



The South FACE

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WTO Public Forum 2007: "Global Trade Governance and the Role of the South: *Theory and Practice in Enhancing the Development-Friendliness of the Doha Round*"

Co-Organized by the South Centre, Geneva
and the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi
5 October 2007, WTO Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland

This two-part panel event brings together academic and practitioners to discuss how the rapidly changing context of global geopolitical and economic relations should be addressed, namely through more active role of the South within global economic governance institutions such as the WTO and improving the ability of the WTO to facilitate Southern participation in its governance processes.

Part I :
9 – 11 am

Vicente Paolo Yu (GGDP Coordinator, South Centre):

'The terms of engagement for developing countries in WTO governance must be improved in order to remedy power and process asymmetries in the system. An asymmetric world is not sustainable. We need to reflect the changing global context and the increasing role of the South in global affairs in the institutions that govern our world.'



Dr. Nagesh Kumar (Director-General, RIS):



'Developing countries, as members of coalitions, have obtained credible veto power. But there is still along way to go in becoming equal partners in the decision-making process at the WTO. They should become agenda setters and bring issues proactively to the table. Individual developing countries do not count anywhere, but in coalitions we can make a difference. Solidarity between the coalitions can increase the effectiveness of developing countries in asserting their interests and priorities.'

H.E. Dr. A.M Maruping (Lesotho Ambassador, LDC-Group Coordinator):

‘Coalitions form because they are a necessary response to the need to survive. In the case of the LDCs, common objectives and common cause bring them together. Also, pooling resources allows for synergy and symbiosis. Coalition-building creates a louder voice. You will remember *Gulliver’s Travels*, where the small people were well-coordinated and could tie down the giant.’



Dr. Carolyn Deere (Global Trade Governance Project, Oxford University):

‘The debate on governance reform at the WTO is dominated by developed-country lawyers in particular. Developing country scholars do not receive significant attention although they do important work...



.....Developing countries are in the WTO because it helps them manage power asymmetries in their trade relations. Asymmetries arise in many instances, and there are several different kinds of power that developing countries encounter including discursive

power. Through the system a set of ideas permeate and dominate over time. When thinking about power asymmetries it is important for developing countries to challenge the dominant discourse about how trade can or cannot be useful for them.’

Dr. Manfred Elsig (World Trade Institute, University of Bern):

‘Coalitions are about information exchange and empowerment. These coalitions (the G20, G77, etc.) must move, however, from defensive to offensive positions – from blocking to engaging -- and must focus also on increasing the trust within and among coalitions. There is a lack of trust. Can big developing countries really represent your position? If you want to exert influence, North-South coalitions, interstate and with NGOs, are also important.’



The South Face is a service provided by South Centre (An Inter-Governmental Organization and Think-Tank of South) to provide space to voices and opinions of the South on global issues.

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