

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND TRADE

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1. Introduction

Recent decades have seen unprecedented progress in technology with key advances in areas such as agriculture, health, environmental protection, genomics, information and communications, and energy offering huge opportunities for countries to harness these technologies. However, the ‘technological apartheid’ is also increasing due to the uneven distribution of benefits and constraints dealing with the transfer of such technologies. The UNDP Human Development Report for 2001 emphasises the need for this situation to change. The recent Human Development Report for 2003 reiterates the need for bridging this gap in light of the commitments governments made in 2000 under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Countries have agreed on a set of priorities for reducing poverty and enhancing rates of sustainable development by calling for a “change in policy, not charity”.

Discussions on implementing various development agendas have heavily relied on issues of aid and support. Much of the aid is increasingly being tied to issues of market access, tighter controls of intellectual property rights (IPRs) and implementation of World Trade Organization (WTO) and TRIPs provisions as well as the often side-lined commitments to work on environmental protection as agreed in Rio de Janeiro during the Earth Summit. Issues of trade frequently preclude discussions on development since trade often offers a mechanism for opening markets and reducing subsidies thereby increasing revenues.

This paper examines some of these issues. The paper focuses on the issue of commitments through MDGs coupled with opportunities for renewing discussions, not only under the WTO agenda, but also through the multilateral environmental agreements, especially the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

2. The Millennium Development Goals

At the eve of the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, countries around the world came together to adopt the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Adoption of these goals reinforced the commitment of the international community to a comprehensive and integrated approach to sustainable development and poverty reduction using a set of agreed targets set against dates. The 8 MDGs consist of 18

targets and 40 indicators and provide a framework for measuring development progress. Achieving these targets is the responsibility of national governments.

Broadly, the first 7 goals address issues of poverty, education, gender equality, health and environmental sustainability. The eighth goal considers a means of achieving the first 7 goals through development of global partnerships. The goals, in particular goal 8, also include actions to reduce debt and increase aid, trade and technology transfer to poor countries. Box 1 shows the 8 goals and corresponding targets.

Box 1 The Millennium Development Goals

<p>Goal 1 - Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">••
<p>Goal 2 - Achieve Universal Primary Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• course of primary schooling.
<p>Goal 3 - Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• levels of education no later than 2015.
<p>Goal 4 - Reduce Child Mortality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<p>Goal 5 - Improve Maternal Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<p>Goal 6 - Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">••
<p>Goal 7 - Ensure Environmental Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reverse the loss of environmental resources;•• dwellers.
<p>Goal 8 - Develop a Global Partnership for Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• system (includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction - both nationally and internationally);• access for exports, enhanced program of debt relief for and cancellation of official bilateral debt, and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction);• the Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and 22nd General Assembly provisions);• international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term;• productive work for youth;• developing countries;• especially information and communications technologies.

2.1 Development Progress

In the past 30 years there have been dramatic improvements in the developing world in areas such as life expectancy, illiteracy and the number of people living on less than \$1 a day. However, development is still proceeding too slowly for many to be satisfied with its rate. For many countries, the 1990s saw setbacks in development with 54 countries being poorer now than in 1990 (UNDP, 2003).

Sustainable growth can only be achieved when countries attain basic thresholds in key areas such as governance, health, education, infrastructure and access to markets. However, structural obstacles and constraints (such as barriers to international markets, high debt levels and the impact of a country's size and location) can make it very difficult for some countries, including those most in need, to attain these basic thresholds, particularly in the absence of external support (UNDP, 2003). Box 2 outlines policy options for developing countries to address structural constraints as well as adjustments to break away from the poverty trap.

Box 2 Policy clusters to help countries break out of their poverty trap

(Source: UNDP, 2003)

Policy responses to structural constraints require simultaneous interventions on several fronts – along with stepped-up external support. Six policy clusters can help countries break out of their poverty traps:

- gender equity. These are preconditions to sustained economic growth. Growth, in turn, can generate employment and raise incomes – feeding back into further gains in education and health.
- is, the majority of the world's hungry people. A reliable estimate is that 70% of the world's poorest people live in rural area and depend on agriculture.
- – to reduce the costs of doing business and overcome geographic barriers.
- and helps diversify the economy away from dependence on primary commodity exports – with an active role for small and medium-size enterprises.
- secure social justice and promote the well-being of all people.
- development improvements are long term.

2.2 Financing development and achieving the MDGs

To assist developing countries in reducing poverty and meeting the targets of the MDGs, key areas of assistance from developed countries include increased aid, debt relief, technology transfer and market access (UNDP, 2003). The commitment of developing countries must also be demonstrated through improvements to their policies and institutions.

Increasing the quantity and effective delivery as well as use of aid is essential to ensure the poorest countries have resources to finance the investments required to reach critical thresholds in infrastructure, education and health. In order to achieve the targets of by MDGs by 2015, the World Bank estimates that an increase in foreign aid of between \$40-60 billion a year is required (Devarajan *et al.*, 2002). For rich countries, 0.7% of their GNP is widely accepted as a reference target for official development assistance, however, this figure has not been met even by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (UN, 2000e In: UNDP 2003). To ensure the effectiveness of the aid, countries need to improve economic and democratic governance and implement policies for effective poverty reduction.

Debt relief can help to release resources that could finance additional spending in areas that contribute to attaining the targets of the MDGs. That is, increased debt relief for developing countries will assist in creating an enabling environment for sustainable development. For example, debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative has increased spending on education and health in recipient countries. However, current analysis indicates that the HIPC initiative will not be sufficient for countries to escape their debt trap and that more must be done to ensure debt sustainability and to meet the targets of the MDGs.

Dramatic advances in technology in recent decades provide significant opportunities to accelerate progress towards poverty reduction and sustainable development. Technological innovations can increase productivity resulting in increased household incomes and provide solutions to many development problems such as disease, transport, energy, water supply and sanitation (UNEP, IISD, 2000; UNDP, 2003). It is vital that developed countries share technological progress with developing countries and invest more into technology development that addresses issues of poverty reduction.

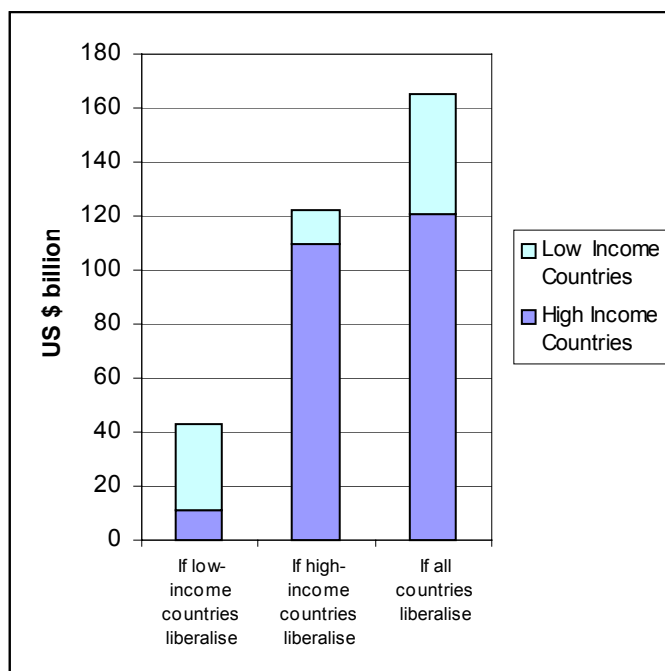
It is recognised that greater market access for developing countries, coupled with development assistance, would significantly contribute to the likelihood of many countries achieving the MDGs by 2015 (Devarajan *et al.*, 2002). Indeed, for many developing countries, the benefits could be much larger than financial transfers through official development assistance (ODA) (Walker, 2001; Devarajan *et al.*, 2002). While aid and debt relief are essential assistance for developing countries, they are not sustainable solutions and developing countries must also to drive their own development.

3. Trade and Development

It is a recognised fact that countries can benefit from trading with one another. The process of systematically reducing and eventually eliminating all tariff and non-tariff barriers between countries, and thus promoting non-discriminatory trade across the board, is based on the theory that an unrestrained market will result in the most efficient pattern of productive activity. For example, the following Figure 1 shows the potential financial benefits of agricultural trade liberalisation for developed and developing countries.

Figure 1 Potential annual welfare gains from agricultural trade liberalisation

(Source: Adapted from Anderson *et al.*, 2000 In Scherr, 2003)



Currently, however, protectionist policies create barriers to trade and distort markets, often having a detrimental impact on developing countries and resulting in lost opportunities for world trade to contribute significantly to poverty reduction and to support economic development. The problem is not that international trade is inherently opposed to the needs and interests of the poor, but that the rules that govern it generally favour the rich (Oxfam, 2003b).

3.1 Developed versus Developing Countries

Over the last two decades, the impacts of trade liberalisation and global economic integration have been influenced by, among other things, the level of development of a given country. Recent statistics indicate that current trade liberalisation rules and policies have led to increases in poverty and inequality, with a disproportionately large negative impact on developing countries (Box 3) (World Trade Organization, 2003a). As developing countries have integrated their economies more intensively with the world economy, they have experienced more vulnerability and inequitable sharing of the benefits between rich and poor (RIS, 2003). This outcome has led to a widespread rethinking of the pros and cons of globalization for developing countries.

Box 3 Trade Liberalisation Statistics

(Source: World Trade Organization, 2003a)

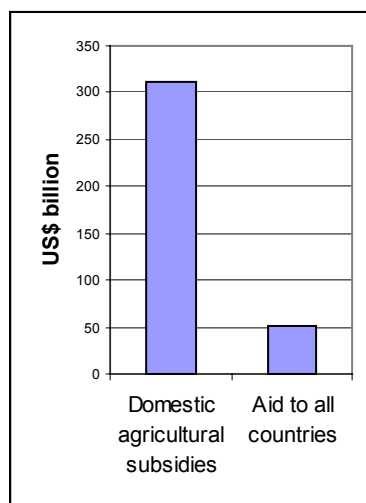
- than 40 per cent since 1980 to a mere 0.4 per cent. (UNCTAD, Conference on Least Developed Countries 1999)
- account for only 0.4% of world trade. This disparity has been growing. (UNCTAD, Conference on Least Developed Countries 2001)
- 500 multinational corporations account for nearly 70 percent of the worldwide trade; this percentage has steadily increased over the past twenty years. (CorpWatch)
- because of unjust trade rules, many instituted by our organization—14 times the amount they receive in aid. (UNCTAD, Conference on Least Developed Countries 2001)

Severe structural problems, often beyond the control of the developing country and often involving the international trade system, can also block access for developing countries to international markets. Examples include when rich countries block

agricultural and other exports from poor countries or when rich countries heavily subsidize their own farmers, depressing world prices of these products (UNDP, 2003). In OECD countries, domestic agricultural policies have impacts on income levels for rural poor in developing countries, often preventing poor farmers from realising their comparative advantage. For example, agricultural subsidies paid to US farmers enables the farmers to sell maize for 25% less than it costs to grow and harvest. Mexican farmers are unable to compete with US prices and can even lose money with each hectare they plant (McNeely and Milimo, 2003). For rural poor farmers, receiving a fair price for their products is essential to their survival, unless they also receive subsidies at the same levels as those with whom they compete in the market place (McNeely and Milimo, 2003). The following Figure 2 demonstrates the extent of annual agricultural subsidies in rich countries, which can be many times larger than annual aid to developing countries.

Figure 2 OECD Agricultural Subsidies Dwarf Aid, 2001

(Source: OECD, Development Assistance Committee, 2003 In: UNDP, 2003)



It is also difficult for small farmers to overcome advantages of developed country commercial companies, which may have better infrastructure and more efficient market systems (Scherr, 2003). A poorer resource base, less productive technology and less efficient marketing systems make it very difficult for poor farmers to compete in many product markets (Scherr, 2003).

It is unlikely that any country will develop simply by opening itself up to trade and foreign investment. The opportunities offered by the world market must be coupled

with a domestic investment (including trade related infrastructure, transportation and telecommunications and institution-building strategy) (Rodrik, 2001; Devarajan *et al.*, 2002). Better roads and communications and deeper integration with neighbouring countries can increase access to markets. For instance, China's remote inland regions face much longer distances to ports, much poorer infrastructure and much tougher biophysical conditions than the country's coastal regions and have not enjoyed the fast economic growth of the coastal regions (UNDP, 2003). It is also essential for developing countries to strengthen policies and institutions, combat corruption and improve governance (UNDP, 2003).

3.2 The World Trade Organization, the Doha Agenda and the Monterrey Conference

The World Trade Organization (WTO) came into force in 1995 and is the organization responsible for administering the international trade regime. It is an international membership organization that aims to abolish quotas and reduce tariff duties. The most recent round of WTO negotiations, the Doha round, commenced in January 2002 and is scheduled to end in January 2005. The Doha Ministerial Declaration (2001) reaffirmed the commitment of the members of the WTO to developing countries including the commitment to:

“continue to make positive efforts designed to ensure that developing countries, and especially the least-developed among them, secure a share in the growth of world trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development”.

In continuation of these international discussions on trade the Monterrey conference on “Financing for Development” was held in March 2002 to discuss the aid and trade needs of the world's poorest countries, in particular the financing requirements to meet the ambitious targets of development. It was recognised by both developed and developing countries that private sources, mostly trade and foreign direct investment, must be the key sources of new money for development. Participants at the Monterrey conference urged WTO members to proceed with global trade negotiations that placed the needs and interests of developing countries at the center.

Despite these commitments, little progress has been made towards meaningful reform. Deadlines in the negotiations on issues of agriculture and other issues that are of importance to developing countries have been missed (FAO, 2003).

Agriculture is one of the key areas of negotiation in the WTO Doha round of negotiations. The key issues relate to substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support. However, developed countries have made little progress towards meeting these objectives and the recently released EU-US bilateral agreement on agriculture has been considered to be a long way from achieving meaningful reform in world agricultural trade and unlikely to advance reforms in the near future (Oxfam, 2003a).

Another important area of focus of the Doha round is the resolution of outstanding implementation issues of Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) for developing countries, particularly for least developed countries. During 2002, discussions on ways to strengthen S&DT rules were unsuccessful and there remains deep division among WTO members on how to improve S&DT provisions (ICTSD, 2003). Progress on this issue would help to restore confidence for developing countries in the Doha Round's ability to deliver (ICTSD, 2003).

The World Bank's Global Economics Prospects (2002) forecasts an increase of US\$355 billion in global income by 2015 as a result of the new round of trade liberalisation. However, it has been predicted that the greatest income gains will accrue to Western Europe, while developing countries, as a whole, are forecast to share around 50 per cent of the extra income, with wide variation among countries (Save the Children *et al.*, 2002). This pattern needs to change to ensure that those most in need are enjoying the benefits of global prosperity – that is, comprehensive changes are required to make the global trading system work in the interests on the poor (Save the Children *et al.*, 2002).

4. Trade and the Environment

The relationship between trade and the environment goes two ways. Firstly, natural resources and agriculture play a significant role in the global economy. Secondly, trading systems can impact on the ways in which natural resources are utilized and the nature and extent of subsequent environmental impacts.

Being fundamental to so many productive activities, natural resources contribute much to the global economy. For example, during the early 1990s, industrial wood

products contributed \$400 billion to the global economy and, in 2000, fisheries accounted for \$55 billion in exports (UNDP, 2003).

Developing countries are the most dependent on agriculture and natural resources (such as forest products, mineral and fish) for export earnings. Accordingly, developing countries are the most vulnerable to resource depletion and worsening terms of trade (UNDP, 2003). For example, environmentally harmful subsidies in developed countries, such as subsidies for marine fisheries, can contribute significantly to global pressure on such natural resources and have a detrimental effect on local fishery communities who depend on fish for their food security (DFID *et al.*, 2002).

The economic well being of a country and increases in international trade can have a substantial impact on the nature and extent of demands on natural resources and ecosystem services. Poverty is an important factor in environmental degradation and, while rising incomes can help to alleviate pressures on the environment, the reverse can also occur. For example, higher incomes tend to increase consumption of ecosystem goods and services but may also increase peoples ability and willingness to mitigate adverse environmental change. The combined rate of growth of GDP, trade and capital flows, and income inequality are crucial determinants of the direction and extent of environmental degradation (Melnick, 2003).

Changes to existing trading systems can have a positive or negative impact on the environment. Some of the key environmental impacts of trade liberalisation are summarised in table below (UNEP & IISD, 2000).

Table 1 Environmental Impacts of Trade Liberalisation

Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the composition of a countries economy – causing it to make more goods it makes well or has in abundance – could lead to increases in sectors that that are more environmentally friendly. • Trading with a country whose consumers demand green goods may also change the composition of the economy, if exporters respond by creating new products or sectors. • Trade liberalisation may remove subsidies, quotas or other trade-restrictive measures that frustrate allocative efficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the goods that a country makes well are based on natural resources or are pollution intensive, then trade liberalisation would increase the share of such industries in the national economy. • In small developing economies, economic openness must be properly staged and accompanies by policies specifically designed to ease the restructuring process. Otherwise, liberalisation may actually work against growth, employment, poverty alleviation, environmental protection and other components of sustainable development, at least in the short to medium term

4.1 Linkages between the Convention on Biological Diversity and Trade

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) calls on Parties to adopt economically and socially sound measures that act as incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of components of biological diversity (McNeely and Milimo, 2003). Unfortunately, current trade policies throughout the world continue to promote the depletion of natural resources. Broadly speaking, the WTO rules state that environmental, ethical and social considerations cannot be used to discriminate between one tradeable commodity and another (ITDG, 2000). In addition, as the value of international trade increases (in absolute terms and as the percentage of overall economic activity) the potential impacts of trade on biodiversity also increases (Downes, 1999).

While many trade policies act contrary to the CBD objectives, there is also potential for trade in biological resources to be supportive of the CBD. This is most likely to be the case when custodians of biological resources enjoy a portion of the economic or other benefits arising from the use products derived from the resources (for example, genetic resources that are used to develop new commercial products). Through equitable distribution of the benefits arising from trade, trade can create incentives for conserving biodiversity (Downes, 1999) thus supporting the objectives of the CBD.

A focus of the WTO's Committee on Trade and Environment is analysis of the trade impacts of environmental policies and, more recently, on ways in which international markets can promote environmentally friendly production as well as conventional gains in income and development (EC, DFID and IUCN, 2001).

Through the CBD, guidance should be provided for ways to incorporate trade into national strategies and policies as a means of regulating trade-related activities that are likely to have an adverse impact on biodiversity. Furthermore, the WTO agreements should be limited to eliminating trade protectionism but should not interfere with environmental objectives (Tarasofsky, 2000)

5. Developing a Global Partnership for Development

Poor countries are not likely to achieve the MDGs on their own. In the WTO Doha Declaration (November 2001) all countries committed to making the needs of development, especially for the least developed countries, a central objective for future trade negotiations (UNDP, 2003). That is, while it is recognised that the primary responsibility lies with the developing country to drive their own development, activities in developing countries must be complemented with policy changes in developed countries in areas including aid, debt, technology transfer and trade (see Section 1.2).

Concerns regarding the current and emerging asymmetries in the world trading system should be addressed to ensure that the system evolves in such a way that it is responsive to the development needs of its members and that a more level playing field is created (RIS, 2003). There is enormous scope for change to discriminatory trade policies in rich countries that limit market access for developing countries and distort global markets. Changes in policies regarding tariffs, quotas and subsidies in developed countries to open their markets, especially in the agriculture and textile sectors, would be of particular benefit to developing countries.

A genuine undertaking from developed countries towards achieving their commitments made under the Doha Development Agenda must be demonstrated. Poor implementation of the commitments of developed countries to developing countries often receives little attention due to a lack of capacities within developing countries (RIS, 2003). Developing countries often lack physical, analytical and financial capacities to scrutinize the policies of industrialised countries and seek redress under the WTO framework (RIS, 2003). Capacity building in developing countries, coupled with assistance from developed countries to monitor implementation of WTO commitments, is vital to ensure development of a fair and equitable world trading system.

Improved communication and partnerships among developing countries would also assist in building capacities within poor countries. Such cooperation would not only strengthen the analytical capacity in the South on international economic issues, but would also improve the exchange of experiences in moderating the adverse effects of globalization (RIS, 2003). Where possible, a coordinated position on WTO

negotiations would raise the voice of the developing world, ensuring more development-friendly negotiation outcomes (RIS, 2003).

In order to protect the environment and the resources and services it provides, it is essential that the industrialized world contribute a fair proportion of the costs of global biodiversity conservation through direct assistance and through more careful assessment of the impacts of their trade, investment and other interactions with the developing world (DFID *et al*, 2002). Innovative ways of providing assistance while promoting conservation should also be further explored. For example, debt for nature swaps can be an effective way of maintaining or promoting sustainable management of natural resources in developing countries in exchange for debt relief. Such agreements generally have certain conditions placed on them regarding the ways in which the natural resources are managed and benefits for the developed country which may include logging permits or access to other services provided by the natural resource, however, can improve the long-term sustainability of the resources.

With the growing globalisation of the world economy, there is a greater need for coherence in international economic and environmental policy making in order to support sustainable development in developing countries (DFID *et al.*, 2002). This includes economic and environmental frameworks that provide sustainable growth opportunities, including market access for exports from developing countries (DFID *et al.*, 2002).

6. Conclusions

The Millennium Development Goals reinforced the commitment of the international community to a comprehensive and integrated approach to sustainable development and poverty reduction. Under the WTO Doha Development Agenda the international community has also reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that developing countries, and especially the least developed among them, secure a share in the growth of world trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development.

To assist developing countries in reducing poverty and meeting the targets of the MDGs, key areas of assistance from developed countries include increased aid, debt relief, technology transfer and market access (UNDP, 2003). The commitment of

developing countries must also be demonstrated through improvements to their policies and institutions.

Despite high expectations during the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, protection to local agriculture afforded by tariffs and subsidies in most developed countries remains extremely high. While the eventual elimination of agricultural export subsidies has been agreed to under the Doha Round of trade negotiations, no timeframe has been set (UNDP, 2003). Additionally, deadlines in the negotiations on issues of agriculture and other issues that are of importance to developing countries have been missed (FAO, 2003) and little progress has been made towards meaningful reform.

While the willingness of developed countries to work in partnership with developing countries towards poverty reduction and sustainable development has been demonstrated on paper, further implementation of policy changes must occur to further development progress and meet the MDG targets. A key area of focus during future negotiations under the Doha Agenda should be on how multilateral trade regimes can support and foster human development, at the same time ensuring trade strategies and policies are supportive of relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

6.1 Ways forward

Discussions under the WTO's Committee of Trade and Development (CTD) and on Trade and Environment (CTE) should embark on an assessment about potential impact of Doha negotiations on developing countries to address issues of poverty reduction as well as human and economic development, operationalisation and implementation of a renewed S&DT and environmental needs and uses. The outcomes need to provide clear and explicit guidelines that negotiating bodies and countries can use to integrate environmental and development considerations.

In addition, it is now clear that special and differential treatment, which is a key issue of discussion both for development and trade is merely turning out to be an instrument for the implementation of current WTO rules and might not make trade supportive of development policies. Discussions should therefore focus on development of

provisions addressing developing countries' market access concerns (eg. Case of cotton from Africa), providing 'policy spaces' for development.

A careful review of the Dhaka Declaration that emerged from the Ministerial meeting of trade ministries of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), held in June 2003, reveals that LDCs need is to ensure that they are not subjected to obligations or commitments beyond what is applicable to WTO LDC members. However, there is a growing concern that powerful members of WTO are exerting unnecessary pressure on LDCs in bilateral negotiations. Considering the need for balanced and equitable growth as well as achieving the development goals set by agencies such as the UN (eg. MDGs) this situation must change.

It is obvious that environment and development, poverty and natural resource degradation, international policy and local livelihoods are all themes that have been subject to much generalization and over simplification. Effective solutions must be guided by a clear understanding of the specifics of these relationships, often determined by local institutions and policies.

Policy and institutional changes are needed to improve governance and enhance the assets of the poor in order to improve the quality of growth and reform international and industrial country policies.

The following are some suggestions to address the above challenges:

- Integrate poverty-environment-development issues into national development frameworks.
- Decentralise environmental management and prioritize actions on the national development agenda.
- Strengthen institutional and individual capacities at the local level to deal with issues of negotiation as well as implementation.
- Improve poverty-environment-development assessment methods so that monitoring and evaluation can be clear, democratic and objective.
- Reduce the environmental vulnerability of poor by providing appropriate coping strategies.
- Develop anticipatory methods to deal with issues of managing the environment, adoption of new technologies and strengthening resource rights.

- Encourage private sector involvement in development planning as well as implementing pro-poor environmental and fiscal reforms.
- Make foreign direct investment pro-poor and pro-environment.
- Find ways to ensure Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) more explicitly contribute to poverty reduction in their implementation.
- Encourage sustainable production and sustainable consumption methods.
- Enhance effectiveness of development cooperation and debt relief that is not only based on the WTO principles and negotiations but also on ethics and equity aimed at sustainable development and poverty reduction.

While all of us agree that the situation and scenarios are complex, complexity should not be an excuse for inaction!

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IUCN - The World Conservation Union

Founded in 1948, The World Conservation Union brings together states, government agencies and a diverse range of non-governmental organizations in a unique world partnership: over 980 members in all, spread across some 140 countries.

As a Union, IUCN seeks to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

The World Conservation Union builds on the strengths of its members, networks and partners to enhance their capacity and to support global alliances to safeguard natural resources at local, regional and global levels.

Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia (RBP)

IUCN's Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia (RBP) was established 1996 to assist countries in Asia implement the Convention on Biological Diversity. Working with 12 countries in Asia. RBP is creating an enabling environment in the region through partnership with governments, NGOs, community based organisations, donors and other stakeholders on technical as well as policy issues.

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