wherever it may be, will become another Seattle.

Beirut, 8 November 2001