People before cows:
Setting the standards for Cancun

Oxfam International briefing for African Union Ministers of Trade Conference, Mauritius, June 2003

In the light of poor progress in the Doha trade round and the recent failure of the G8 to break through the negotiation deadlock, the June 2003 Africa Trade Ministers' meeting in Mauritius is a defining moment for the upcoming Fifth WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun.

Africa's citizens look to their leaders to unite on positions that will be a global standard for judging whether the Doha Development Round lives up to its promise. Oxfam calls on African leaders to maintain a focus on agriculture and TRIPS reform and resist the extension of the WTO mandate to include the so-called 'Singapore Issues'. This paper sets out Oxfam's analysis and policy propositions on these topics.

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Oxfam International

"The World Bank estimated that a cow in Japan received US$1.7 subsidies a day while a cow in Europe got more than US$2 subsidy a day. To put this in context, about a billion people survive on less than a dollar a day, while cows in some parts of the world live better. Are there WTO rules to promote cows in developed countries in preference to the underprivileged in our countries?"
Hon. Chowdhury, Minister of Commerce, Bangladesh speaking during recent LDC Conference, Dhaka, Bangladesh

"When it comes to trade, we are totally forgotten. They talk about eliminating poverty, but why then must they subsidise their farmers?"
Soloba Mady Keita, Cotton Farmer, Mali, 2003

"…Negotiations could lead to new agreements that would commit African countries to a range of serious obligations that would adversely affect the flexibility and policy options they currently exercise over development policies."
Statement by Trade Experts from ten African Governments, Arusha, Tanzania, 2-5th April 2003

Summary

Africa continues to receive inadequate benefit from globalisation as result of an unfair international economic regime that works against its interests. Although, the African continent contains 13 per cent of the world's population, it accounts for only two per cent of global trade. Sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 300 million people live on less than US$1 a day, has been losing its share of world trade over the last three decades. In the 1990s alone, the share declined by 25%.

Since the 1970s, deteriorating terms of trade have cost Africa more than seven times the amount it has gained in development aid. Rich countries continue to apply tariff barriers that keep out African goods and subsidise their own farmers to the tune of $1 billion a day to produce cheap food and export crops which they dump onto world markets – and the local markets on which Africa's farmers depend. Millions of African farmers face the paradox of Soloba Mady Keita of Mali. They produce food and export crops more cost-effectively than European and American farmers, but they cannot compete in this brutally skewed system.

It is in this context that the WTO Inter-ministerial Conference in Doha took place. The well-publicised launch of the Doha Development Round offered a commitment to developing countries that their issues would be placed at the heart of the work programme. Twenty months later, negotiations of importance for development such as TRIPS, agriculture and Special and Differential Treatment are deadlocked. Vital deadlines have been missed. Yet, Africa and the LDC governments and citizens have noted the energy that is going into expanding WTO's rules to include new issues such as investment, which developing countries do not need and many do not want.

Africa's leaders now face the challenge of adopting positions that will act as a global standard for judging whether the Doha Development Round is living up to its promise. . The Africa region includes most of the poorest countries in the world and if its governments speak with one voice in defence of those in poverty, they will be heard. Oxfam is fully committed to supporting them in this. Africa also has an important role to play in uniting the developing

countries in the WTO around shared long-term goals. The Seattle Ministerial and Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health showed that when developing countries act in concert, there is much that can be achieved.

Based on our experience of working with poor and marginalized communities and national policy makers in many African countries, as well as vigorous campaigning in the industrialised world, Oxfam International calls on Africa's leaders to unite around a **policy triangle** of agriculture reform, TRIPS reform and resistance to the extension of the WTO mandate to include the so-called 'Singapore Issues'. [1] Specifically, Oxfam International asks Ministers of Trade to include the following proposals in the Conference communiqué;

On agriculture

- **A comprehensive ban on export dumping by industrialised countries**
- **Recognition of the principle that subsidised products should not be exported, unless support is minimally trade-distorting.**
- **The right for African and other developing countries to protect poor farmers against subsidized imports and import surges.**
- **Immediate and bound quota- and tariff-free access to all industrialised countries' markets for African LDCs and low-income countries, progressive opening for products of interest to the more developed African countries, including in their semi-processed and processed form; simplified rules of origin; and an end to protectionist abuse of health standards.**
- **Full operationalisation of the 1994 WTO decision on measures concerning the possible negative effects of the reform programme on LDCs and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries.**

On investment

- **Opposition on any move to agree scope and procedures on investment and the Singapore Issues and thereby launch negotiations at the Cancun Ministerial conference.**

On TRIPS

- **Press for a fresh start to the Paragraph 6 talks citing public health considerations. Failing agreement on this, substantive amendments to the Motta text would be highly advisable. Any restrictions on the scope of disease covered by the amendment, or restrictions on countries eligible to use the solution should be rejected**.
- **Call for longer transition periods for compliance with TRIPS as a whole, while encouraging African LDCs to take immediate and full advantage of the new TRIPS deadline (at least 2016) for introducing drug patenting.. Non-LDCs can ensure that national patent law fully exploits the limited flexibility granted by TRIPS.**

[1] Although, we have focused on agriculture, health and investment-related issues, Oxfam recognises the importance of the WTO making on progress on Special and Differential Treatment measures and access to industrialised-country markets for Africa's manufactured goods such as textiles. Another area for concern is the pressure on African countries to open up their service sectors to foreign firms and to liberalise manufactured imports, without regard for potential damage to domestic enterprises or to government revenue.

1. Agriculture and African citizens' right to a livelihood

The outcome of the WTO agriculture negotiations is of crucial importance for Africa. In the sub-Saharan region, over two-thirds of the workforce makes its livelihood in agriculture, and the sector represents 18 per cent of GDP (30 per cent, if South Africa is excluded).

The Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture was strongly biased against the interests of Africa, for the following reasons:

- it legitimised the aggressive dumping practices of the industrialised world;
- in conjunction with efforts of the international financial institutions, it promoted excessive and hasty trade liberalisation in poor countries;
- it failed to resolve the commodity crisis;
- it failed to provide effective and secure market access for African products into developed economies.

The current debate in Geneva

The present round of negotiations provides a crucial chance to change this picture. However, the current negotiating text (Harbinson's revised modalities draft) fails to satisfy the key demands of Africa.

Cultivating poverty in West Africa's cotton belt

'Life is tougher than it has ever been,' says **Soloba Mady Keita,** a cotton farmer from the town of Kita, 150km east of Mali's capital Bamako. *'We no longer live on a year-to-year basis, we now live day by day.'*

In a good year, Soloba will make $300 per year from farming his seven hectares of land, but even this is $75 short of what he needs to break even.

'If I could just get five per cent more than our costs, I could pay back my loans and really help my family. My three girls all sleep in the same bed – if I had more money I could buy each of them their own place to sleep.'

Three years ago, Soloba's nine-year-old daughter, Fatimata, broke her leg playing with her sisters. Soloba couldn't afford to take her to see the doctor. Fatimata missed out on school for a year and now walks with a limp. Across West Africa the cotton price slump has crushed livelihoods of nearly two million families. In Soloba's village in Mali, the effect is deepening poverty, hunger – and incomprehension.

Meanwhile, 25,000 US cotton farmers receive US3.6bn a year in subsidies – more than the total of US aid to Africa. The subsidies help make the US the world's largest exporter and push down world prices, which have fallen by half since the mid-1990s. Africa as whole loses US$300m a year as a direct consequence of US policies.

President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso, in the Cotton Submission by west and central African countries to the Trade Negotiations Committee of the WTO noted "*Our farmers, who produce the kilogram of cotton 50 percent cheaper than their competitors from developed countries, ranking them amongst the most competitive in the world, suffer the negative impact of cotton subsidies.*

These subsidies have caused economic and social crises in African cotton producing countries. As a consequence of cotton subsidies, in 2001, Burkina lost 1 percent of its GDP and 12 percent of its export incomes, Mali 1.7percent and 8 percent, and Benin 1.4 percent and 9 percent respectively. The massive subsidies awarded to cotton farmers in some WTO member States are among the most important and direct causes of the problems encountered on the international cotton market. These subsidies artificially inflate the offer and depress export prices. "

The Harbinson text as it stands today will allow dumping of agricultural produce to continue. Export subsidies per se will not be eliminated within 12 years from now, and there are major loopholes permitting the use of export credits and the abuse of food aid. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, the text leaves other forms of hidden export subsidies untouched and even encourages a shift of subsidies from the amber and blue to the green box, without adequately reducing the trade distorting effects of these subsidies.

President Chirac's proposals for a moratorium on export subsidies for products destined for Africa should be adopted by all rich countries and extended to other low-income countries. Even though his proposal may prove merely rhetorical, it is important to build on this initiative, since France is the country most resisting reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. The campaign by West African countries against US cotton subsidies could have a great impact on the broader issue of dumping, and will hopefully count on the full backing of the Africa Group.

The bitter taste of European sugar

The EU matches the US in its use of subsidies. Thanks to the CAP, Europe is the world's largest exporter of white sugar, pushing more efficient producers in countries such as Malawi and Zambia out of regional markets. The same CAP restricts the entry of African sugar into EU markets. Mozambique, where 70 per cent of the rural population lives below the poverty line, loses $100m a year as a result.

The Harbinson text also overly restricts the flexibility of developing countries to effectively protect their vulnerable agricultural sectors against the subsidy superpowers. This is damaging to rural livelihoods and food security, and grossly unfair. However, even if dumping were reduced, there is still a need for developing countries to retain the ability to limit international competition in the farm sector, on development grounds.

Policy proposals

Oxfam proposes that a new agreement on agriculture should at least contain the following elements. These points are consistent with the key demands formulated by African trade ministers in previous meetings, and by the trade ministers from the Least-Developed Countries (of which 33 are African) at their May 2003 conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

- **A comprehensive ban on export dumping by the industrialised countries**: elimination of all export subsidies, including the subsidy component of export credits and the abuse of food aid, within five years after the beginning of the implementation period.

- **Recognition of the principle that subsidised products should not be exported,** unless support is minimally trade-distorting. This means that blue box subsidies will only available for non-exported products, and that the criteria for green box subsidies are tightened.

- **The right for African and other developing countries to protect poor farmers against subsidized imports and import surges.** This entails:
    - No pressure or obligation on African countries to make further liberalisation commitments [2]
    - Access to a simple countervailing measure such as additional duties on subsidised imports, until trade-distorting support is eliminated
    - Access to Special Safeguard Mechanism that is simply triggered and available for all products.

- **Immediate and bound quota- and tariff-free access to all industrialised countries' markets** for African LDCs and low-income countries; progressive opening for products of interest to the more developed African countries, including in their semi-processed and processed form; simplified rules of origin; and an end to protectionist abuse of health standards.[3] These measures will, among other things, assist countries to diversify out of commodities for which there is excess supply, such as coffee, as well as add value to their production.[4]

- Full operationalisation of the 1994 WTO decision on measures concerning the possible negative effects of the reform programme on LDCs and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries.

2. Investment – the right of African governments to regulate

Oxfam believes that foreign direct investment (FDI), when properly regulated, can play an important role for sustainable development in Africa. However, Africa is a marginal recipient of FDI, accounting on average for only 1.5% of global inflows between 1999 and 2001. Over the same three-year period, sub-Saharan Africa's share was less than one per cent (of which nearly half was destined for South Africa). These resources are not sufficient to cover Africa's urgent needs.

At the same time, existing foreign investment does not always bring the full benefit it should, because of damage to local industries, excessive profit remittances and, in the case of extractive industries, major social and environmental disruption. There is therefore a need to improve both the quantity and quality of foreign investment. The

[2] The LDC trade ministers meeting in Dhaka have already proposed that LDCs shall not be required to undertake reduction commitments, as provided for in Article 15.2 of the Agreement on Agriculture.
[3] The expansion of markets due to the dismantling of non-tariff barriers and reduction of subsidised farm production in the industrialised countries would help balance out developing countries' loss of preferences. This should be complemented by technical assistance on supply-side measures, as well as by compensation for particularly vulnerable countries and sectors, such as textiles. The special needs of small and island economies should be taken into account.
[4] Oxfam is fully behind the revival of interest in tackling the commodities crisis and supports the initiative led by Kenya and other African countries to place commodities on the WTO agenda. Rich-country protectionism and farm subsidies evidently contribute to the problem.

problem with the proposed investment agreement at the WTO is that it will do neither – indeed, Oxfam believes that it will do positive harm.

Will WTO investment rules increase the quantity of FDI?

According to the World Bank, investment rules in bilateral and regional agreements rules have not led to significant increases in FDI flows. This is confirmed by the fact that LDCs, despite having signed close to 300 bilateral investment treaties (BITs), still remain marginal recipients. France and US are the largest investors in China and Turkey respectively, in the absence of BITs. Other factors play a far larger role in influencing investment flows, such as the size of markets, skills of the workforce, quality of infrastructure and political stability. Increasing the ability of developing countries to export by reducing protectionist barriers in the rich countries could do far more to encourage FDI than a set of multilateral rules, as could selective tariffs on imported goods.

Will an agreement improve investment quality?

More importantly, Oxfam believes that a WTO investment agreement would have damaging consequences for Africa. Given the WTO's bias towards liberalization and deregulation, negotiations are highly likely to result in an unbalanced agreement which will favour large corporate interests over the need for sustainable development, placing no obligations on investors or their home countries.

Even if an initial negotiated framework were relatively 'light', this would be the thin end of the wedge for a fully fledged agreement covering market access in all sectors, and a set of rules that would greatly limit the regulatory powers of developing-country governments, of which the existing TRIMS agreement is a foretaste.[5] The EU has even said it would not oppose US proposals for extending the scope of the agreement to cover portfolio investment, though for the moment it is arguing against the inclusion of NAFTA-style investor-state dispute mechanisms.

The WTO principle of national treatment will effectively require African governments to treat trans-national companies no less favourably than domestic ones. They could be stripped, albeit gradually, of their ability to use measures to regulate foreign investors in the interests of national development, including measures that have been successfully used in the past by the industrialised countries and are still used discreetly by them today, e.g. export performance requirements. Many of the investment policies employed by Asian tigers, such a insisting on technology transfer by TNCs though joint ventures, could be prohibited in an eventual agreement.

There are similar major problems with negotiations on procurement. At the moment, African governments can use their purchases of US$50bn a year as a development tool, favouring local or national companies, or discriminating positively in favour of small business or particular ethnic groups. An eventual WTO agreement opening procurement to international competition (or if individual countries join the existing

[5] The TRIPS agreement started life as an innocuous proposal to which no 'reasonable' government could object. As one WTO delegate put it, TRIPS was smuggled into the Uruguay Round negotiations in 1986 by using a phraseology on the need to act against counterfeiting and piracy (quoted in SUNS Bulletin #5287, 20 February 2003).

plurilateral Government Procurement Agreement) would greatly restrict these policy options.

The EU and others claim that a ‘bottom-up’ or ‘positive list’ approach will allow developing countries to choose which sectors to open up to foreign investment and which policy instruments to renounce in line with their development needs. The same argument is used in relation to liberalizing procurement. However, the experience of GATS shows that there would still be intense pressure to liberalise, in what are, in practice, bilateral negotiations (with, of course, no real ‘payment’ for so-called autonomous liberalization). And bound commitments are virtually impossible to reverse, just as policy space, once renounced, is virtually impossible to recover, even if a country’s needs or policies change.

A WTO investment agreement will not replace existing regional or bilateral investment treaties, nor prevent future negotiations of such agreements by the EU or the US. The experience of TRIPS demonstrates that industrialised countries will use the multilateral agreement as a new and higher floor, not as a ceiling.

Investment overloads the agenda and distracts from key issues

Finally, a major problem in expanding the WTO agenda to cover investment and the other ‘Singapore Issues’ is that it is already vastly overloaded. Most African governments simply do not have the resources to participate fully in negotiations about new global rules and liberalization in the complex areas of investment, competition and government procurement. Moreover, a focus on these issues will necessarily reduce the attention given by all member states to existing WTO negotiations of vital importance for economic development in Africa, such as agriculture, services and TRIPS.

For these reasons Oxfam hopes that African governments will oppose any move to agree scope and procedures and thereby launch negotiations on the Singapore Issues, including investment, at the Cancun Ministerial conference.[6] This would be consistent with many African countries’ long-standing and grave reservations about binding negotiations in these areas, as expressed by the region’s trade ministers in previous conferences. As one African observer put it recently, caution is a very valuable asset in fishing, especially when you are a fish.[7]

3. TRIPS and African citizens right to health

The outcome of the current discussions on TRIPS, and the shape of national patent laws, will have a critical impact on people’s access to vital medicines in Africa, the continent most affected by public health crises. This matters not only to the 28 million people with HIV/AIDS but also to the millions who suffer from other communicable and non-communicable diseases.

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[6] The present tactic of the EU and other advocates of the Singapore Issues is to go for a bland agreement on modalities that addresses process but avoids substance. This amounts to asking developing countries to sign a blank cheque.

[7] Percy Makombe, p 12, SEATINI Bulletin 31st May 2003.

Paragraph 6 of the landmark Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health mandated Ministers to find a solution to one unfair and highly damaging anomaly in the agreement which prevents countries without limited manufacturing and economic capacity - including most developing and least developing countries- from making effective use of compulsory licensing to gain access to affordable generic medicines. The same rule restricts access to generics for developing countries that do not grant pharmaceutical patents.

Trade in patented medicines – what is the problem?

Currently rich countries can override a patent and authorise a domestic company to produce a cheaper generic version of a patented medicine, if the price is too high or supply limited. This gives them real bargaining power when negotiating prices with companies. But almost all African countries do not have the manufacturing capacity or market size to produce affordable new medicines, and so rely on imports, at least for the active ingredients.

The few remaining developing-country drug producers such as India and Egypt will have to comply with WTO rules by 2005 and will no longer be allowed to meet this demand. Almost all developing countries will therefore have to pay the high price of the patented product – which their population can ill-afford – or leave patients without treatment. This will be true even for those LDCs, which avail themselves of the extended deadlines agreed at Doha and exempt drug patenting until at least 2016.

Developing countries have negotiated in good faith to find the appropriate legal formula to honor the intentions of Paragraph 6. However, there has been great pressure from rich countries, notably the US, and the pharmaceutical lobbies to water down the amendment and render it impracticable. The US has striven not only to keep any changes cosmetic but also, in so doing, to effectively limit the scope of the whole Doha Declaration. Some rich countries are now saying 'of course, the Declaration was really about drugs for major infectious diseases in Africa', an interpretation that would be strengthened if there were any limitations on disease scope or country eligibility in the final Paragraph 6 amendment.

The TRIPS Council compromise – a bad solution?

Many developing countries have indicated acceptance of Chairman Motta's December 16th text on the Paragraph 6 issue, essentially because they feel they cannot hit their heads forever against the brick wall of rich-country intransigence. Despite this, the 2002 deadline set by WTO ministers to solve this problem was not met because the US sought to further restrict the diseases covered by the solution.

Oxfam and many other NGOs, along with legal experts consulted, believe that the Motta text, even if a 'political solution', will not provide a really workable solution to the problem to access to generic medicines after 2005. It involves a complex and burdensome legal mechanism and saddles developing countries with restrictions and conditions not faced by rich countries in the use of TRIPS safeguards. The problem of importing countries having to seek the consent of the government in the exporting country is an unjustified form of political dependency, which the United States would certainly never accept for itself.

Acceptance of the text could effectively endorse a new set of more restrictive conditions on compulsory licenses, as well as prejudicing a better out come under Article 30, which covers exceptions. Regrettably, the US will take advantage of the ambiguities in the text to secure further limitations: according to MSF, the US has already said it would not regard the Philippines as eligible under the Motta system.

The impact of TRIPS on the ten million Egyptians with hepatitis C

"My condition started deteriorating gradually with progressive fatigue, bone aches and patches of blood over my belly and legs. I am not able to do housework and care for my family." Sanaa Taha Eisa, housewife with three children.

"Maybe if I took the full course it could have benefited me more. Anyway, I am luckier than my younger brother, whose condition deteriorated rapidly till he died one year ago." Abdel Latif, government employee.

The hepatitis C virus causes debilitating chronic damage to the liver, cirrhosis and cancer. At 18%, Egypt has the highest rate of infection in the world, placing a huge burden on the national health budget, even though many people in rural areas fall outside the net. Just as with HIV / AIDS, new drugs and combination therapies are becoming more effective but are extremely expensive. The latest drug costs US$6,800 for a 24-week course. A less effective but still potentially life-saving combination costs over one thousand dollars per course. Schering-Plough and Hoffman-La Roche currently dominate the global market for these products.

Because the disease is present in the industrialised world, there is a market stimulus for research into medicines with greater efficacy and less side effects, and there are at least a dozen already in the pipeline. With TRIPS in force, these new drugs will be patented worldwide and will be priced out of reach of poor people and poor countries. If the US has its way in the current negotiations on an amendment to TRIPS, Egypt will not be able to override these patents and import affordable generic versions – it will have to pay the high price of the patented product or do without.

Worse outcomes

At all costs, the Motta text should not be further weakened by WTO members agreeing to US demands for limiting the amendment to only certain diseases or countries. Such restrictions would effectively rewrite the Doha Declaration, which developing countries fought hard to keep broad in scope. The US-proposed list of diseases would prevent countries from gaining access to affordable generic versions of new medicines for important diseases such as pneumonia, asthma, gonorrhea, bloody diarrhea, cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular illness, SARS, diseases spread by terrorist attacks, and future as yet unknown diseases. Such restrictions would be deeply unfair as rich countries do not face them.

If the industrialized countries are allowed to breach the promise of Paragraph 6, or worse still, retrospectively reinterpret the Doha declaration to be only about health emergencies or a limited number of countries, there are grave implications not only for public health but also for the whole WTO and the rules-based system. As a Caribbean delegate said recently, the developing world invested much of its negotiation capacity and political capital in order to win the TRIPS and Public Health Declaration. It is unfair, and a dangerous precedent, that these countries are being forced to fight the same battle all over again, and it will be even more damaging if they lose.[8] It means that a WTO decision might never really hold if the beneficiaries are from the developing countries.

Oxfam proposals on TRIPS

- **African LDCs should consider taking full advantage of the TRIPS deadline for introducing drug patenting, now extended to at least 2016** in order to gain access to affordable generic versions of new medicines. Non-LDCs can ensure that national patent law fully exploits the limited flexibility granted by TRIPS.

- **Pressing public health considerations make a fresh start to the Paragraph 6 talks essential, even though it is a major political challenge**. A limited exception to TRIPS Article 30 would provide the most effective alternative legal formula. This is in line with the proposal presented by the WHO to the TRIPS Council in September 2002, with the European Parliament amendment 196 to internal EU regulations, and with the recent resolution on TRIPs and public health passed by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. Failing a fresh start, substantive amendments to the Motta text would be highly advisable.

- **Any restrictions on the scope of disease covered by the Paragraph 6 amendment, or restrictions on countries eligible to use the solution, should be categorically rejected**.

- **If a *fair and workable* multilateral solution is not possible, Oxfam proposes that African and other developing countries use the existing flexibilities, with the Doha Declaration as backing, to export affordable generic versions of new medicines to countries without domestic capacity** (including Articles 30 and 31f & k)

- **African countries together with other developing countries should call for longer transition periods for compliance with TRIPS as a whole**, based on their achievement of development milestones rather than arbitrary dates as at present. In the short term, African and other LDCs should be granted a block extension for compliance with TRIPS as a whole until they cease to be in the 'least-developed' category, as recommended by LDC trade ministers in Dhaka. These changes could be the outcome of a sorely needed substantive review of the health and development impact of TRIPS, in conjunction with relevant UN bodies and in consultation with public interest groups. Such a review is fully justified in the light of authoritative evidence of the detrimental impact of global intellectual property rules on innovation, access to knowledge-based goods and development.[9]

[8] Personal communication with Oxfam staff, May 2003
[9] Powerful critiques of the one-size fits all, high level of intellectual property protection mandated by TRIPS can be found in the reports of the UK's expert International Commission on Intellectual Property Rights and the UK-based Royal Society, and in World Bank studies.

CONCLUSION

The Seattle Ministerial and Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health showed that when developing countries act in concert, there is much that can be achieved. Africa must continue to remain firm on global reforms that help African governments to promote economic growth, fight poverty and deliver on basic rights to livelihoods and essential services.

Oxfam International is aware of attempts to divide the Africa Group through bilateral and multilateral concessions. We urge individual governments to put the collective interest of Africa ahead of short-term and limited benefits. A unified stance before Cancun will strengthen the individual bargaining power of all African governments and, by extension, all developing countries. It is only in this way that the Doha Development Round will over some hope to the millions of Africans living in poverty

Oxfam in Africa

Oxfam international works millions of poor people throughout Africa, either directly or through African organisations and governments. This experience on the ground underpins our vigorous campaigning for the industrialised world to address issues of debt, education, health and trade. We see daily the disastrous impact that rigged rules and double standards in international trade policy have on the lives of poor families, whether it is farmers ruined by dumping of subsidised cereals and falling coffee prices, or poor people dying because they cannot afford expensive patented medicines. Through offices in Africa, Europe and North America, we have regular meetings with African and other developing country delegations to discuss their priority trade issues and the state of play at the WTO. Our international Make Trade Fair campaign, combining research, lobby, media work and popular campaigning seeks to influence international public opinion and global trade policies. We already have a million supporters signed up.

Visit: www.maketradefair.org

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