

# **Global Partnership for Development**

## ***Where do we stand and where to go?***

*New Delhi, India, 12-13 August 2008*

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### **Background**

In August 2008, CUTS International and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in association with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the World Bank will organise this major conference on Global Partnership for Development in New Delhi, India. The idea for this conference was conceived as a backdrop of slow progress in the WTO Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations. Although in no sense substitutes for the multilateral process of Doha round, the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations involving the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union may not yield desired developmental outcomes. The on-going Doha Round was dubbed and sold as the 'Development Round' even though a completely successful Doha Round cannot possibly solve the serious developmental problems, many of which are domestic in nature, in most less developed countries. Yet, after six years of tortuous negotiations the poorest countries now seem concerned that the possible outcomes are unlikely to offer anything meaningful to them, since there are low prospects of significant reductions in market access barriers faced by many of them.

Besides, significant domestic supply constraints constrain their ability to take advantage of increased global trade and investment flows. Similarly, an overwhelming majority of ACP countries are increasingly realising the fact that they should have known, that their preferential trading arrangements with the EU, which are to be transformed to reciprocal preferential schemes that are WTO consistent, can hardly help increase their share in world trade and deliver development. Whilst international trade is recognised as an important vehicle for fostering economic growth, lack of supply-side capacity along with market access barriers have reduced development opportunities for a large number of poorest and most vulnerable countries, threatening the objective of achieving a number of their own development goals.

There is a widespread recognition of the need for developed countries to help developing countries achieve their development goals, which necessarily will go beyond the development goals envisaged in the Doha Round and EPA negotiations. The reality is that the eight goals of the so called Millennium Development Goals (MDG), in particular, MDG-8, which stresses the importance of a global partnership for development, exhorting the need for cooperation and commitment from developed nations towards achieving the other seven MDGs, remain largely rhetorical. There is no firm and concrete commitment by the rich countries to reform their trade regimes, to provide effective opportunities and to take concomitant measures to assist the poor countries in their fight against poverty.

However, the direction and priorities of trade, aid and debt policies, the principal ways through which the North interacts with the South, or are perceived by the South to be largely decided in the North. Yet they have profound impact on the society, economy and stability of countries in the South. It is for holding both the rich and the poor countries accountable in advancing a broad development agenda.

Many observers are of the view that when the poorest countries' expectations from Doha and EPAs are quite low, an emphasis on a broad development agenda with a clear delineation of commitments and obligations of North and South would provide an opportune avenue through which more serious North-South engagement in development cooperation may be triggered. With this in view, this global dialogue, involving important stakeholders, is being organised.

## **Objectives**

To keep the conference focussed on the subject matter and to facilitate stimulating deliberation and discussion, a number of thought-provoking ideas will be discussed as a reference for *future discourse on global trade and development cooperation regime*.

The specific objectives (analytical content) of the conference will revolve around the following:

- To assess the impact of the increasing likely failure of the Doha Round of negotiation by the WTO Members on LDCs and small vulnerable states and the prospects for achieving their enhanced and beneficial participation of in world trade;
- To discuss the scope of cooperation between the developed and developing (including least developed) countries apart from the multilateral trade talks and regional trading arrangements in order to strengthen the link between trade, growth and poverty reduction in the developing world;
- To identify the scope for and measures by developed and the more advanced developing countries' playing a fuller and more effective role in advancing growth and development in the rest of the world (particularly in the poorer world), i.e. beyond their national borders and regional economic groupings; and
- Based on the above, to formulate recommendations for making the global partnership for development more effective.

## **Format**

Discussions will be facilitated by presentations from experts to be drawn from different parts of the world. More than 150 participants representing governments, inter-governmental organisations, multilateral bodies, civil society, business, media and academics will attend.

**Agenda>>**