

FAIR TRADE ADVOCACY OFFICE AND THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION

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<p>WHAT IS THE WTO?</p>	<p>The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an international organization with 148 member countries and a permanent secretariat based in Geneva. It is designed to supervise and liberalise international trade. The organization officially commenced on January 1, 1995 under the Marrakech Agreement, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which commenced in 1947.</p> <p>The WTO deals with regulation of trade between participating countries; it provides a framework for negotiating and formalising trade agreements, it oversees the implementation, administration and operation of the covered agreements (there are about 60 different agreements) and a dispute resolution process.</p> <p><i>Doha Development Agenda</i></p> <p>The organisation is currently endeavouring to persist with a trade negotiation called the Doha Development Agenda (or Doha Round). The Doha Development Round was launched in 2001 and was supposed to focus on 'development' issues in trade. However, the Round keeps stalling with pessimism from the 'major players' that a deal will be signed anytime soon. Some members would like to change the package (ie. USA specifically Congress) whereas developing countries believe they have nothing further to give and have no willingness to change their positions.</p> <p>As the multilateral liberalisation efforts (DDA) is stalling and developing countries are worried about the increase trend in bilateral negotiations and of being left without 'a broader framework' to hold onto; a group of 22 developing nations announced after the latest Ministerial that they had agreed a framework deal to cut tariffs and other barriers to each others' exports, in an attempt to boost South-South trade.</p> <p>The issues still under negotiation that are priorities for different developing countries include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM): to effectively protect agricultural producers in the face of import surges that can cause damage. o Agricultural subsidies by developed countries: a particular sensitive area is cotton o Market access for agriculture to developed country markets o Market access for industrial products (NAMA) o Aid for Trade: see research by FTAO for further information on AfT. Please visit the Aid for Trade page on the FTAO website. http://www.fairtrade-advocacy.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=38&Itemid=56 <p><i>Next Steps</i></p> <p>After the 7th WTO Ministerial Meeting of 30th November to 2nd December 2009 in Geneva, WTO members are set to launch another push for a deal in the Doha Round negotiations, with a 'stocktaking' exercise by March 2010 to determine whether the long-running talks can be brought a close by the end of the year.</p>
<p>PAST WORK BY FTAO IN</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) FTAO attended and coordinated FT movement activities in relation to the Ministerial Meetings in (Cancun, 2003 before FTAO was officially created) and Hong Kong (2005). 2) FTAO attended WTO Public Forums, Geneva in 2007 and 2008.

<p>REGARDS TO WTO</p>	<p>3) FTAO developed a strategy and positions in regards to Aid for Trade and attended the First WTO AFT Global Review, Geneva 2007.</p> <p>4) FTAO coordinated FT movement experts in creating an internal briefing document for the FT movement and press release for the WTO Ministerial, Geneva, December 2009.</p>
<p>WHAT ARE FTAO'S VIEWS?</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>1. Sustainable Development and Trade Justice Key WTO members should 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.</p> <p>2. Social and Environmental Standards as binding criteria WTO trading rules need to take into account social and environmental international standards, agreements and conventions as binding criteria. 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.</p> <p>3. 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.</p> <p>4. 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.</p> <p>5. 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.</p> <p>6. 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</p>

	<p>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.</p>
<p>FURTHER READING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTAO documents 3 December 2009 - Geneva - Brussels. The WTO ministerial in Geneva lacked commitment to address economic, food or climate crisis Press Release: http://www.fairtrade-advocacy.org/images/stories/ftao_press_release_wto_ministerial_meeting.pdf Aid for Trade: is the EU helping small producers to trade their way out of poverty? A review by the Fair Trade Advocacy Office and ICCO. April 2009: http://www.fairtrade-advocacy.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=38&Itemid=56 FTAO made a presentation at a plenary session of the WTO Aid for Trade Global Review: 19-21st November 2007: http://www.fairtrade-advocacy.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=38&Itemid=56 Hong Kong WTO Ministerial, December 2005, a final statement was issued, analysing the outcomes of the negotiations: http://www.fairtrade-advocacy.org/images/stories/publications/fine_wto_dec05.pdf During Hong Kong WTO Ministerial, December 2005, "Fair Trade Rules" position paper was created and translated into German, French, Spanish, Italian and Dutch: http://www.fairtrade-advocacy.org/images/stories/publications/fine_wto_dec05.pdf Cancun WTO Ministerial, Sept 2003, TOWARDS A FAIRER WORLD TRADING SYSTEM: A Fair Trade Perspective of IFAT towards the 5th WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun, Mexico: http://www.fairtrade-advocacy.org/images/stories/publications/ifat_wto_2003.pdf • Other civil society documents The South Centre: http://www.southcentre.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1 Oxfam International: http://www.oxfam.org/en/campaigns/trade International Centre for Trade and Development: http://ictsd.org • Official documents WTO website: http://www.wto.int/ European Union position on WTO: http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/eu-and-wto/index_en.htm • Other Guardian Unlimited - Special Report: The World Trade Organization ongoing coverage: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/wto