

The South FACE

An Event Reporting Service of the South Centre

Available online at: www.southcentre.org/southface/index.html

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.

5 October Part II: 16 :30 – 18 :30 Dr. Nagesh Kumar (Director-General, Research and Information Systems for Developing Countries, India):

'Developing country coalitions have strengthened themselves by coordinating

positions with other coalitions. We have come a long way since 2003 when the developing countries first got together as the G20 to respond to the EU-US joint submission on agriculture. Developing countries have realized the virtues of negotiating together. What is



most striking is that developing countries have been able to rise above narrow national considerations to work towards solidarity and shared interests to shape the whole trading system, thus leveling the playing field as they begin setting the agenda. This is a great opportunity for a trading regime that is truly development-friendly.'

H.E. Mr. Faizal Ismail (NAMA 11 Coordinator, South Africa):



'We inside the system, the developing countries, believe that the Doha Agenda is an agenda not only for the immediate resolution of developing country concerns but also of a future vision of what a truly fair, balanced, and developmentoriented multilateral trade regime could be. If there wasn't a WTO we would want to create one. Because in today's world we are trying to build better systems of global governance

and better rules to manage trade and globalization so that we can share the benefits of globalization. And we as developing countries are not afraid to engage.

One of the important lessons and signs of hope of the last few years is that developing countries have been able to organize, develop technical capacity and share it amongst

themselves, and negotiate quite effectively in many cases to prevent unfair deals, and to put on the agenda issues which have been carried forward. For example most of the concepts put forward by the G20 have been carried forward and it is seen as the bridge builder—as a group that everyone else must move towards. This is a tremendous advance.'

Mr. Mayur Patel (Global Trade Governance Project, Oxford University):



'Coalition bargaining seems set to continue as the dominant means of structuring developing country participation in the WTO largely due to the benefits of pooling resources and the limited capacity of individual developing countries to engage the institution. However, specific features will change over time. Regional based coalitions could become more unified if the regional-integration process continues to strengthen. Block Coalitions may dissipate as they may find it more

difficult to establish positions when the bargaining moves from establishing a broad framework for negotiations to drilling in on specific modalities, sectors, and issue-areas. New issue-area coalitions are likely to arise as the agenda of the WTO shifts focus over time. At a broader level, what we are witnessing is that by forming their own group structures and interactions, developing countries are fundamentally changing and disrupting the old ways of doing business in global institutions, not just here at the WTO, but also at the IMF and UN bodies.

Vicente Paolo Yu (Global Governance for Development Coordinator, South Centre):

'The increased use of group action as a governance adaptation mechanism by developing countries has led to an ideational shift in how developing countries perceive the WTO. More clearly they have been able to articulate the kind of WTO they would like to see. The effect of that kind of synergy between adaptive action and the shaping of the



substantive agenda has been that you see a marked improvement in the extent of developing country participation with their groups and a stronger ability to influence WTO decision making, not least in the fact that you have stronger and more clearly articulated development content as part of the agenda. Whether or not that will bear fruit remains to be seen, but at least the seeds are there, and I think those seeds will only grow because developing countries are now realizing that success in WTO negotiations lies in developing countries working together.

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.

Select presentations may also become available on South Centre Digital TV.

http://www.SouthCentre.org

For more information on this Service and how you can use it to cover events organized by your organization, please contact:

Mr. Vikas Nath, Head - Media and Communications, South Centre - Geneva

nath@southcentre.org Tel: +41 22 791 8050

This edition of "South Face" is produced by Andrew Breidenbach, South Centre, Geneva