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Newsletter 85- page 1(1)
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Sand in the wheels

Weekly newsletter - n°85 – Wednesday 13 June 2001.

DON'T MISS THE BUS

Content

1- Good Havens! – ATTAC may put the writing on the wall

A point of view from a Jersey person on the situation made public by ATTAC demonstrating in the island last Saturday. All is not good even in a haven, especially for the locals as the industry, the housing, culture and agriculture seemed to have failed I a big void made of secret deposits and foreign money.

2- Good Havens! – To conclude for now

After a day of mobilizations in Andorra but also in Jersey, ATTAC France Secretary general conclude this day of actions showing its importance as a start but also as a part of a broader campaign. One of the results of the day is the creation of ATTAC Jersey, more than a symbol, the consequence of a drastic difference between the official speeches and the day to day reality of the population.

3- Demands of the IMF & World Bank: 2001

The following demands are being circulated for endorsement in advance of the mobilization at the IMF/World Bank annual meetings in Washington, DC in September/October 2001.

4- Genoa – Don't miss the bus

*This July a red London bus will be traveling from Leeds via London and Paris to Italy for the G8 summit in Genoa. Its mission - to call the leaders of the G8 countries to sign a *New Deal* on debt in Genoa as part of the Drop The Debt campaign (a successor to Jubilee 2000).*

5- Africa and International Trade

From the 24 – 28 of May, 2001, we the under mentioned civil society organisations from West, Eastern, Southern, Northern Africa, and the Middle East met in Accra, Ghana. Our objective was to discuss the pressing challenges facing the people in African and other developing countries in the global economic system, and to develop a framework of activities for civil society organisations to confront these challenges.

6- WTO Tidbits

Dissension within the EU, on textiles, and on the launch of a new Round at Doha; the US favour Quad discussions on a new Round - on conditions! No agreement in sight on the Doha agenda. Developing countries demand an impact study before proceeding with services liberalisation; some among them favour a safeguard mechanism capable of being activated in emergency situations

7- ATTAC Finland

The founding event of Attac Finland in the house of the Finnish-Swedish Workers' Institute of Helsinki on May 19-20, 2001, marked the end of a long "incubation period".

Goods Havens! – ATTAC may put the writing on the wall

By Adrian Walton

ATTAC's demonstration in Jersey seems to have been organized in the wrong place. Perhaps Whitehall or Threadneedle Street would have been more suitable. The City of London's uses most of Britain 'feudal and colonial remnants' as tax havens, as do the Dutch their islands in the West



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Indies with the aid of laws undreamt of in the Code Napoleon.

This has been done with the connivance of successive national governments in their national interests. These national governments bear the responsibility of possibly unwinding these arrangements in the future as well as compensating their dependencies for the loss of revenue.

However, offshore finance has been a mixed blessing for Jersey, causing overdevelopment, overpopulation, and the squeezing out of many of the bona fide local population – a kind of bloodless ethic cleansing over the years, on the one hand to the highest bidder and on the other hand to the willingly exploited.

The recently published Island Plan continues the trend over the decades of potentially ineffective policies (measured, it is noted, in acres rather than in vergées – so much for Jersey's heritage) which will not answer the plight of locals until there is a possible cutback in the finance industry.

Perhaps ATTAC's demonstration will represent 'the writing on the wall'. However, it will be some time before the EU or the OECD get their act together. By all means 'make hay while the sun shines', but prudence demands that a start should be made to adjusting to a new situation. Top of the list should be a transfer to indirect taxation, a halt on property development other than for basic housing and a selective payroll tax on the finance industry.

Adrian Walton
Le Pré, Rue des Raisies, St Martin.

Goods Havens! – To conclude for now

By Pierre Tartakowsky

Speech given the evening of 9th June in Saint Malo

After having evoked the events of the day in Andorra, Pierre Tartakowsky picks up on what the delegation did, said and noted in Jersey.

" we were subjected to a welcoming that was at once extraordinarily courteous and distrustful; courteous were the police who assured us their "protection" throughout the day; courteous were the people in charge who "flanked" our comings and goings; courteous were the authorities who received us in delegation. The distrust had been

maintained at the same level as the "courtesy"; limited movements, continual warnings. This distrust was found in the words of the children " Have you come to take our money? Are you going to fight" and in the presence - discreet but real - of the forces of repression specially imported from Scotland.

We also encountered solidarity and fear, these being in the residents of Jersey who took responsibility for the delegation's picnic, the residents of Jersey who came to thank us for coming, emphasising the demanding side - to say no more - of the island's political life.

And, within this framework, I'm happy to announce the creation of Attac Jersey.

Our delegation was received by Colin Powell. We were hardly surprised by the exchanges we had. We presented Attac, explained that we obviously didn't have anything specifically against Jersey and its inhabitants, but, on the other hand, the existence of tax havens shocked our sense of social justice. That we intended, that very day, to draw the attention of public opinion and that of the governments to their existence, and their role of kingpin in financial globalization, a role that we consider deeply deleterious.

Our interlocutors kept, in general, to the agreed topics, picking up the arguments that they had developed before the OECD. These arguments contain two essential points: On the one hand, there are in existence some tax havens which are problematic, and others which are not; some which feel bad , some good about themselves; some "co-operative" and some " delinquent". It would be useless to precise in which category our interlocutors place themselves. On the other hand, the stakes being global, global solutions are called for, that is to say the definition of new legal frameworks, new criteria to be imposed on all offshore, and other havens. While waiting for this agenda to be formalised, it is extremely complicated to establish other, less offending practices

That is what we replied when we agreed with the idea that we were effectively dealing with global stakes which call for global solutions. But, that it was necessary to begin somewhere; and that if we were sensitive to all "moralistic" progression, aiming at black market money, then we didn't intend to stop there; that the "grey market" capital, that of the large companies, the great fortunes, which is feeding speculation and



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corruption, was not free from social interpellation. And that the greatest achievement of tax havens basically lies in the achievement of tax havens themselves.

In the same way, we were able to subscribe to their vow of "better information", but on the condition that this information be developed with procedures, controls and a participation of the "civic society". That the matters in question being too important to be left in the hands of bankers of governors of tax havens.

What lessons can be drawn from all that and from our day of action?

The first is that we were right in doing it; we succeeded in transforming a debate of experts, a technical debate, into a public and political debate. In a very short time, we have raised the level of the debate and of public demands.

It is one reason to continue to develop our "Tobin now" campaign, with, notably, the letters to be sent to the banks.

The second, which we learnt from the very eyes of our interlocutors; we are on the offensive and they are on the defensive ; they fear conflict and they detest us shouting in their faces. In other words, this should become our plan of action in the weeks and months to come.

Because, we truly intend to continue. Perhaps in Luxembourg the next time?

In the weeks to come, there will not be a lack of occasions to denounce the role of the havens; all our campaigns that deal with debt, the Tobin tax, that deal with international trade, concern tax havens, as with the free trade zones.

The stand is now given to Frank Norman, descendant and resident of Jersey, then to the representatives of Attac Poland and Attac Belgium, the latter presenting the perspectives of action linked to the Belgian European presidency.

Translation: Tony Savill, volunteer translation
coordinat@attac.org

Demands of the IMF & World Bank: 2001

By 50 Years is Enough

These demands have been formulated by the 50 Years Is Enough Network, a U.S.-based coalition

of over 200 organizations committed to the fundamental transformation of the IMF and World Bank, through consultations over 15 months with the members of its South Council (representing economic justice organizations in 13 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean) and others.

To endorse these demands, please send e-mail to demands50years@yahoo.com and include your organization's name and location as well as contact information. Endorsements may also be sent by fax to +1-202-636-4238 or by post to 3628 12th Street, N.E. - Washington, DC 20017 USA.

50 Years Is Enough: U.S. Network for Global Economic Justice

DEMANDS of the IMF & WORLD BANK: 2001

We call for the immediate suspension of the policies and practices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Group that have caused widespread poverty, inequality, and suffering among the world's peoples and damage to the world's environment. We assert the responsibility of these institutions, together with the World Trade Organization, for an unjust world economic system. We note that these institutions are anti-democratic, controlled by the G-7 governments, and that their policies have benefited international private sector financiers, transnational corporations, and corrupt officials and politicians.

We further call for the creation of a neutral and credible "Truth Commission," composed of individuals with a demonstrated commitment to poverty eradication, to investigate the actions and impacts of the IMF and the World Bank. The Truth Commission's findings must be respected and acted on by the governments, institutional officials, and civil society organizations concerned with economic development and international financial policies.

We issue this call in the name of global justice, in solidarity with the peoples of the Global South and the former "Soviet bloc" countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia who struggle for survival and dignity in the face of unjust, imperialistic economic policies. We stand in solidarity too with the millions in the countries of the Global North who have borne the burden of "globalization" policies that mirror those imposed on the Global South.

Only when the coercive powers of the international financial institutions are eliminated shall



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governments be accountable first and foremost to the will of their peoples. Only when a system that allocates power chiefly to the wealthiest nations for the purpose of dictating policies to the weaker and impoverished ones is reversed shall peoples be able to forge bonds -- economic and otherwise -- based on mutual respect and the common needs of the planet and its inhabitants. Only when integrity is restored to economic development, and both the corrupter and the corrupted held accountable, shall the people begin to have confidence in the decisions that have impacts on their livelihoods and their communities. Only when the well-being of all, including the most vulnerable peoples and ecosystems, is given priority over corporate profits can we achieve genuine sustainable development and create a world of justice, equality, and peace where fundamental human rights, including internationally-recognized social, cultural, environmental, and economic rights, are respected.

With these ends in mind, we make the following demands of the management, Executive Directors, and Governors of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund:

1. **DEBT CANCELLATION:** We demand that the IMF and World Bank cancel 100% of all claimed debts without imposing any form of external conditionalities. We concur with the position of Jubilee South that holds these debts to be illegitimate. Any funds required for this purpose should come from positive net capital and assets held by those institutions. Should other institutions, such as the African Development Bank, require assistance to write off the debts owed them, we call on the World Bank and IMF to make such funds available. We believe that civil society in the indebted countries should take the lead in determining how savings realized through cancellation are utilized.

2. **END STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT:** We demand that the IMF and World Bank immediately cease imposing the economic austerity measures known as structural adjustment and/or any other macroeconomic "reform" as conditions of loans, credits, or debt relief. This requires both the suspension of those conditions in existing programs and an abandonment of "poverty reduction strategy papers" (PRSPs) and any version of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, which conditions debt relief on policy reforms.

3. **TRANSPARENCY:** We demand that the IMF and World Bank Group make all board meetings public

and all documents in its possession freely available to the public (with exceptions to protect confidentiality to be decided on by a neutral body). This includes all project and program agreements, board meeting minutes, evaluations of program failures and successes, etc. All documents must be made available in the local languages of project- and policy- affected peoples.

4. **REPARATIONS FOR STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT:** We demand that the IMF and World Bank accept responsibility for the disastrous impact of structural adjustment policies, as determined by a neutral and credible Truth Commission, by paying reparations to the peoples and communities who have borne the consequences. These funds should come from the institutions' positive net capital and assets, and should be distributed through democratically-determined mechanisms.

5. **REPARATIONS FOR SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVASTATION:** We demand that the World Bank Group pay reparations to peoples relocated and otherwise harmed by its large projects (such as dams) and compensate governments for loan repayments made on projects which World Bank evaluations rank as economic failures. A further evaluation by a neutral and credible Truth Commission should determine which World Bank projects have failed on economic, social, cultural, and environmental grounds, and see that appropriate compensation is made. The funds for these payments should come from the institutions' positive net capital and assets, and should be distributed through democratically-determined mechanisms.

6. **STOP AID TO PRIVATE SECTOR:** (a) We demand that the World Bank Group immediately cease providing advice and resources to advance the goals associated with corporate globalization, such as privatization and liberalization; (b) We demand that the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guaranty Agency (MIGA) be privatized or closed, and that private-sector investments currently held by these World Bank agencies be liquidated to provide funds for the reparations demanded above.

7. **ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CORRUPTION:** We demand that the agencies and individuals within the World Bank Group and IMF complicit in abetting corruption, as well as their accomplices in borrowing countries and in private banks, be prosecuted, with full cooperation from the institutions, and that those responsible, including the institutions, recover and return stolen wealth



and provide compensation for unrecoverable stolen resources. We call for a neutral and credible Truth Commission to assess the culpability of the various parties to corruption and stolen wealth.

8. ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONS' FUTURE: We demand that the future existence, structure, and policies of multilateral institutions such as the World Bank Group and the IMF be submitted to a re-evaluation conducted through a democratic, participatory and transparent process, building on the findings of a neutral and credible Truth Commission. The process must accord full participation to the peoples most affected by the policies and practices of the institutions, and include a significant and influential role for all parts of civil society, including farmers' associations, trade unions, women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, faith-based groups, and student/youth organizations.

The accession to these demands would require the institutions' directors to accept and act on the need for fundamental transformation. It is possible that the elimination of these institutions will be required for the realization of global economic and political justice.

We commit to work towards the defunding of the IMF and World Bank by opposing further government allocations to them (in the form of either direct contributions or the designation of collateral) and supporting campaigns such as a boycott of World Bank bonds until these demands have been met.

Endorse these Demands! e-mail:
demands50years@yahoo.com fax: +1-202-636-4238 post: 3628 12th Street, N.E. – Washington, DC 20017 USA

Genoa – Don't miss the bus

By Dontmissthebus

We are leaving Leeds on 12th July and travelling to London for a big send off from Trafalgar Square. From the 13th we will be travelling to Genoa. Our journey plans are quite flexible to some extent. As long as there are no steep hills en route, our old bus may have difficulties! We will travel via Paris and the south of France aiming to arrive in Paris on 14th/15th July.

We have a website- www.dontmissthebus.com

We also have an e-petition (please see the website). It would be great if the e-petition could be publicised and passed on to as many people as possible. The e-petition is designed to raise awareness of the Drop the Debt' campaign.

It would be great if you could help publicise our bus journey to Genoa in France and meet us. For further information please contact, Joanna Brown on email at: jozart@lineone.net

"Debt cancellation must go deeper and be delivered more quickly."
Nelson Mandela, February 2001

Who?

A group of eight folks from Leeds, Lincolnshire, London and Uganda.

What?

Traveling on board a 40 year old Red London Routemaster bus with a maximum speed of 40 mph.

Where?

From Leeds, via London and Paris, to the G8 summit in Genoa.

When?

Departure: 12th July 2001

Arrival: 21st July 2001

Why?

To join with people from across the globe to call on the World's leaders to adopt a "New Deal on Debt" as proposed by the Drop The Debt campaign (a successor organisation to Jubilee 2000).

Get to Genoa

Get on the bus and go
Ask Rosa Parks she will know
Someone must speak
Even rivers have a source
And mountains a peak
Someone must stand
Raise a hand
Point to the sun.

The desert squeezes water out of a rock
stands aside as if to mock
Burying oases under sand
Little children reach for a mirage.
So when someone raises a hand
Like the Jubilee 2000 band
God in Heaven moves



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Mercy and Peace fly down like doves.

Get on the bus and go
Believe that what you sow
Will grow and shower much fruit
And the Lord will say:
I was helpless and you walked my way
I was hungry and you fed me
I was injured and you paid the hospital fee
Get on the bus and pray.

We demand for more
Drop the debt; release the children to the fore
Wear the mantle of justice
That the tongueless may announce
the crippled bounce
the chains be broken
and our children be free.

(Susan Kiguli 2001)

Africa and International Trade

By Third World Network-Africa

From the 24 – 28 of May, 2001, we the under mentioned civil society organisations from West, Eastern, Southern, Northern Africa, and the Middle East met in Accra, Ghana. Our objective was to discuss the pressing challenges facing the people in African and other developing countries in the global economic system, and to develop a framework of activities for civil society organisations to confront these challenges. We paid particular attention to the World Trade Organisation, the Cotonou Agreement, and the US –Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, and the dangers they pose to the democratic rights and development of African economies and the equitable needs of their peoples. In relation to these, we have deliberated upon the following issues and reached the following conclusions.

The WTO

Agreements, processes and the institution of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are imbalanced against African and other developing countries. In essence, the agreements (in particular on agriculture, TRIMS, TRIPS, services) serve principally to prise open markets for the benefit of transnational corporations at the expense of national economies, workers, farmers, women and other groups in the developing world, and the environment. The WTO system, rules and procedures are undemocratic, untransparent and non-accountable and have operated to marginalize

the majority of the people of Africa and the world's people.

Those governments that dominate the WTO, and that, together with the transnational corporations have benefited from the WTO system, have refused to recognise and address these problems. Instead, they have been pushing for further liberalisation through the introduction of new issues for adoption in the WTO.

Thousands of civil society groups from Africa and all over the world have continued to campaign against the inequities of the WTO system, and the system of global economic regulation represented by it.

Before and during the failed Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Seattle, African civil society groups joined thousands of civil society groups the world over to oppose the use of the Ministerial Conference to launch a new round of comprehensive liberalisation, demanding instead, a turnaround of the global system. Since Seattle, civil society organisations the world over have continued to campaign to take out of the WTO, issues that do not belong to its sphere, as well as to revise existing agreements, in order to protect livelihoods and the right to development of peoples.

Civil society groups have not been alone in making these demands. African and other developing countries governments also sought redress for the imbalances and inequities of the existing WTO agreements, which have damaged their economies and threatened the livelihoods of their peoples. At the same time, they opposed the introduction of new issues in the WTO, and demanded an end to the undemocratic processes of the WTO that marginalized them. Since Seattle, these governments have continued to exert strenuous efforts to keep their demands alive in the WTO.

However, the concerns of civil society and the demands by developing country governments have been ignored by the major powers in the WTO. Negotiations on the concrete proposals put forward by developing countries for the review of the agreements in such areas as Agriculture, TRIPS, TRIMs and services have been frustrated by the developed countries. At the same time, the latter have used negotiations in areas such as services to exert pressure for further liberalisation, ignoring the concerns of civil society for the protection of social services and needs.

Instead, the US, EU, Canada, and Japan have continued to put pressure on developing countries for the launch of a new round to begin negotiating new agreements, in such areas as investment, competition policy and government procurement. In furtherance of this, and as part of their determination to launch a new round at the next WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, these countries have resorted to the same undemocratic and non-transparent processes, as well as, the blatant bullying and divisive tactics that were in evidence in Seattle.

At the recently concluded United Nations Conference on LDCs, governments of the developed countries as well the WTO secretariat attempted unsuccessfully to use the desperate needs of LDCs (34 of the 48 of which are in Africa) to force them to agree to a new round.

Earlier, in November 2000, the US and the EU colluded with the WTO secretariat to use the Ministerial Workshop in Libreville, Gabon as an attempt to force African ministers to support the launching of a new round. This was in utter disregard of the Africa's own decisions, taken by their collective decision-making structures, opposing the new round and calling for the review of existing WTO agreements.

Cotonou; AGOA

Regional and bilateral agreements with African countries have also been utilised by developed countries to introduce the issues that they have difficulty introducing in the WTO. Through the domestic law enacted by the US, the so-called African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), African countries are pressured to adopt WTO-like, and even WTO-plus, provisions relating to intellectual property rights protection, investment and financial liberalisation. These are all in exchange for some illusory benefits. AGOA is being used to trap African governments into giving up their legitimate rights under the WTO, and to secure opportunities for US businesses to the detriment of African domestic economic development

The Cotonou Agreement is similar. It sustaining existing aid relationships between Europe and ACP countries. However, the trade component of the agreement contains provisions requiring African governments' compliance with a range of measures contained in the WTO agreements. It calls for full compliance with the TRIPS Agreement

of the WTO. It requires African governments to negotiate for adoption of provisions on competition and investor protection that the European Union is seeking in the WTO, where they are being opposed by African governments. In addition, it provides for the negotiation of reciprocal free trade agreements between the EU and African countries, separately or in regional groupings. This will prejudice agricultural production, and industrial development within national or regional development.

Both the Cotonou Agreement and AGOA will pressure African countries to continue implementation of structural adjustment policies, while dividing them and undermine Africa's efforts at regional integration.

Underlying Economic Problems

The pressing problems of economic development facing African countries have grown worse. The developed countries, and international financial institutions dominated by them, IMF and the World Bank have refused to seriously consider the means of resolving Africa's debt problem. Instead, the debt burden continues to be utilised as an instrument to force African governments to continue - through the so-called HIPC programme and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSPs) - with the structural adjustment policies that severely damage our economies, harm our people and aggravate the debt crisis.

Women are disproportionately affected by these problems. The current trade regime exacerbates their subordination, in particular the exploitation of women's labour which underpins the free market system, and enables the perpetuation of gender, class and national inequities in the global system.

OUR DEMANDS AND COMMITMENTS

In the light of all this, we will strengthen our efforts in the on-going campaigns, actions and alliances in Africa and the world, to change the unfair and oppressive multilateral trade system embodied by the WTO and other trade agreements, to reverse the destructive effects of the current global economic order, as part of the processes and efforts for an equitable, balanced and sustainable economic development based on the needs of African people and their priorities. To these ends we make the following:

In relation to the WTO



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We are opposed to the launch at the forthcoming WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar of a new round of comprehensive negotiations.

For a gender-sensitive, sustainable, equitable and democratically accountable system of international economic relations, we endorse and reiterate the demands in the global civil society platform statement, WTO: Shrink or Sink, in particular:

- there must be no further expansion of WTO, by bringing in new issues, such as investment, competition, government procurement, biotechnology, and accelerated tariff liberalisation;

- social rights and services should be protected; therefore health, education, energy and other rights and services must not be subject to liberalisation under the General Agreement on Services (GATS);

- patenting of life forms must be prohibited, and furthermore, the TRIPS Agreement, a protectionist instrument which promotes corporate monopoly, restricts developing countries' access to technology, and denies the poor access to essential medicines, should be removed from the WTO;

- measures taken to promote and protect food security, food sovereignty and small-scale agriculture and enterprise must be exempt from WTO trade disciplines;

- the effective operationalisation and expansion of special and differential rights for third world countries, that recognise fully the weak position of developing countries in the international trading system and that provides them space to participate in the global economy according their own needs; and

- the decision-making processes and the dispute settlement system of the WTO must be reformed to democratic, transparent and equitable.

In relation to Cotonou

- We oppose the free trade pressures within the Cotonou Agreement; and

- We call for effective and coordinated negotiating strategies, in order to develop alternative trade arrangements that support nationally and regionally defined priorities for development.

In relation to AGOA

- The aims and interests propelling AGOA and the forthcoming Bush summit must be resisted by African governments and their peoples;

- African governments must desist from taking measures intended to satisfy the eligibility requirements under the Act;

OUR ACTIVITIES

In order to realise the above demands, we will undertake the following activities

- jointly, or individually, and with other groups and allies;

- in our countries, in our sub-regions, continentally and globally;

- with our diverse range of constituencies; and

- in relation to governments, economic and trade policy decision-making bodies, at the national, sub-regional, continental, and global levels.

We understand that conditions differ from country to country, from region to region; and among different constituencies. Therefore these activities represent options that we can pursue according to our respective circumstances. And we will offer support to each other, and share resources as appropriate, in solidarity with initiatives led by groups in their own contexts.

As part of the global social movements for alternatives, we are committed to pursuit of just, equitable and sustainable alternatives to the current global system.

Signatories

Abantu for Development, Ghana - Alternative Information Development Centre (AIDC), South Africa - Arab NGO Network for Development, Lebanon - Centre for Trade Unions and Workers Services (CTUWS), Egypt - Counsel des ONG d'Appui au Développement (CONGAD), Senegal - ECONEWS Africa - Kenya - ENDA - TM, Senegal - Environmental Rights Action (FOE- Nigeria) - Espace Associatif, Morocco - Friends of the Earth - GHANA - Gender and Trade (GENTA), Benin - Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre, Ghana - General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU), Ghana - Inter Press Service (IPS)- Burkina Faso - Inter Press Service (IPS)-Nairobi -



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IPS - Zimbabwe - Journalists for Democratic Rights, Nigeria - Les Amis de la Tere (FOE -Togo) - MOSOP - Nigeria Environmental and Human Rights Group - Nigeria Labour Congress - NLC - Organisation of African Trade Unions Unity - Ghana - Organisation of African Trade Unions Unity, Ghana - Oxfam GB West African Regional Program, Senegal - Railways Artisans Union - Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions - Third World Network - Africa, Ghana - Worldview International - The Gambia

Third World Network-Africa; 9 Ollenu Street, East Legon; P O Box AN19452; Accra-North; Ghana
tel: 233 21 511189/503669/500419
fax: 233 21 511188
email: twnafrica@ghana.com

WTO Tidbits

by the Attac work group on International Treaties

1) An EU report draws criticism from the International Textile & Clothing Bureau

A report entitled "Non-commercial impacts of trade policy - questions raised, search for sustainable development" has provoked a response, addressed to P. Lamy, from the ITCB (consisting of textile exporters from 24 big developing countries). The conclusion of the Commission's report stressed the negative social and environmental consequences which could be occasioned by the liberalisation of the textile trade, particularly the rise in water levels and air pollution. According to the ITCB, this position is in total contradiction with previous EU declarations, which had laid emphasis upon the positive effects (less pollution and more efficient production) of in-trade competition.

2) Introductory Declaration to the Doha Declaration

S. Harbinson, President of the WTO General Council, has met several delegations with a view to drawing up the Agenda for the Doha Conference.

No agreement has been obtained on the specific terms of the Declaration. All that can be noted is wide support for the necessity to protect public health systems from unilateral use of the TRIPs clauses, following the controversy which surrounded the recent conflict between the TRIPs and treatment for Aids victims.

On another subject, the Brazilian delegate called for the "development deficit" resulting from incomplete application of the Uruguay Round to be recognised in the Doha Declaration.

3) The 13 countries which are candidates for entry into the EU support Lamy on the launch of a new Round ...

Furthermore, they agree that the negotiations should include investments and competition.

4) ...but the European Round Table rejects the EU vision of a new WTO Round

The European Round Table, a lobby consisting of 45 big European firms dealing in energy, telecoms, finance and industry, is opposed to the EU proposal to include investments, competition and public markets in the negotiations, considering there is not sufficient time to reach a consensus on such a large number of subjects by November, and that to keep them on the agenda would be a "recipe for failure" in Qatar.

The ERT prefers to focus on tariff reductions, on agricultural and current service negotiations, the removal of non-tariff environmental and food safety obstacles, and suggestions for means to resolve disputes between countries by negotiation rather than by WTO procedure.

The new Round, as the ERT sees it, should yield results in 3 years. A new Round, if it was launched and then failed, would be a "lost opportunity". But this should not be interpreted as a victory for anti-globalisation forces.

5) The US favours a meeting of the Quad on the launching of a new Round - but on one condition ...

The Chairman of the US Senate Finance Committee expressed the opinion that it was urgent to reinforce cooperation between the US and the EU before the Ministerial Conference in Qatar, and that the Quad should be used to reach a consensus on the subjects of negotiation. He referred to the recent settlement of the banana dispute between the US and the EU (which was mainly to US advantage). However, he warned that US-EU relations might become tense again before Qatar if the US loses its case concerning the US trading companies based abroad, and is consequently obliged to change its tax regulations. "We should do everything to prevent this

happening" (speech to the European American Business Council, April 2001).

6) Impact study in the service sector

Discussions on this topic have run into difficulties, some deploring the lack of available information. The developing countries insist on having a complete impact study before going any further in liberalisation. For them, the study must lead to a better knowledge of the effects of liberalisation in certain sectors. Nevertheless, the guide to negotiations adopted in March stipulates that the impact study would go on at the same time as the negotiations for more liberalisation.

For the moment, only pre-negotiations by sector are on the board. They will take place in July and August. Those on market access are not expected until early 2002.

Negotiations are also underway to make progress on the "unfinished work" of the Uruguay Round, on the subject of procedure for drawing up GATS rulings, which various sub-committees have been working on.

Amongst these, the work group on Internal Regulation has discussed disciplines for professional services and horizontal disciplines. Discussions have hardly started on the way to treat the numerous national rulings related to the proposals for negotiation. The question of whether disciplines applicable to the accountancy sector could be applied more widely to the professional sectors as a whole has been examined. Opinions are divided, on account of the number of adjustments which would be necessary.

Delegations have concentrated on the concepts of "necessity" and of transparency in the context of horizontal disciplines on procedures and qualification requirements, as well as on technical norms and licence obligations.

The EU, Australia and Japan have presented their reports defining the concept of "necessity". Discussions continued on what the definition should be. It is a subject which also interests the developing countries.

Pressure from some developing countries is mounting to reach an agreement on disciplines with regard to safeguard measures. From the point of view of these countries, a mechanism for setting off urgent safeguards could encourage them to liberalise services even when no impact

study has been made. However, for the US and the EU, these disciplines seem neither necessary nor even desirable. The WTO considers that these discussions are becoming too technical for the capacity of developing countries.

Work group "International Treaties",
omc.marseille@attac.org

ATTAC Finland

by Mikael Bök

The founding event of Attac Finland in the house of the Finnish-Swedish Workers' Institute of Helsinki on May 19-20, 2001, marked the end of a long "incubation period" including:

- the research and information campaign on the Tobin Tax conducted by the state-subsidized Center for Voluntary Service (KEPA), which has provided the nascent Finnish Attac-movement with dr Heikki Patomäki's book (in Finnish) on "The implementation of the Tobin Tax" (Like Publishing House, 1999) etc.;

- the Tobin Tax-option in the programme of the present Finnish government; however, in November 2000, it became clear that the government is divided on this subject: Conservative Finance Minister Sauli Niinistö is against the Tobin Tax, while Social Democratic Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, Green Minister of the Environment Satu Hassi and Second Finance Minister Suvi Anne Siimes (Left-Wing Alliance) are in favour of it;

- the initiation by the "Folkets Bildningsförbund" (The People's Educational Association"), headed by Per Salskov, of a Finnish-Swedish Attac-association.

The actual preparations for the founding of Attac Finland took off with opening of the email list attac-lista@kaapeli.fi and the website "www.attac.kaapeli.fi" by senior citizens' activists Johan von Bonsdorff and Mikael Bök in January 2001. Hundreds of people from all over the country got involved, an interim board (working group) of Attac Finland was formed, and contact details of "local Attac-persons" were published during the next few weeks.

Among the "local Attac-persons" are young students, old trade unionists, priests, researchers etc. The interest paid to Attac by the media increased by a qualitative leap when Social



Democratic member of parliament Susanna Rahkonen not only volunteered as the local Attac-person of her home-town Espoo (Esbo), but also successfully set out to convene a local Attac-group in the Finnish Parliament. A fourth of the Finnish MPs (ca 50 MPs) have declared their sympathies for the goals of Attac. This has led to repeated debates on whether it is desirable that MPs and government ministers participate in civic associations and pressure groups! Ministers Tuomioja and Hassi have publicly confirmed their membership in Attac Finland.

At the moment of its founding assembly on May 20, one thousand persons had joined Attac Finland. Three weeks later the number is already ca 1800. The attac-lista@kaapeli.fi has as many subscribers. Phone numbers and email-addresses to ca 25 "Local Attac-persons" are found at the website and regional Attac-chapters are being founded around Helsinki, Tampere, Turku, Jyväskylä and other major Finnish towns. Although several of the local persons live in the country-side, Attac Finland does not yet have organic links to the farmers' organisations. On the other hand, a partnership has been established between Attac Finland and the trade union central of Finland. Notably, the (Lutheran) Church of Finland has also declared its partnership with Attac.

The constituent assembly of 20 May elected a 21-person national steering and co-ordinating organ called the "Attac Working Group". This includes figures who had been active on the interim board, like young sociologist Eeva Luhtakallio, but also persons from the trade unions and the Church. In addition to the aforementioned MP Susanna Rahkonen, MP Kimmo Kiljunen (also Social Democrat) was elected a member of the Working Group.

The Working Group has nominated three of its members as chairpersons: Ms Malin Sundgren, a young student; Ms Merja Leskinen, who is international secretary of "Työväen Sivistysliitto" (The Workers' Educational Association) and Mr Mika Rönkkö, a free-lance economic journalist.

On June 9, the chairpersons publicized a statement on Tax Havens and the EU Savings Tax Directive. Intervening by way of an article in Helsingin Sanomat (2.6.) Finance Minister Sauli Niinistö summoned Attac and "civil society" to lend support to the government's policy on the EU Tax package. Attac Finland declared that it is in favour of the EU Savings Tax Directive, but added, that this Directive is only a first and very insufficient measure to combat the tax havens. Attac Finland also repeated that it expects the Finnish government to act in favour of the implementation of the Tobin Tax in the EU as well as in other fora.

Contact:

See <http://attac.org/suomi-finland/> (website in English), and <http://www.attac.kaapeli.fi/> (website in Finnish and , partly, in Swedish).

You may reach Attac Finland via its global address suomi-finland@attac.org ; the current secretary of the national Attac Working Group is contacted via attac@kaapeli.fi

The chairpersons:

Mika Rönkkö (mronkko@kaapeli.fi), Malin Sundgren (malin.sundgren@helsinki.fi), Merja Leskinen (merja.leskinen@tsl.fi)
Representatives of Attac Finland in Göteborg 17.6.2001: Mikael Bök (book@kaapeli.fi) Johan von Bonsdorff (seppi@kaapeli.fi), Eeva Luhtakallio (eeva.luhtakallio@helsinki.fi)