

STOP THE WTO's DOHA "DEVELOPMENT" ROUND AND OTHER "FREE TRADE" NEGOTIATIONS

by Our World Is Not For Sale
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We call upon civil society organizations and social movements from around the world to join with us in showing their strong, united and unequivocal opposition to the completion of the World Trade Organization's trade "round", and other bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements being forced on people by governments. We are committed to campaigning together to stop these negotiations, which ignore the needs of developing countries, the peoples of the world and the environment, and promote corporate globalization. We agree to mobilize, nationally and internationally, in late April, mid May and late July, to ensure our voices are heard as governments meet for the WTO's scheduled General Council meetings.

When the WTO was established in 1995, its stated purpose was to increase prosperity and employment, reduce poverty and inequality, and promote sustainable development around the world, through greater "free trade". After more than ten years, it is now clear that the WTO has not delivered on these goals. Indeed, it has had exactly the opposite results. Under the guise of "free trade", WTO rules are being used to take away peoples' basic rights "to safe and secure supplies, decent livelihoods and access to essential services such as water, health care, and education" transferring control over these matters to transnational corporations. At the moment:

- livelihoods are being destroyed, human rights ignored, public health endangered, the environment plundered and democratic systems eroded
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- local economies are being undermined, with workers, peasants, family farmers, fishers, consumers, women and indigenous peoples being especially disadvantaged and exploited and
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- governments' ability to guarantee access to the essentials of life, promote health, safety and food sovereignty, and to protect cultural and biological diversity is being undermined and sometimes eliminated.
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Indeed, the impacts of the WTO are so severe that it already faces broad and increasing resistance around the world. As a result, the United States and the European Union are also promoting their economic interests by pushing hard to establish multiple bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). But these are also meeting strong opposition. The regional FTAA (Free Trade Agreements of the Americas) has ground to a halt, in the face of increasing resistance in the Americas. Several national governments have acknowledge the disastrous effects that such an agreement would have on their economies, environments and public health, and have refused to sign on.

WTO agreements and the FTAs are designed to serve the interests of transnational corporations and national elites and are in direct conflict with peoples' interests. We have to stop countries from signing these agreements. We believe another world is possible!

At the WTO's Sixth Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, held in December 2005, a highly contested Ministerial Declaration was pushed through at the insistence of the US and the EU. Now these same governments are trying to strong arm weaker governments into opening up their markets to foreign trade while they themselves make as few

commitments as possible. By July 2006, the WTO wants all member states to agree on "modalities", in order to set the stage for the final phase of negotiations, before the US's internal "fast track" trade negotiating authority expires, in July 2007.

But we the people from around the world, acting together, can stop the WTO! There is already sharp disagreement among governments over the negotiations and we can build upon that. Now is the time to show governments, as forcefully as we can, that we will not put up with any further selling-out of our interests and welfare.

These WTO and FTA negotiations are really about

- Opening up local agriculture to unfair competition from corporate agriculture
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- Preventing countries from protecting their local industries and natural environment
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- Losing the right to control financial services and essential human services like health care, education and water

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We say "Let the People Decide" not governments negotiating on behalf of transnational corporations.Â Stop the negotiations. Take these proposals to every village square and see what the people have to say about these proposed trade agreements.

Increased mobilization and action of civil society movements around the world is necessary! We must begin today.Â Our voices must be heard in the coming critical months. We will write letters, meet with our negotiators and take to the streets if we have to, so that our countries will not sell out our communities, our peoples and our environment.

We believe in a global economy built on the principles of economic justice, ecological sustainability and democratic accountability, an economy that asserts the interests of people, not transnational corporations. We are promoting the development of vibrant local economies that support the rights of all people, including workers, peasants, migrants, family farmers, consumers, women, and indigenous people. In short, we demand a new, socially just and ecologically sustainable international framework for the 21st Century that allows local communities and economies to strengthen themselves and makes international trade respond to the needs of all people.

We are committed to telling our trade negotiators that this is the world we want and that they should represent our interests! And we are committed to working in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world in civil society organization and social movements, to make our voice heard.

If you want to sign on to this call to action or if you want more information regarding WTO and organizations working around the free-trade agenda you can go to www.ourworldisnotforsale.org

If you need more information on the bilateral and regional free trade agreements you can also go to www.bilaterals.org

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source: <http://www.ourworldisnotforsale.org/en/signon/stop-wto-s-doha-development-round-and-other-free-trade-negotiations> Â