



WTO Public Forum, 25 & 26 September 2006, Geneva

**Work Session:
“G-20 Civil Society Views on WTO”
26 September 2006, 16:30 – 18:00**

*Jointly organized by the
Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES) Geneva Office and
CUTS International, India*

About the WTO Public Forum

The World Trade Organization (WTO) hosts once a year a public forum (formerly public symposium) to discuss current WTO-related topics. Participants come from governments, parliaments, civil society, the business sector, academia and the media. Most of the time during the Public Forum is reserved for governments, civil society and parliamentarians to organize their own events in the form of work sessions on key subjects. This year, FES and CUTS International are jointly organizing the work session “G-20 Civil Society Views on WTO”.

A Brief Background

The G-20 is a group of developing countries and was established on 20 August 2003, a few weeks prior to fifth Ministerial Conference of the WTO, held in Cancun, from 10 to 14 September 2003. The Group was born to try, as it did, to avoid a predetermined result at Cancun and to open up a space for negotiations in agriculture. In that occasion, the Group’s main objective was to defend an outcome in the agricultural negotiations which would reflect the level of ambition of the Doha mandate and the interests of the developing countries.

The Group has a wide and balanced geographical representation, being currently integrated by 21 countries: 5 from Africa (Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe), 6 from Asia (China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand) and 10 from Latin America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela).

Since its establishment, the G-20 has generated great interest, and raised expectations among many poor countries of the South. Despite attempts to divide this formidable alliance of G-20, the group has gained strength and now universally recognised as an essential interlocutor in the agricultural negotiations. The G-20 alliance of WTO members played a major role in placing a united voice of the South at the negotiating table.

The civil society organisations from G-20 countries too played an important role in raising the concerns of the poor and thereby influencing the positions of G-20 on agricultural negotiations in the WTO. Both at the Cancun Ministerial in 2003 and at the Hong Kong Ministerial in December 2005, the civil society’s role were crucial in influencing the outcome. Since G-20 will continue to be an important player in trade negotiations, the role of civil society too becomes important. Therefore, in order to better understand the existing mechanism through which the civil society organisations from G-20 countries are engaged in multilateral trade negotiations, the panel discussion proposes to throw lights on following issues:

- to highlight the G-20 civil society perspectives on the G-20 position in the WTO, on their respective governments' position and on their power to influence them at present;
- to identify the main challenges, the G-20 civil society organizations are facing in the dialogue with their governments, other WTO groupings (such as G-33 or G-90) and inside the G-20 grouping itself;
- to discuss the role and perspective of G-20 civil society organizations in influencing the G-20's and their respective governments' positions in the WTO of the XXIst Century to strengthen the voice of the people in developing countries.

Venue: WTO, Rue de Lausanne 154, Ch – 1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland, Room (to be specified) with a capacity of 280 people.

Speakers

Moderation:

Dr. Thomas Manz, Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES), Dialogue on Globalization, Berlin.

Panelists:

- Umberto Celli, idcid Brazil
- Dr. Mzukisi Qobo, Research Associate, SAIIA, South Africa
- Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International, India,

Commentary:

Ricardo Melendez-Ortiz, Chief Executive, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), Geneva.

Language: English

Organizers

Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES) Geneva Office

The Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation is a German Political Foundation, non-profit organization and largely public funded. FES strives to promote political participation, social justice and international understanding. The FES Geneva Office works on trade and development, international labour issues and human rights, conducting policy analysis, research and capacity building.

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CUTS International, India

CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment, established in 1996, aims to be a high-level global standard institution for research and advocacy on multilateral trade and sustainable development issues.

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