

SPECIAL RELEASE

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WTO'S RENEWED ATTACK ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

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The World Trade Organization talks are now at a crucial stage and particularly threaten Southern agriculture and food sovereignty. The WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) reached at the end of the Uruguay Round has already gone far in opening up and destroying domestic agriculture sectors in its decade of implementation. The AoA being renegotiated during the current Doha Round, resumed in early 2007, aims to bring this destructive process even further forward. The Chair of the WTO's agriculture negotiations, Ambassador Crawford Falconer of New Zealand, provided a paper in late April purportedly aimed at moving the agriculture talks forward. Its proposals however merely affirmed, once again, that the direction of the WTO's AoA is towards the only kind of deal acceptable to the big Northern powers: one that benefits them at the expense of the already impoverished rural producers of the South.

WTO Director General Pascal Lamy spent the first few months of 2007 travelling the globe and working to manoeuvre a conclusion to the current Doha round of multilateral world trade talks. At the core of the deadlock in talks is a refusal by the big Northern powers – particularly the United States (US) and European Union (EU) – to substantially reduce their support and protections for their domestic agricultural sectors while compelling the global South to more fully open up their agricultural, industrial and service sectors to Northern goods and capital. Governments of the weaker Southern powers are hoping to preserve as much control over domestic sectors as they can. However while these include the big underdeveloped countries of Brazil and India, the “free market” agenda that the WTO embodies has already essentially been embraced and this is a defensive battle at best.

This Special Release on “**WTO's Renewed Attack on Food Sovereignty**” is researched and written by Sonny Africa, an economist based in the Philippines. Mr. Africa heads the research department of IBON Foundation Inc., an independent development institution established in 1978 that provides research, education, publications, information work and advocacy support on socioeconomic issues.

This fourth issue of Special Release is published by the People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS) and the Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific (PAN AP). This publication aims to provide critical analyses and raise awareness on food sovereignty issues.

PCFS is a growing network of various grassroots groups of small food producers particularly of peasant-farmer organisations and their support NGOs, working towards a People's Convention on Food Sovereignty.

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) is a global network working to eliminate the human and environmental harm caused by pesticides and to promote biodiversity based ecological agriculture. PAN Asia and the Pacific is committed to the empowerment of people especially women, agricultural workers, peasant and indigenous farmers.



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