



WTO MINISTERIAL LACKED COMMITMENT TO ADDRESS ECONOMIC, FOOD OR CLIMATE CRISES

03 December 2009 (Brussels/Geneva) – The WTO Ministerial Meeting held in Geneva this 30th November to 2nd December generated great expectations as to the role played by this institution within the context of the current global economic crisis. Regrettably, there was an absence of any meaningful reassessment of the WTO-conventional trade model, despite its role in driving the food, climate change and economic crises which have been so devastating for producers and workers in developing countries. Instead ministers adopted a business as usual approach, by calling for a speedy conclusion of the Doha Round by 2010.

The Fair Trade movement calls on governments to reject the current Doha proposals and commit to building an alternative system that puts sustainable development at the forefront. If trade is to contribute to achieving sustainable development, the social, environmental, as well as economic conditions of production must be taken into account.

The Fair Trade movement believes that a more just trading system is possible. We believe that following key principles are necessary to build a fairer trading system and should be at the forefront of any future policy decisions and discussions on trade.

AT THE FOREFRONT: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE JUSTICE

The Fair Trade movement is disappointed that discussions during the ministerial meeting have not produced the momentum needed for an alternative discourse favouring the most vulnerable of the world.

The Fair Trade Movement believes that, as binding criteria, all WTO trading rules need to take into account social and environmental international standards, agreements and conventions. Trade, in a positive or negative manner, has a global impact - the WTO has to work in line and in full coherence with climate change and Millennium Development Goal decisions, standards and goals.

SAFEGUARD FOOD SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY

Every country has the right to food security and sovereignty, and should be entitled to protect and support its domestic agriculture – as a large group of developing countries (known as the G33) have been demanding. The food crisis has shown clearly the dangers of food import dependency, a situation which has arisen as a consequence of liberalisation of trade in agriculture. Despite a growing recognition that the current model has undermined food security and livelihoods in developing countries, and that investment in small-scale agriculture is crucial for addressing both food security and climate change; existing proposals under the Doha Round will make it extremely difficult for developing countries to protect and promote sustainable small-scale agriculture.

SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MARKETS

Most developed countries achieved economic wealth through strong internal markets and multiple economic linkages between domestic industrial, agricultural and other primary production sectors. If developing countries are to build value-added industries and move beyond commodity dependency, it is critical that governments retain policy space to promote national and regional production and markets. Yet proposals under Agriculture and NAMA undermine the scope for developing countries to diversify and climb up the value chain, and to use important policy tools to support jobs and industries.

STOP DUMPING BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Rich countries have a long-overdue obligation to end all forms of trade-distorting subsidies that lead to dumping on world markets, as the impact of these practices on agriculture in the South has had a devastating effect on domestic production, livelihoods and food security. Addressing these subsidies was a key promise at the beginning of the Doha Round - yet current proposals in Doha will instead allow the largest subsidisers enormous scope to continue the farm payments that lead to dumping.

FAIR TRADE: A STEP TOWARDS MORE TRADE JUSTICE

Fair Trade can be used as a positive trade example that avoids fluctuations of price, price speculations and takes into account the real costs of production that makes trade sustainable.

As long as global trade rules continue to work in favour of rich countries and their companies, and continue to deny deprived populations from developing countries the right to earn a living, then the work of Fair Trade Organizations is more important than ever. By supporting Fair Trade campaigns and buying Fair Trade products everybody can signal their support for a more just trading system. And it provides a real alternative now for the most vulnerable in developing countries while governments continue to talk but provides no meaningful action.

The Fair Trade Advocacy Office speaks out for Fair Trade and trade justice with the aim to improve trading conditions for the benefit of small and marginalised producers and poor workers in developing countries. Based in Brussels, the office coordinates the advocacy activities of the four main Fair Trade Networks: Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International [FLO](#), World Fair Trade Organisation [WFTO](#), Network of European Worldshops [NEWS!](#) and European Fair Trade Association [EFTA](#). These four networks bring together over 1.5 million Fair Trade producers from more than 60 countries, 20 labelling initiatives, hundreds of specialized Fair Trade importers, 3000 worldshops and more than 100,000 volunteers.

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