

Letter from civil society regarding public food stockholding programs

24 November, 2014

To Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO):

As 116 organizations of civil society from countries of the global North and South, representing consumer groups, environmentalists, trade unions, farmers' groups, women's organizations, and other development advocates, we are writing to you to convey our deep concern over the process and content of what is currently being negotiated at the WTO on the peace clause related to the G-33 Proposal on food security and the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) as part of the Bali package from December 2013. The Bali package was a highly unfair and unbalanced agreement in the first place. It included a permanent Trade Facilitation Agreement that was extracted by the developed countries while including only best endeavour clauses on the development package for least-developed countries (LDCs). In addition, the Bali package included only a "temporary" peace clause on the G-33 proposal on food security, which was further weighed down by stringent conditionalities.¹ The G-33 proposal was a genuine demand by a number of developing countries, led by India, to change the WTO rules to allow domestic subsidies to producers in developing countries and LDCs for public food stockholding programs, to be given without limit.

The current WTO rules have been identified by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food as a barrier to global food security. Given the impacts of global climate change, food price speculation, and rich country subsidies, it is immoral that developing countries and LDCs are still prevented by WTO rules from investing in domestic small-holder production, which has been repeatedly identified as one of the most important globally-agreed poverty-reduction strategies. This shows the importance of changing the WTO rules to allow these public food stockholding programs for the food security of developing countries and LDCs and how essential these subsidies are for supporting food production, procurement as well as for farmers' livelihoods.

According to news reports, the United States and India have reached a deal on public stockholdings for food security purposes. According to the media,² the text of the deal between India and the United States will only be released on 24 November 2014 and countries will be required to decide on it two days later, on 26 November 2014. This process is too rushed for such a vitally important issue and is extremely non-transparent. A deal reached between two countries does not mean that it suits all other countries. There should be a proper process to include the views of all other WTO member countries after having given them long enough to

¹ http://wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/mc9_e/desci38_e.htm

² Washington Trade Daily, 21 November 2014

carefully and thoroughly consider all the implications for current and future programs of the deal reached between the U.S. and India.

The text of the U.S.-India deal has not yet been released but for it to be adequate for food security it must contain the following provisions:

- An unambiguous statement that the peace clause lasts until there is a permanent solution.
- That any peace clause applies to existing as well as new programs. The Bali Ministerial Conference Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes Decision is grossly inadequate because it only applies to programs existing as of 7 December 2013. This unnecessary restriction punishes those who did not have programs in place at the time they were asked to rapidly agree to this Decision. Many other developing countries and LDCs may want to have these programs in future, for example when the global financial crisis is over and so they are able to afford them. It is very unfair that the Decision does not allow them to start these programs by using the peace clause in the future.
- none of the onerous and inappropriate conditions on the peace clause that were in the Bali Decision, including those identified in our previous letter of 20 November 2013, which was endorsed by more than 230 civil society groups globally.³
- a requirement that the permanent solution should be quickly agreed with a satisfactory permanent solution by June 2015. From our perspective, the permanent solution must allow subsidies to producers for supporting public food programs as part of the Green Box that can be used by developing countries and LDCs without conditions and without limits. This is important because the current system of calculating subsidies based on 1986-88 reference prices would make almost any government purchase from farmers at today's price a violation of WTO rules by wrongly magnifying the subsidy. Therefore the permanent solution must also correct the outdated reference price date and base the calculation of subsidies on current global prices.

We therefore urge you to ensure that developing countries' and LDCs' interests are not sacrificed in the current negotiations and at the special General Council meeting on 26 November 2014 in order to clear the path for the TFA. Crucial development issues in developing countries and LDCs such as food security and farmers livelihoods must be addressed to their satisfaction if the Doha Development Agenda is to truly be a development round of negotiations at the WTO. A peace clause and committed accelerated work program on a permanent solution as outlined above needs to be agreed.

Signed by

International and Regional Organizations and Networks

³ <http://www.ourworldisnotforsale.org/en/signon/global-civil-society-calls-permanent-solution-g-33-food-security-proposal-wto>

1	LDC Watch	LDC Watch is a global alliance of national, regional and international civil society organisations (CSOs), networks and movements based in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
2	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)	The IUF is currently composed of 385 trade unions in 123 countries representing a combined representational membership of over 12 million workers (including a financial membership of 2.6 million). It is based in Geneva, Switzerland.
3	South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)	An alliance to fight against poverty and injustice in South Asia comprising journalists, academics, trade unionists, human rights activists, NGOs and other civil society actors across the region.
4	Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG)	PANG is a Pacific regional network promoting economic justice in globalisation with specific attention to: 1) Accountability and transparency in economic and trade policy processes, 2) Poverty eradication, 3) Equitable development and sustainable livelihoods (opportunity, access, impact) and 4) Food sovereignty and environmental sustainability.
5	Third World Network (TWN)	Third World Network (TWN) is an independent non-profit international network of organisations and individuals involved in issues relating to development, developing countries and North-South affairs.
6	Third World Network (TWN) Africa	TWN-Africa co-ordinates the Africa Trade Network which was established in 1998 by TWN-Africa, and has over 25 members from 15 countries in Africa.
7	ACP Civil Society Forum	The Forum is a coalition of 80 not-for-profit organisations working on issues relating to ACP-EU development cooperation. It seeks to cater for the diverse range civil society development issues within the wide geographic coverage of the ACP group.

National Organization

8	Australian Fair Trade and investment Network	Australia
9	Fórum das Organizações Não Governamentais Angolanas (FONGA)	Angola

10	Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Centre (GARDC)	Antigua and Barbuda
11	Civil Society Bahamas	Bahamas
12	Equity and Justice Working Group Bangladesh (EquityBD)	Bangladesh
13	Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)	Bangladesh
14	Intergrated community and industrial development in Bangladesh (INCIDIN)	Bangladesh
15	Barbados Association of Non Governmental Organizations	Barbados
16	Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology	Belize
17	Groupe de Recherche et d'Action pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture et du Développement (GRAPAD)	Benin Republic
18	Botswana Council of Non Governmental Organisations (BOCONGO)	Botswana
19	Cadre de concertation des OSC pour le suivi du CSLP (CdC/CSLP)	Burkina Faso
20	Civil Society Organization Network for Development (RESOCIDE)	Burkina Faso
21	Action Développement et Intégration Régionale (ADIR)	Burundi
22	Conseil des ONG Agrées du Cameroun (CONGAC)	Cameroon
23	Council of Canadians	Canada
24	National Farmers Union	Canada
25	Association Commerciale, Agricole, Industriel et du Service (ACAISA)	Cape Verde
26	Conseil Inter ONG En Centrafrique (CIONGCA)	Central African Rep.
27	Centre d'Information et de Liaison des ONG (CILONG)	Chad
28	Conseil de Concertation des ONGs de Développement (CCOD)	Congo
29	Cook Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (CIANGO)	Cook Islands
30	Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País	Cuba
31	Conseil National des ONG de Développement (CNONGD)	D.R. Congo
32	Kalingo Carib Council	Dominica
33	Alianza ONG	Dominican Republic

34	Forum des ONG pour le Développement Durable (FONGDD)	Eq. Guinea
35	Cotonou Task Force	Ethiopia
36	Poverty Action Network in Ethiopia (PANE)	Ethiopia
37	Concertation Nationale Des Organisations paysannes et des Producteurs (CNOP)	Gabon
38	Worldview	Gambia
39	Agricultural Workers Union of TUC	Ghana
40	Inter Agency Group of Development Organizations (IAGDO)	Grenada
41	Federation de Femmes Enterpreneurs et Affaires de la CEDEAO (FEFA)	Guinea
42	Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa (INEI)	Guinea-Bissau
43	Women Across Differences (WAD)	Guyana
44	Programme de Plaidoyer Pour une Intégration Alternative (PPIA)	Haïti
45	All India Union of Forest Workers and People (AIUFWP)	India
46	FDI Watch	India
47	Initiative for Health & Equity in Society	India
48	Diverse Women for Diversity	India
49	Feminist Learnig Partnerships	India
50	New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI)	India
51	Sunray Harvesters	India
52	Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA)	India
53	Rashtriya Raithu Seva Samithi (RRSS)	India
54	Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society (CECOEDECON)	India
55	Kirishak Biradari	India
56	Indonesia for Global Justice	Indonesia
57	Farmers Initiative for Ecological Livelihoods and Democracy (FIELD)	Indonesia
58	Aliansi Petani Perempuan Indonesia (APPI)	Indonesia
59	Aliansi Petani Indonesia (API)	Indonesia
60	Seknas Jokowi	Indonesia

61	Fairwatch	Italy
62	Alliance Pour la Reconstruction et le Developpement Post-Conflict (ARDPC)	Ivory Coast
63	National Council of NGOs	Kenya
64	Kiribati Association of Non-Governmental Organisation (KANGO)	Kiribati
65	Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN)	Lesotho
66	West African Women Association (WAWA)	Liberia
67	Plate-Forme Nationale des Organisations de la Societe Civile de Madagascar	Madagascar
68	Malawi Economic Justice Network	Malawi
69	Consumers Association of Penang	Malaysia
70	Sahabat Alam Malaysia	Malaysia
71	Foundation pour le Developpement au Sahel (FDS)	Mali
72	Marshall Islands Council of NGOs (MICNGOS)	Marshall Islands
73	Mauritius Trade Union Congress	Mauritius
74	Federation of Democratic Labour Unions	Mauritius
75	Migration and Sustainable Development Alliance	Mauritius
76	Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS)	Mauritius
77	FSM Alliance of NGOs (FANGO)	Micronesia
78	National Forum for Mozambiquan NGOs and CBOs (TEIA)	Mozambique
79	Namibia Non-Governmental Organisations Forum Trust	Namibia
80	Nauru Island Association of NGOs (NIANGO)	Nauru
81	Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)	Nepal
82	National du Réseau des Ong de Développement et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme et de la Démocratie (RODADDHD)	Niger
83	Association Nigérienne des Scouts de l Environnement du Niger	Nigeria
84	National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS)	Nigeria
85	Niue Island (Umbrella) Association of NGOs (NIUANGO)	Niue
86	Institute for Development Initiatives (IDI)	Pakistan

87	NOOR	Pakistan
88	Creed Alliance	Pakistan
89	Melanesian NGO Centre for Leadership (MNCL)	Papua New Guinea
90	Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services (IDEALS)	Philippines
91	Rwanda Civil Society Platform	Rwanda
92	Samoa Umbrella for Non Governmental Organisation (SUNGO)	Samoa
93	Forum das Ong de São Tomé e Príncipe (FONG-STP)	Sao Tomé and Príncipe
94	Plate-forme des acteurs non étatiques pour le suivi de l'Accord de Cotonou au Sénégal	Senegal
95	Liaison Unit of the non-governmental organisations of Seychelles - (LUNGOS)	Seychelles
96	Civil Society Movement of Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone
97	Development Service Exchange (DSE)	Solomon Islands
98	Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute - (SEATINI) - South Africa Chapter	South Africa
99	South African NGO Council (SANGOCO)	South Africa
100	Iyanola (St.Lucia) Council for the Advancement of Rastafari Incorporated (ICAR)	St. Lucia
101	Windward Islands Farmers' Association (WINFA)	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
102	Stichting Projekta	Suriname
103	Council for NGOs (CANGO)	Swaziland
104	Tanzania Association of NGOs	Tanzania
105	The Asia Foundation	Timor-Leste
106	Groupe d'Action et de Reflexion sur l'Environnement et le Développement (GARED)	Togo
107	Civil Society Forum of Tonga (CSFT)	Tonga

108	Grassroots Organisations of Trinidad & Tobago (GOTT)	Trinidad & Tobago
109	Tuvalu Association of NGOs (TANGO)	Tuvalu
110	Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute - (SEATINI)	Uganda
111	Consumer Education Trust	Uganda
112	Food & Water Watch	US
113	Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)	US
114	Vanuatu Association of NGOs (VANGO)	Vanuatu
115	Zambia Council for Social Development	Zambia
116	National Association of NGOs (NANGO)	Zimbabwe