



**SEATTLE SYMPOSIUM ON
INTERNATIONAL TRADE ISSUES IN THE FIRST
DECADES OF THE NEXT CENTURY
29 NOVEMBER 1999**

The Seattle Symposium on International Trade Issues in the First Decades of the Next Century was held at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center in Seattle, Washington on 29 November 1999, on the eve of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Third Ministerial Conference, which is to take place from 30 November-3 December 1999. Approximately 1500 delegates, comprising representatives of WTO Member States, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and journalists, participated in the Symposium, which was webcast live. During two panel sessions, delegates engaged in informal dialogue on issues likely to affect the international trading system in the next century in an effort to enhance awareness of the issues involved, provide a forum for exchange of ideas, and increase the understanding of the WTO's contributions in these areas.

In the first session, participants considered trade and development prospects for the next twenty years, particularly how trade liberalization can contribute to development, the need for increased cooperation among IGOs' activities in support of sustainable economic development, and the contributions to be made by NGOs in this effort. Special attention was given to the role of international trade in poverty elimination, the effects of globalization on developing country economies, and ways in which the WTO's least developed Members can become more fully integrated into the trading system. In the second session, participants considered evolving public concerns with the multilateral trading system, emphasizing the relationship between sustainable development and the WTO's trade liberalization imperative, how scientific innovation and developments in information technology (IT) potentially impact the trading agenda, and technology transfer concerns.

REPORT OF THE SYMPOSIUM

**SESSION I - TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS FOR
THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS**

OPENING STATEMENTS: The first session was chaired by Alec Erwin, South African Minister for Trade and Industry. At the opening of the session, Mike Moore, WTO Director-General, noted

that when the Uruguay Round was launched, it was met with public apathy, whereas in Seattle apathy has been transformed to anxiety and even anger, not only locally but also worldwide. He noted that the WTO is not a supranational government, a world policeman, or an agent for cooperative interests; the WTO does not have the right to dictate countries' policies or to overrule national laws. He noted that decisions are made by the WTO's Member States and adopted by their governments. Moore quoted President Clinton as saying that globalization is no longer a policy choice, but a fact. He said the real question is whether globalization should be left unfettered, dominated by the most powerful, or governed by an international system of rules that are adopted by world governments.

Moore said that a new round of tariff liberalizations would boost world economic output by three percent, or over US\$1.2 trillion, and that developing countries would benefit the most. He took note of the approximately 50,000 WTO demonstrators in Seattle, yet emphasized that over 30 countries, including China and Russia, wished to join the WTO. He said that the old divides between North and South and East and West were no longer applicable, but that the divide now is between those that welcome the future and those that fear it. He agreed with the argument that economic, social and political freedoms are prerequisites for development, and observed that a world without the WTO would be a poorer world of competing groups, power politics, greater uncertainty and increased marginalization.

SPEAKERS: Richard Rominger, US Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary, speaking on behalf of Charlene Barshefsky, US Trade Representative, said the Symposium reflected progress on US President Clinton's goal of putting a human face on the global economy as well as his overall agenda to make the WTO more open and transparent. He noted that it was Clinton who proposed that the WTO host a day for NGOs so that they would have an opportunity to voice their concerns and that the Symposium represented the first time in 50 years that NGOs have been given such a voice. Regarding agriculture, he said the US hoped that in the new round, the reduction and elimination of export subsidies, the reduction of some domestic supports, and the expansion of market access could be achieved. He called for a more open, transparent and accountable WTO that is committed to sustainable agriculture and sustainable development.

Clare Short, UK Secretary of State for International Development, called on delegates to make the next round of negotiations a "development round," focused on creating opportunities for the poor. She

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noted that globalization is generating great wealth and that such wealth could be used to reduce poverty and inequality worldwide, which she said were both the biggest moral issues facing the world and the greatest threats to the future security and stability of the planet.

Short said delegates should make the next round a broad round, focusing not only on agriculture and services but also on investment, competition and public procurement. She said a less broad round might result in developed countries striking deals outside the WTO to the detriment of poorer countries. A broader round would also allow delegates to discuss the links between trade, labor and the environment, and help build mutual trust. She called for duty-free access for exports from the 48 least developed countries (LDCs), which comprise a small portion of world trade, by the end of the next round, and called on developed countries to open up markets in agriculture, textiles and clothing. She said delegates should make a clear commitment to capacity building efforts that would allow developing countries to take advantage of the new round. She stressed that developed countries must make efforts to understand developing countries' concerns on such issues as trade and labor, particularly child labor.

Dr. Mari Pangestu, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia, emphasized that poverty remains a huge problem in today's world, with over 1.3 billion people earning an average income of US\$1 a day. She stated that there has been an increase in the gap between rich and poor countries and a marginalization of the poor, especially women. She noted that openness can lead to growth and benefits, but warned that the benefits of growth are only realized with the existence of other complementary policies and institutions, including macro-stability and appropriate investment strategies. She emphasized that growth does not automatically lead to "trickle-down" benefits without a development policy, social safety nets and a conscious effort toward broader-based growth.

She emphasized the fundamentals of economic growth and stated that trade liberalization should not be an end in itself. She noted the importance of participatory institutions, civil and political liberties, quality and capacity of bureaucrats, the rule of law, the existence of a mechanism for social insurance in the creation of broad-based growth, and the avoidance of inequities that may accompany liberalization. She said that developed countries should provide open market access for all countries, but if this is impossible, a preferential system for LDCs would be appropriate.

Pascal Lamy, EC Commissioner for Trade, said he welcomed increased NGO participation in the WTO, and stated that this was the first time representatives of NGOs would serve as official advisors of the EU delegation. He said this was a good beginning, but called for further increases in NGO participation. He noted the importance of public perception and emphasized the necessity to convince sectors of the public that trade liberalization is moving in the right direction. He stated that the WTO must address new trade issues such as, *inter alia*, the environment, consumer rights, and food safety, emphasizing the EU's commitment to a comprehensive round. He said a debate on these issues must take place and that the EU came to Seattle with a mandate that this would take place.

Jagdish Bhagwati, Professor of Economics, Columbia University, noted that countries that have integrated into the world economy have advanced economically, while inward looking countries have done poorly. He stressed that globalization has been a force for economic

good, prosperity, and has led to the advancement of social agendas. He stated that most of the allegations against trade liberalization are unfounded. He observed that the reason the Uruguay Round did not produce benefits was due to the economic crisis in Asia. He also said that much of the liberalization agreed to in the Uruguay Round has not yet occurred, and therefore it is too early to realize the positive effects. He stated that there has been a failure by governments to educate the public about trade issues and liberalization and that they should respond to the concerns of the public in this regard. He stressed that it is necessary to fight for better labor standards, but suggested that the proper forum to negotiate for these standards is the ILO, not the WTO. He stated that problems such as poor labor standards cannot be solved through trade sanctions and, in fact, are often exacerbated by them.

Vwelinzima Vavi, representative of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, stated that global integration has brought growth to some parties, but that the downside of liberalization is becoming more apparent and troubling. He noted that in sub-Saharan Africa and many other poor countries, per capita incomes are lower today than they were in 1970. He said that the political and economic power of corporations has become increasingly concentrated. He stressed that the inequalities have begun to take on racial dimensions and that trade liberalization policies have resulted in ballooning trade deficits in some developing countries. He said that the terms of trade are weighted heavily against developing countries and that the debt burden has been especially difficult. He noted that the expansion of trade in the post-war period has been the consequence rather than the cause of economic growth. He emphasized that many of the Asian economies grew most rapidly behind walls of high tariffs.

Vavi stressed that the framework of the current trading regime has failed and left many countries highly vulnerable to unexpected changes in financial flows. He noted that tens of millions of people have lost their livelihood and fallen into poverty. He stated that developing countries have been forced to export their way out of trouble, and observed that the roots of the crisis are found in the tilting of the balance of economic power towards corporations and away from workers.

Julian Edwards, Director General of Consumers International, noted that the consumer movement has always supported the principles of trade liberalization because it increases choice, which generates competition and the development of efficient markets, which leads to lower prices and better products. He stated, however, that a competitive environment assumes that consumers have access to the market, knowledge to make well-informed choices, and a legal framework to protect consumer rights.

He noted that evidence since the Uruguay Round indicates that there are significant problems in the trading regime, particularly the lack of economic equity as the benefits of liberalized trade have flowed to transnational corporations and not to the LDCs. He said that these problems must be reviewed and resolved before starting a new agenda for further liberalization. He stated that the power and wealth of some multinational corporations now outstrips the financial resources of some governments, and recommended limiting the power of these corporations. He criticized the US, Japan, and the EU for their lack of progress in eliminating agricultural subsidies and noted that consumers have suffered as a result. He underscored that consumer concerns must be addressed, and called for improved transparency and accountability in the WTO.

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Charlene Barshefsky, US Trade Representative, stated that the reasons for the creation of the multilateral trading system in 1947 are the same reasons that its continuation is so important – the continuation of global prosperity, particularly for poorer countries, and the continuation of peace and stability in the world as nations acquire economic interests beyond their borders. She said that the system created in 1947 must confront new challenges, noting the further integration of transition economies seeking to establish economic rule of law and stable governance, as well as the technology of a new era.

Barshefsky also noted that the WTO in the future must address the intersection of trade liberalization with environmental protection and labor policies, as well as increased transparency. She noted that the experience of the US illustrates that a growing economy can lead to a cleaner environment and that the two are not mutually incompatible but can be mutually inclusive. She called for early environmental reviews of the new round, and for the use of the existing WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) as an oversight committee to the negotiations to promote not only the WTO's core mission for a global trading system, but also a cleaner and healthier environment. She said that the global system does not recognize the link between trade and labor and that this was "intellectually indefensible," and called on delegates to consider this issue in a thoughtful and non-politicized way. She underscored that transparency and accountability are stabilizing forces and that the WTO must be more accessible to public input and public scrutiny. She noted that the Symposium, which was the first of its kind in 50 years, was a small first step in acknowledging that the way the WTO has been run in the past must change.

DISCUSSION: Following these remarks from the above speakers, the Chair opened the floor for discussion. THIRD WORLD NETWORK brought to the Symposium's attention the Civil Society's Declaration of Seattle that had been prepared and endorsed by NGOs. The Declaration called on the WTO to undergo a process of review, repair and reform of those agreements that have negative impacts on the environment, citing in particular the agreements on TRIMs, TRIPs and agriculture. He said that Northern countries were not adhering to their promises regarding, *inter alia*, textiles, agriculture, anti-dumping and non-differential treatment. Disagreeing with Short, he discouraged the diversion of resources to a new group of issues to be negotiated, which he said would further disadvantage developing countries, and instead called for a "turnaround." ECO LOGIC stressed the need for greater market access and the reduction of export subsidies; Short responded that the EU had agreed to zero tariffs for most products from the 48 LDCs. The COUNCIL OF CANADIANS said the WTO lacks a built-in mechanism to implement the issues that had been discussed during the Symposium. She said the Symposium had been more of a lecture than a dialogue and that NGOs were not welcome in the new round of negotiations.

The ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN NGOs ON AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (RONGEAD) noted the importance to developing countries, particularly LDCs, of regional trading agreements, even though they may conflict with the multilateral trading system. He also noted that, despite universal agreement on the existence of labor rights, which are currently addressed by the ILO, enforcement to date has been inadequate. He stated that the WTO unintentionally protects countries that

continue to violate such rights and called for reform of the multilateral system in this area. The DANISH ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION called for discussions on the TRIPs Agreement, describing it as anti-development, anti-competition, anti-equity and anti-trade. He noted that most developed countries prospered before patents were imposed and therefore it was unfair to impose patent protections on developing countries. He said that weak patent rules were the best form of technology transfer. He said 20-year patents were sufficient to protect inventors and noted that for some industries, such as computers, two years was sufficient. The WOMEN'S CAUCUS called on the WTO to establish an open and transparent mechanism to address women's issues.

DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS noted that many of its patients die as a result of a lack of access to affordable medicines due to patent protections and a lack of research on diseases that affect developing countries. He called for: governments to provide for access to medicines in the Seattle Ministerial Declaration; a standing working group on access to medicines that would work with TRIPs and review intellectual property rules as they relate to medicines; and research and development on neglected diseases. The UNION OF INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYERS' CONFEDERATIONS OF EUROPE supported Short's proposal for a broad agenda, which should include investment in order to provide for a more predictable environment for the new round of negotiations. The JAPAN FEDERATION OF ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS also supported a comprehensive round of negotiations that should include investment, and called for the strengthening of WTO rules, particularly those relating to anti-dumping abuses.

The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF FISH AND SHRIMP (ANFACO) said the fishing sector must be addressed, given its impact on coastal populations as well as trade and labor worldwide. The GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (CGT) called for the establishment of universal labor standards throughout the world. He called for the establishment of an ongoing working relationship between the ILO and WTO to establish core labor standards. The INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATIONS stated that the TRIPs Agreement is globalizing research and represents the first global attack on counterfeit drugs. He stated that the problem of the health care system is a problem of development, and called for the establishment of a council to allow for more frequent inter-agency negotiations so that the issues of public health and trade can be brought together. A representative of the EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT called for greater prioritization to be given to the needs of LDCs, emphasizing that the poorest of the LDCs must be given the highest priority.

Stu Eizenstat, US Deputy Treasury Secretary, said that US President Clinton wants a new round of negotiations where developing countries feel that they have a stake in the outcome. He expressed the US' support for a broad-based round that goes beyond agriculture and services and includes, *inter alia*, e-commerce, labor, and biotechnology. He stated that the US also supports a working group on investment, but that given the experience with the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), negotiations on investment are premature.

Chair Alec Erwin summarized the highlights of the morning discussion. He stated that substantial, meaningful and continuous participation by NGOs must occur in their own countries, given the constraints of the

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WTO forum. He said that governments should initiate dialogue with NGOs in their countries and encouraged them to listen to representatives from civil society.

SESSION II - EVOLVING PUBLIC CONCERNS AND THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM

SPEAKERS: Chair Mark van Putten, President of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), opened the second session of the Symposium by stating that the multilateral trading system is in a crisis of plummeting public confidence. He noted that average citizens do not believe that the international trade system reflects their values, including concern for the environment. He emphasized that the Symposium provided a good opportunity to explore the reasons for the erosion of public confidence and begin to address the problems. He stated that the Third WTO Ministerial meeting represents an opportunity to establish public confidence with reform measures including, *inter alia*, the recognition of legitimate national and international environmental standards; the inclusion of environmental assessments in new trade agreements; and the adoption of modern standards of openness in the WTO. He said that the unfulfilled commitments of the Uruguay Round to developing countries must be fulfilled. He offered to work with the business community to create greater openness, transparency and clarity in the WTO.

Yash Tandon, Director of the Southern and Eastern African Trade, Information and Negotiations Initiative (SEATINI), said that NGOs from developing countries as well as developing country governments had failed to protect the values and interests of their countries by agreeing to certain parts of the Uruguay Round agreements. He warned developing country governments not to sign any agreements emerging from the Seattle round without fully understanding what they were signing. He stressed that the lives, food security, health, and basic human rights of the people must be protected.

Tandon further stated that he is not in favor of abolishing the WTO, but suggested that the problem with the WTO is its manipulation by transnational corporations. He said the WTO is an organ of rule-making and enforcement used to centralize and protect corporate capital. He noted that the majority of Member States are effectively excluded from the process of decision making in the WTO. He said that the WTO is based on "collective individualism" – where powerful individual States come together to impose laws on weaker States. He asked members of civil society in developed countries to help monitor developed country governments, who he suggested impose agreements that are iniquitous, illegitimate and forced on developing country governments.

Dr. Eugenio Diaz-Bonilla, Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute, stated that the problem of food security has at least three components: food availability, food access, and food utilization. He said that trade is just one component among many necessary for a country to maintain food security. He noted that indicators of food security have been improving worldwide. He highlighted problems related to food security in some countries, but said these are usually related to non-trade issues such as war, internal conflicts, and weather. He stated that with regard to agriculture, there is a need for investment in human capital, infrastructure and land tenure policies, as well as support for small farmer organizations and the empowerment of women as producers. He underscored that, in order to maintain food

security, it is necessary to have stable economic policies, competitive markets, a vibrant civil society, good governance, rule of law, and peace and reconciliation processes.

Diaz-Bonilla stressed the need to distinguish between good and bad trade policies, with good trade policies being those that increase production in an equitable and sustainable manner. He stated that the Agreement on Agriculture is promoting good trade policies by disciplining bad trade policies such as export subsidies. He said that developing countries should not have to compete against the subsidies of developed countries. He noted that food security requires better treatment of food aid, including levels of food aid that are not counter-cyclical (where food aid is higher when prices are low and lower when prices are high). He called for better structures and methods to target vulnerable countries and vulnerable groups within those countries. He stated that the criteria for net food importing countries is flawed, and called for a better categorization of vulnerability, taking into account consumption, production and other indicators.

Luis de la Calle, Under-Secretary for International Trade Negotiations in Mexico, noted several ways in which the debate on trade and economic development could be more balanced. He said delegates must recognize that trade can make a significant and positive contribution to economic development, but trade alone is not enough. Delegates must pay greater attention to the concerns of developing countries, where the greatest growth will occur in the future. He noted that the experience in the developed and most developing countries has shown that trade makes a significant contribution to increased labor standards and environmental protections and that the reverse should not be assumed. Noting many countries' fears that the WTO could overturn domestic regulations, particularly with respect to environmental and labor standards, he said such domestic rules are accorded deference so long as they are based on scientific principles and are non-discriminatory. He also said that developing countries create an imbalance in the multilateral trading system by refusing to open markets until they have achieved similar standards to those in developed countries.

Claude Martin, Director General of WWF International, stated that multilateral trade rules are necessary to achieve sustainable development, but that those trade rules must engender trust, which will require the WTO to increase its transparency and encourage broader participation from civil society. He said the WTO has started to become more transparent, environmentally sensitive and multilateral over the past few years. He highlighted the recently released WTO report on Trade and Environment as a positive development to this end, noting that: economic growth alone is insufficient to solve environmental problems and that trade varies in its effects on the environment; growth must be translated into higher environmental standards through appropriate policies and regulations; and public accountability and good governance are key to developing appropriate standards and policies. He also noted that the report identifies the importance of international cooperation and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to protect the environment from global and transboundary threats, and he stressed the need to safeguard MEAs from potential WTO challenges to trade restrictions used to implement those MEAs.

Martin said that to achieve reform in the WTO: the process of sustainability assessment must spread to all Members, and developed countries should provide technical assistance to developing countries in

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this regard; win-win scenarios, such as a negotiation of fishery subsidies, must be prioritized in future negotiations; and the WTO must become more transparent.

Yoshiji Nogami, Japanese Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, noted that rapid globalization and technological advancement have created many new issues that are difficult to address within the current multilateral trade framework, and said the WTO must be mindful of countries' and civil society's increased anxiety in this regard. He noted, however, that without the WTO, economic and social disparity between rich and poor countries would be wider. He said the WTO should clarify the relationship between trade and the environment, aiming at a minimum for policies that increase sustainable development.

Concerning agriculture, he said the WTO should consider environmental protection, conservation of the landscape and the maintenance of humane rural communities. He called for discussion of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), particularly with regard to labeling. With regard to technology, he said that no tariffs should be placed on e-commerce.

Lewis Platt, Chairman of Hewlett Packard and Member of the President's Advisory Committee on Trade Policy and Negotiations, noted that technology will continue to have a profound impact worldwide. He further noted that as Internet technologies advance, national borders are becoming less relevant, policy cooperation among governments is becoming more important, and a new framework in which to conduct trade is required. He said the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) is a significant achievement toward promoting IT equipment in that it eliminates tariffs on over US\$600 billion worth of IT goods, covering 95 percent of world IT trade. Regarding e-services, he said the WTO should build on its General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and Basic Telecommunications Agreements to promote competition and innovation among service, equipment and application providers, which will help to expand the infrastructure and services that are needed to give people worldwide greater access to the Internet. With regard to e-commerce, he said the WTO is well-positioned to: extend the WTO moratorium on customs duties for e-commerce; ensure consistency by affirming that current WTO rules apply to e-commerce and extend their reach; continue to identify and eliminate other barriers to e-commerce; extend technical assistance to developing economies; and prevent over-regulation.

DISCUSSION: Following these remarks from the above speakers, the Chair opened the floor for discussion. Klaus Töpfer, UNEP Executive-Secretary, noted that increases in global trade did not lessen but in fact broadened the gap between the rich and the poor. He said that increased trade without improved global, regional and local environmental protections is poor economics. He called for, *inter alia*: better environmental assessment for trade measures as early in the process as possible, linked to technology transfer; a clear position on WTO rules and their impact on MEAs; capacity building in developing countries with regard to the new round of negotiations; the integration of Rio Principle 15 (the precautionary principle) in the negotiations; and eco-labeling on a non-discriminatory basis.

GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL said that it is time to recognize that environmental degradation is a barrier to trade. He called for greater participation by NGOs in the proceedings of the WTO, including the dispute settlement process. The PACIFIC ECONOMIC

COOPERATION COUNCIL said that the challenge in the future is to promote, not discourage technological innovation by enhancing the implementation of the TRIPs Agreement. She emphasized the need to assess the impact of e-commerce and biotechnology innovations on the end-user. The COMMONWEALTH BUSINESS COUNCIL stated that the benefits of globalization depend on greater participation by developing countries. He noted that environmental discussions should not be included in the negotiations because they will act as a barrier to trade and should instead be discussed in specialized fora. The NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FISHERIES CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS (ZENGYOREN) emphasized the importance of sustainable use of fisheries as food sources, and stated that international trade rules should insure the continued existence of fisheries. He said that the most important question is not the existence of fishery subsidies, but whether there are adequate fishery management systems in place. The COALITION OF NGOs FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (COCIS) called on the WTO to enact a citizen's agenda that links trade, human rights and development. He called for the globalization of rights to be enacted in conjunction with the globalization of markets.

The EUROPEAN SERVICES FORUM said that sustainable development is impossible without investment, and called for encouragement of investment in developing countries. The CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF THE ARTS stated that the trade rules used to promote and liberalize goods and services should not be used to regulate the arts. The INFORMATION SOCIETY FORUM stated that the international trading regime should acknowledge the importance of cultural diversity, particularly in the framework of sustainable development. The AFRICAN TRADE NETWORK stated that they were dissatisfied with the dialogue in the Symposium and that imbalances and inequities in the trading regime should be the focus of the negotiations at this WTO Ministerial meeting. She expressed concern that the numerous issues being tabled would shift the focus away from the need to address unfairness in the existing agreements and problems with their implementation. AS YOU SOW called for a more substantive role for NGOs and increased transparency, including increased access to documents along with public review and comment on trade disputes. She said that the issue of GMOs should be kept out of the WTO until it has been addressed in the Biosafety Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The WOMEN'S CAUCUS supported the call for a moratorium on new issues in the WTO and the demand for a comprehensive review of existing agreements. She requested the WTO to undertake the following in order to facilitate gender-equitable citizen involvement: acknowledge and build upon the international agreements and commitments that protect the rights of women in decision-making governance, economic equity, social progress and sustainable development; create effective, open and transparent mechanisms for facilitating ongoing exchange of information between the WTO and women's NGOs and networks; and institute procedures that formalize and strengthen NGOs' ability to consult, debate and participate in WTO processes and to nominate representatives for these processes. CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL noted that none of the WTO Ministerial papers mention consumer protection or consumer policy and said it is impossible to speak of trade without addressing these issues.

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The HUMAN SOCIETY OF THE US said that animal protection policies are a mark of society's ethical foundation. She emphasized that the marketplace is not the proper forum for determining the treatment of animals and that trade is establishing a system whereby economic efficiency trumps all other values. Noting the tuna-dolphin and shrimp-turtle disputes, she said that there has never been a greater threat to animal protection than under the GATT and WTO. She stated that GATT Article 20(a) supports the view that certain social agendas, including animal rights, were intended to fall outside the penumbra of WTO rules.

The NATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON PATENT RIGHTS said that sustainable development must occur over time but that rapid technological change has shortened that time span. He said that such a time span must be defined in order to determine if sustainable development is achievable. The CANADIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION noted the lack of discussion of GATS and noted the importance of services to libraries. He questioned the basis on which health, education, museum archives and libraries have been categorized to commodify not only information but also the process of obtaining information. FOOD ACTION 21 noted the universal importance of agriculture and underscored that food sovereignty, as well as environmental protection and consumer health, should be respected. He said GMOs should be restricted because their safety is not scientifically certain. A representative of KOREAN NGOs called for compulsory labeling of GMOs, the establishment of fair and equitable trade rules that are applied equally to exporting and importing countries, and recognition of the multifunctionality of agreements. The INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS said that countries should have the right to subsidize the creation and production sectors as they see fit. She called for increased debate on the commodification of information, noting that everyone would suffer in a "pay per view world."

Chair van Putten thanked the Symposium participants and warned WTO Members to beware of rising expectations: "You have given us a forum, you heard us; the question is did you listen?" He noted that the next four days of negotiations would reveal whether the suggestions generated from the Symposium had been incorporated in a meaningful way.

CLOSING SESSION

Ali Said Mchumo, Chair of the WTO General Council, concluded the Symposium with a summary of the discussion. He said that the positive interactions between WTO Members and civil society representatives were encouraging. He noted that in the first part of the Symposium, discussion had focused on three areas -- the role of international trade in poverty elimination, the effects of globalization on developing countries, and integration of LDCs into the trading system. He said that the second part of the discussion had broadly addressed three issues -- systemic questions about expanding WTO disciplines, new issues such as the implications of new technological developments, and institutional issues involving WTO transparency and accountability.

Mchumo observed that a number of speakers had emphasized the need for implementation of a comprehensive set of policies in order for trade liberalization to generate broad-based growth. He said many speakers had argued that the implementation of existing agreements was a burden for developing countries and that the WTO should focus

on a review process. He noted that some speakers had urged the adoption of rules on new issues of public concern such as the environment, investment, and labor, while others expressed the view that the WTO is not the forum for such issues, and that social and environmental problems arise from causes other than trade. He noted that transparency and openness in the WTO had been stressed repeatedly. He highlighted the many calls for public participation in the WTO, but also stressed that each Member government bears the responsibility for consulting with its public. He said widespread support had been expressed for increased support to LDCs. He added that some speakers urged that market access be improved, while many pointed out that market access alone is insufficient and more must be done to support LDCs. Mchumo concluded by reiterating that constructive discussion is necessary in addressing all of these issues.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

UN CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

CONSULTATION WITH NGOs: This conference will be held from 12-14 December 1999 in Geneva, in preparation for UNCTAD X. For information, contact: Jo Butler, Chief, UNCTAD Public Affairs Unit, tel: +41-22-917-5048; e-mail: jo.butler@unctad.org.

RESUMED SESSION OF THE FIRST EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE

CBD: This meeting will finalize and adopt a Protocol to the CBD on biosafety and will be held from 24-28 January 2000 in Montreal, Canada. It will be preceded by an informal consultation on the Protocol from 20-22 January 2000. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat, World Trade Center, 393 Jacques St., Suite 300, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2Y 1N9; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org.

OECD CONFERENCE ON THE SCIENTIFIC AND HEALTH ASPECTS OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS:

This conference will take place from 28 February-1 March 2000 in Edinburgh. For more information, contact: Helen Fisher, Media Relations; tel: +33-1-45-24-80-97.

WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT: The WTO CTE will meet on 1 March 2000 in Geneva. For information, contact: WTO Secretariat; tel: +41-22-739-5111; fax: +41-22-739-5458.

TENTH SESSION OF THE UN CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT:

UNCTAD-X will be held from 12-19 February 2000 in Bangkok. The session's theme will be developmental strategies in an increasingly interdependent world. For accreditation and registration before 10 January, contact: Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; fax: +41-22-907-00-56.

EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

CSD-8 will be held from 24 April-5 May 2000 in New York. The session's themes are sustainable agriculture, land resources, finance and trade. Inputs from major group organizations are due by January 1, 2000. For major group information, contact: Zehra Aydin-Sipos, Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-8811; fax: +1-212-963-1267; e-mail: aydin@un.org.