

The WTO, the WSSD Johannesburg Mandate and the Millennium Development Goals: Strengthening Systemic Linkages

Presentation at
ICTSD-IUCN side event
“Ensuring Access to Water and Sanitation-
The Trade Dimension”

UN CSD-12, New York
22 April 2004

Existing systemic Links between the WTO (Doha) and Johannesburg SD mandates and the Millennium Development Goals

- All mandates are rooted in the concept of sustainable development (SD)
- In a nutshell :
 - the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) lay down certain clear SD goals to be achieved
 - the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation provides a broad road-map of steps to be taken towards SD and
 - the WTO Doha mandate constitutes a potentially powerful tool to give effect to this road-map and contribute to the MDGs by shaping international trade rules and thereby the trade and investment flows that result

An example: Access to water and sanitation

- “Ensuring environmental sustainability” MDG#7 has as a target halving “..by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to drinking water and basic sanitation”
- The Johannesburg POI (Part IV, Para 25) provides in this regard for “actions at all levels..” including among others to “ (a) Mobilise international and domestic financial resources .., promote best practice and support capacity –building for water and sanitation infrastructure and services development,..” and (d) Intensify water pollution prevention to reduce health hazards and protect ecosystems by introducing technologies for affordable sanitation and industrial and domestic wastewater treatment...”

Some WTO Issue Areas relevant to sustainable development

- Clarifying the relationship between Multilateral environmental agreements and trade rules—Could ensure that WTO rules respect multilaterally agreed environmental mandates
- Agriculture (where most of the world's poor work): Through negotiations that help lower tariffs and non—tariff barriers to market access for developing country exports while ensuring that trade rules contribute to food security and rural livelihoods
- Industrial goods: By removing high tariffs on processed goods from developing countries could contribute to value-addition and employment in developing countries

- Towards sustainable fisheries: By negotiating reduction on fishing subsidies, a major cause of overfishing
- Services: Greater access to temporary movement of developing country workers in developed country markets
- Intellectual property: Developing and clarifying rules could enable the protection of biodiversity and benefits to indigenous people
- Environmental goods and services: An area where trade rules and liberalisation could have a significant impact on sustainable development, for example in terms of access to water and sanitation. This impact could be positive or negative depending on how rules are shaped, the nature of domestic regulation, the type of liberalisation undertaken and the timing and sequencing of liberalisation

Forging systemic linkages: What needs to be done

- Linkages between mandates exist but needs to be more concretely identified and strengthened by policy makers in a coherent manner
- This could be done by:
- ***Translating MDG objectives into national sustainable development needs and priorities*** as in water and sanitation in consultation with relevant stakeholders
- ***Assessing these needs and priorities in the context of the roadmap provided by the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.*** What has been said? What is the state of implementation? What are the constraints?
- ***Asking how trade is relevant to those needs?*** Does it fit into the national strategy? What is the strategy at the WTO and for regional trade negotiations? (Eg: What are the environmental goods and services relevant to water and sanitation? How are they being dealt with in the WTO?)

- ***Working out a a strategy for WTO and regional trade negotiations*** which results in trade rules that reflects and operationalises these SD needs and priorities. (Eg: How should trade rules be shaped so that access to water and sanitation for different regions and socio-economic groups are enhanced rather than constrained. This may call for:
 - Coordinated plan of action worked out between environmental, developmental and trade policy makers in capitals
 - Translating the plan of action into a strategy for trade negotiations
 - Communicating this strategy to WTO trade negotiators in Geneva and the regions

- Coordinating between different trade negotiating groups
Eg: negotiating bodies on goods, services, agriculture and working group on domestic regulation etc
- Communicating outcomes of trade negotiations back to policy makers in capitals and relevant stakeholders
- Assessing and evaluating these outcomes in terms of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (POI) and the Millennium Development Goals
- Taking corrective action to steer trade negotiations towards the SD framework provided by the POI and the MDGs
- This exercise could be done for trade negotiations as a whole or in terms of needs of specific sectors-such as water and sanitation or regions-eg: Small Island Developing States
- Thank you