

VOICES FROM THE SOUTH

E-Newsletter -October 2013

THE
KARIBU
FOUNDATION

Founded in 1985, the Karibu Foundation is an independent foundation that supports voices from the Global South who provide alternatives to the dominant paradigms of power, distribution, and development.

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Stop Expansion of the WTO! Call to Action for World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Bali

In December 2013, official delegations from around the world will meet in Bali, Indonesia for the 9th World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference. The Ministerial is the topmost decision-making body of the WTO, and the main topic on the agenda in Bali will focus on the future of the so-called "Doha Development Round," a series of trade negotiations that have been stalled since 2008. While a vast majority of countries in the Global South have called for the abandonment of the Doha rounds and for the correction of imbalances within the existing WTO structures, many wealthy countries continue to push aside such demands, instead focusing on corporate interests and the expansion of global trade rules that rule in the favor of world's most wealthy.

This month's "Voices from the South" highlights a number of excerpts from the Call to Action on the Bali Ministerial from Karibu partner Our World Is Not For Sale (OWINFS). The Call to Action focuses on three main demands: 1.) the ending of the expansion of the WTO, 2.) the necessity for an alternative trade agenda, and 3.) the need for a change in Global Trade Systems that will works for the rights of the global 99%.

By: Our World Is Not For Sale

(Excerpts/edited for brevity)

For twenty years, people and the environment have suffered enormously from a powerful assault on our basic needs and rights via free trade agreements. The World Trade Organization (WTO) and numerous Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) have been used by large corporations to impose policies that destroy jobs and livelihoods, undermine access to affordable medicine and essential services, trash the environment and impose numerous policies that undermine our future.

The WTO imposes over governments'

own policies a corporate wish list of damaging intellectual property, investment and agricultural rules and constraints on the health, financial, food safety, environmental and other regulations on which we all rely. The WTO includes an enforcement system that has the power to penalize countries, taking away the policy space of governments and forcing them to change their national policies affecting access to medicines, food and water; economic development; control over natural resources; financial stability; energy; and more.

From the streets of Seattle, massive protests in Cancun (2003) and Hong Kong (2005), and through years of



Our World is Not For Sale (OWINFS) is a network of organizations, activists and social movements worldwide fighting the current model of corporate globalization embodied in global trading system. OWINFS is committed to a sustainable, socially just, democratic and accountable multilateral trading system. For more information, visit: ourworldisnotforsale.org



relentless campaigning in many countries against the Doha Round's attack on jobs, food security and more, until today peoples power has prevented the conclusion of the Doha Round and stopped the WTO's expansion.

Ensuring that the Doha Round is not revived is critical to safeguard these past victories and to fight back against the renewed onslaught of corporate globalization, which is also represented by the new wave of bilateral and regional FTAs all over the world.

The future of the WTO will be decided at the December 3-6 Bali WTO Ministerial meeting. Only by taking action in each of our countries to hold our governments accountable and by showing our power in Bali, can we stop WTO expansion and begin to dismantle the catastrophic regime of "free trade" agreements.

Stop the new attempt to expand the WTO in Bali

Developed countries have broken their Doha Round pledge to negotiate on key developing country

issues and have removed from the agenda the "development mandate" issues intended to correct the severe problems in existing WTO rules. This includes opposing: a proposal by the G33, a group of 46 developing countries, to allow developing countries to subsidize poor farmers to grow food for their populations at risk of hunger; a simple package of policies to allow least developing countries to improve the results of their participation in global trade; and a proposal to provide "special and differential treatment" to developing countries recognizing that they cannot succeed under the same rules as the rich developed countries.

Instead, the developed countries have re-packaged the same liberalization and market access demands by their corporations on developing countries that have been rejected repeatedly by the developing country WTO members. This includes an agreement on Trade Facilitation, which would require developing countries to prioritize their financial and technological resources on facilitating more im-

ports from developed countries. Not only would this mean fewer resources for national health, education and employment goals, but it would undermine the economies of developing countries with a new flood of imports.

Developed countries have also launched negotiations on their post-Bali corporate agenda. This includes expansion of an existing WTO plurilateral Information Technology Agreement (ITA). Expanding the ITA would restrict the ability of poor countries to develop key job-creation industries.

They have also launched plurilateral negotiations on a radical services FTA called the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) that would result in the deregulation and liberalization of many private-sector and public services in developing and developed countries alike. ..These two agreements represent more of the failed model of liberalization and deregulation, which civil society organizations in both, developed and developing countries have long opposed.

We need a very different kind of trade framework, one that guarantees human rights above corporate interests; one that preserves the sovereignty of the states, especially of the weakest; one that defends at the forefront, health, food, jobs and one that treats nature with respect and care. A world without the WTO, FTAs, BITs and the free trade regime is possible and necessary!

“We must ensure that the Bali WTO Ministerial meeting does not approve a dangerous expansion of the corporate agenda. Instead, a new equitable and complementary trade framework must be developed that has peoples and nature's rights at its heart.”



Our call is to stop the expansion of the WTO in Bali, and strengthen the global movement to put an end to this free trade regime.

We demand:

- **No WTO Expansion!** In the lead up to the Bali WTO Ministerial, governments must reject a Trade Facilitation agreement and insist on an end to negotiations the other agreements that expand WTO policies, such as the proposed ITA and TISA.
- **WTO Turnaround!** Instead, governments must agree to begin to dismantle the overreaching WTO rules to ensure the required policy space for countries to address key issues such as food, health, jobs, financial stability, climate change and nature.

This alternative agenda is identified in the WTO Turnaround 2013: Food, Jobs and Development First! Statement. And, governments must approve the proposal of developing countries on Food Security, and a strong package of proposals for Least Developed Countries which have been long identified as the priority by de-

veloping countries.

- **Change the Global Trade System!** The global trade framework must work for the 99%. Failed institutions like the WTO, and FTAs and BITs, must be replaced with a new system that disciplines corporations, while providing countries sufficient policy space to pursue a positive agenda for sustainable development and job-creation, food security, access to affordable healthcare and medicines, and global financial stability. ■

Endorsers as of October 28, 2013 include major international networks including the ACP Civil Society Forum, the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), Asian Peasant Coalition (APC), ATTAC Europe, Caribbean Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), LDC Watch, Pacific Network on Globalization (PANG), Public Services International (PSI), South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE), and Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC), along with national coalitions and organizations from 105 countries.

More information:

To read the full “Call to Action,” visit:

<http://karibu.no/upload/voices/OWINFSCalltoActiononWTO-2013ENGLISH.pdf>

To read the “WTO Turnaround Statement,” visit:

<http://karibu.no/upload/voices/OWINFSWTO-Statement2013ENGLISH.pdf>

Photos: Courtesy of “Our World Is Not For Sale”

