

# *The Battle* *After Seattle*

**A Working Paper for Strategic  
Planning & Action on the WTO.**

**Prepared for Internal Discussion  
and Feedback by Civil Society  
Groups in Canada**

**by  
Maude Barlow & Tony Clarke**

**January 31, 2000**

# *Contents*

Introduction

1. Seattle Showdown p. 2

- \* Civil Society Protests
- \* North/South Divide
- \* Power Bloc Differences

2. Political Challenges p. 4

- \* WTO Regime
- \* DFAIT Structures
- \* E/W - N/S Alliances

3. Critical Issues p. 6

- \* Agriculture
- \* Services
- \* Intellectual Property

4. Policy Demands p. 9

- \* WTO Negotiations
- \* Citizens' Round
- \* Democratic Governance

5. Campaign Strategies p.11

- \* Campaign Goals
- \* Campaign Targets
- \* Campaign Themes

6. Movement Building p. 13

- \* National Movement
- \* Grassroots Movements
- \* International Movement

## Introduction:

For many activists both here in Canada and around the world, the Battle of Seattle which took place between November 26<sup>th</sup> and December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1999, marked a turning point in the agenda for economic globalization. The fight for democratic rights, which broke out in the streets of Seattle on November 30<sup>th</sup> and erupted again later inside the trade convention centre, has become the shameful legacy of the World Trade Organization.

Whatever else may be said, the Seattle WTO Summit symbolized both a 'watershed' and a 'beachhead'. As a 'watershed' moment, the dramatic collapse of the WTO talks and the failure to launch a new round of negotiations for the expansion of world-wide trade by transnational corporations brought the engines of globalization to a 'standstill', at least for the time being. As a 'beachhead' moment, the mobilization of mass resistance to the WTO by civil society groups set the stage for a potential 'rollback' of the agenda for economic globalization which has been systematically entrenched over the past quarter century.

In effect, the slogan 'No New Round, Turnaround' which signified the campaign objectives of many civil society groups on the WTO leading up to Seattle, was certainly half accomplished. To be sure, this is no small victory! But, the lingering question for many civil society activists coming out of Seattle has to do with "where do we go next." The legitimacy of the WTO as a global governing institution and, to some extent, the Ottawa trade bureaucracy, has been dealt a severe blow. The question for civil society groups now is how do we sustain this momentum and continue to go on the offensive.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a framework for doing some strategic reflection, analysis and planning in response to these basic questions. The paper is divided into six parts. It begins with some reflections on the 'Seattle showdown' followed by a look at some of the 'political challenges' on the horizon for civil society groups. After this, we review the 'critical issues' at stake in the so-called built-in WTO negotiations that will proceed regardless of what happened in Seattle plus the kind of 'policy demands' which might be made in calling for a citizens' round of negotiations. Finally, we identify some priorities for 'campaign strategies' and 'movement building.'

It should be emphasized that this is **not** meant to be a detailed plan of action. Instead, it is intended to initiate strategic discussion and planning about the future. Originally, this paper was prepared to provide a possible starting point for our collective discussions when we gather under the auspices of the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Labour Congress for our first national trade campaign meeting since Seattle. It is also our hope, however, that all of our various organizations will be able to use this paper to stimulate some internal strategic discussions about what to do in response to the WTO agenda, given the interests and concerns of our own members and constituencies. For this reason, we have added a 'discussion starter' containing a set of questions at the end of each section. Your feedback on these discussion questions is needed if we are going to develop a common action plan along with a common organizational vehicle for the battles we will face after Seattle.

## 1. Seattle Showdown

Everyone who participated in the Battle of Seattle came away enormously energized and uplifted. Coming on the heels of the MAI victory, Seattle may prove to be a turning point in the international democracy movement. In thinking about where we go from here, it is necessary first to reflect on some of the reasons for the collapse of the WTO talks and the lessons we might take away from this reflection.

Many in the media and the public mistakenly assumed that the protests in Seattle just "happened" — parallel spontaneous outbreaks of resistance from an unrelated set of interest groups. This is wrong. For months ahead, civil society groups around the world struggled to come to a common analysis of the WTO and produced a civil society declaration on the WTO ratified by 1,500 organizations internationally. A common demand was carefully worked out among the groups from many countries best summed up by the slogan: "No New Round - Turnaround." As well, on-the-ground organizing, initially spearheaded by Public Citizen and local labour unions, was taking place almost a full year before the talks. Finally, starting with a massive Teach-In sponsored by the International Forum on Globalization, major educational events such as public debates, forums, workshops and seminars were held continuously throughout the following week all over the city. The fusion between action and education was a built-in axiom of the week.

As a virtual police state descended on the city, the talks ground on in an air of tension, suspicion and conflict. While there were clearly many factors at work in the scuttling of the Millennium Round, three major causes stand out.

*Civil Society Protests:* For months, and even years before, groups representing human rights, labour, the environment, farmers, food safety, health and consumer concerns, social justice, culture, indigenous peoples, international development and others had worked tirelessly to bring their concerns regarding global trade and the WTO to their governments. In Canada, years of organizing around NAFTA and the MAI prepared civil society groups to challenge the WTO from a base of strength. Hundreds of groups testified before the Parliamentary Committee hearings on the WTO and at least a dozen well-attended public forums and teach-ins were held across Canada in the months leading up to Seattle. All governments brought these political concerns with them to the table. In Seattle, the protests started before the talks began and continued unabated throughout. The labour-sponsored rally of 50,000 demonstrators (including 41 bus loads of Canadians) was paralleled by several thousand highly-disciplined, very courageous youth protesters trained in non-violent civil disobedience. Between them, they dominated the political and media agenda throughout the week. Three thousand journalists had come from all over the world to cover the liberalization of global trade. Instead, they sent home stories about protesters, endangered sea turtles, sweat shops, child poverty, the plight of Third World farmers and demands for the democratization of the WTO. As one commentator observed, most of the world went to bed one night not even knowing there was such a thing as a

WTO and woke up the next morning filled with curiosity about it.

*North/South Divide:* Inside the Conference Centre, delegates did their best to ignore the outbreak of democracy on the streets. What they didn't count on was the outbreak of democracy inside the Conference Centre itself. After much wrangling and foot-dragging on the part of the U.S., developing countries, who almost universally believe that the WTO has not delivered on promised benefits to the South, were assured for the first time an equal role in the Seattle process. Many, particularly in Asia and Africa, were opposed to the inclusion of the new issues — investment, competition, and government procurement — being touted in particular by Europe. They wanted to first deal with the issues of implementation from the last round of talks, but soon found their concerns dismissed by Northern countries. Tension quickly built. When President Clinton publicly called for labour standards in the WTO, developing countries felt that their issues had not been heard at all. Buoyed by civil society protest, the developing country delegates started demanding a democratic process inside the meetings, with resulting paralysis. Charlene Barshefsky was blunt in her warning. Democracy was being attempted, she declared, by "allowing" developing countries to participate. But if the process didn't work to her satisfaction, she told an international press conference, she would exercise her authority and unilaterally impose her agenda on the meeting. She did that on the last two days, calling "friendly" countries into "Green Room" sessions — invitation-only meetings intended to set the agenda others must follow. Third World delegates, backed by their NGOs, were palpably furious and refused to capitulate.

*Power Block Differences:* The third powerful dynamic that sealed the fate of the talks were unbridgeable differences between the developed nations, particularly Europe and the United States. At issue were the delicate subjects of agricultural subsidies, dumping, genetically modified foods and the so-called "Singapore" issues of investment, competition and transparency. European countries, in particular France and Norway, joined Japan in refusing to reduce agricultural supports and insisted on putting forward the notion of "multi-functionality" — that agriculture is more than just growing food for profit, but involves multiple factors including 'food security, environment, rural-urban relationships, and food safety.' The U.S. and Canada took a hard pro-agribusiness line, insisting that domestic support and export subsidy programs be drastically reduced, if not eliminated, in order to expand global agricultural trade. As well, the European Commissioner, checkmated by six environmental ministers from European Union countries who were later reinforced by 12 EU trade ministers, suddenly withdrew support for a WTO working committee on biotechnology proposed by Canada to promote the export of genetically engineered food products. On the last day of the meeting, it became clear that an impasse was imminent when, with only hours to go, the EU announced it would not sign-on to the agricultural negotiating agenda until there was agreement to include other key issues in the new round [i.e. investment, competition, government procurement]. Overarching the entire proceedings was the arrogance of the U.S., which

bungled the proceedings, underestimated the size of the protests, mishandled the developing nations and generally acted as a bully. Many felt it inappropriate that U.S. Trade Representative, Charlene Barshefsky, did not act as a neutral chair, and her inflexibility provoked an unprecedented amount of public criticism from all sides.

### **Discussion Starters**

1. *Were any members of your group able to be in Seattle for the WTO events? If so, what was their experience? What were the reactions of those who followed the events from back home?*
2. *What do you see as the relationship between the defeat of the MAI and the failure to start a new round of WTO negotiations? Do you think these events signify a turning point?*
3. *What impact, if any, did Seattle have on your organization? Do you see more priority being given to the WTO and related issues of globalization?*

## **2. Political Challenges**

The collapse of the WTO Millennium Round, fueled by the massive resistance mounted in Seattle, poses a series of political challenges for civil society groups, both here in Canada and internationally.

Leading up to Seattle, the WTO was correctly and increasingly portrayed by civil society movements as the emergence of a new world government primarily designed to operate in the interests of transnational corporations. As a global governing institution, the WTO possesses *de facto* judicial, legislative and even executive powers. In literature published by civil society groups, numerous examples were presented to illustrate how these WTO powers are used to change unwanted laws, policies and programs of nation states. Acting on behalf of their corporate clients, governments can use the WTO's body of rules and dispute settlement mechanism to, in effect, compel other countries to ratchet down and/or re-write laws and programs governing a wide range of domestic concerns including food safety, health care, environmental safeguards, workers rights, cultural integrity, and social security. In short, what the WTO's model of corporate-government collusion represents is nothing less than a fundamental threat to democracy itself. Furthermore, the dangers of global corporate governance are bound to intensify as the WTO consolidates strategic alliances with both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

From this perspective, it is now clear that the 'Battle of Seattle' dealt a serious blow to the legitimacy of the WTO. But this turn of events raises several strategic questions and challenges for civil society groups.

*WTO Regime:* One strategic issue arising out of Seattle, paraphrasing Public Citizen, is

whether to ‘fix’ or ‘nix’ the WTO regime. While some want to take advantage of the moment to press for reform of the WTO to make it more accountable to civil society concerns, others maintain that the model is so thoroughly flawed that we should seize the opportunity now to dismantle and replace it. The limits, as well as the possibilities, of these two different strategies need to be discussed and debated. Yet, this need not be an ‘either/or’ proposition. The *fix-it or nix-it* slogan emerging out of Seattle could be used in such a way as to combine both in a common strategy. Instead of simply reforming the WTO, for example, a platform of radical changes could be put forward calling for a major transformation of the WTO’s mandate, rules and procedures. If, as is likely, civil society’s platform for change is rejected outright, then the stage could be set for demanding that the WTO be dismantled and replaced altogether. Once rejected, a fall-back strategy could be implemented, one designed to take advantage of opportunities for monkey wrenching the current negotiations in such a way as to rollback and destabilize the operations of the WTO. At the same time, measures could be taken to strengthen countervailing mechanisms such as the ILO, UNCTAD, UNEP. All this, of course, would have to be undertaken with a vision of fundamentally transforming institutions of global governance.

*DFAIT Structures:* The same strategic question of ‘*fix-it or nix-it*’ arises in relation to Ottawa’s mechanisms for developing and implementing Canada’s trade policies through DFAIT [Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade]. As we all know, DFAIT is a classic example of corporate-government collusion in terms of international trade policy making. Prior to Seattle, several of our organizations insisted that this collusion be broken in DFAIT and that new trade policy making mechanisms involving civil society groups be put in place. At that time, commitments were made by DFAIT officials to discuss specific proposals regarding a mechanism for civil society participation. Not only is a civil society mechanism imperative, but a countervail strategy also needs to be developed for the purpose of strengthening other key federal departments [e.g. environment, culture, health, human resources, labour etc.] to play a positive role as effective checks and balances to the DFAIT policy making apparatus. The danger of pursuing such a strategy, of course, is that civil society groups could easily be trapped and coopted in terms of time and energies. Nevertheless, a plan of action needs to be devised and a consensus developed amongst civil society groups before a real challenge to DFAIT’s corporate-government juggernaut can be mounted.

*E/W -N/S Alliances:* Another major political challenge over the next 18 months is to cultivate stronger alliances with like-minded civil society movements and, where possible, governments on both an East/West and a North/South basis. In Seattle, the work that was done with European counterparts to block the Canada-U.S. proposal for a WTO working group on bio-technology provides a good example of what can be done with such strategic and/or tactical alliances. Similar kinds of strategic alliances need to be cultivated with European civil society groups and governments around the forthcoming GATS negotiations [especially on health, education, social, culture, environmental and related public services] and, where possible, the Agricultural negotiations [perhaps around the

multi-functional definition of agriculture] At the same time, concerted actions must be taken to strengthen alliances with the South. Given the developing countries reaction to their systemic exclusion from WTO decision making in Seattle, it is crucial that a countervailing bloc be forged amongst like-minded governments from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Here, strategies need to be worked out with groups like the Third World Network and related civil society allies from our various sectors in the South. A key to these strategies will be overcoming North/South divisions around labour and environmental standards. In the wake of Seattle, there may be space to develop a common plan amongst civil society groups for resolving these divisions.

#### **Discussion Starters**

- 1. Do you feel that the WTO can be 'fixed' or should it be 'nixed.' What do you think of the idea of combining both in a common strategy as suggested above?*
- 2. What do you think should be done to change the way in which international trade policy is made through DFAIT in this country? What are the pros and cons of fighting for a mechanism for civil society participation?*
- 3. Do you have partners in Europe or the Third World? What kinds of alliances could be forged with these partners? On what issues?*

### **3. Critical Issues**

In light of the collapse of the Seattle talks, there are a series of more immediate, critical issues facing both the proponents and opponents of the WTO. It is not yet clear as to whether Seattle represents the end of a new round, or just a temporary set-back. In all likelihood, negotiations will be launched on the so-called "built-in" agenda of agriculture and services left over from the last GATT round. But, how these negotiations proceed will be tempered by other factors including: whether the huge gaps between the North and the South and between Europe and North America can be bridged; whether the process will be put on hold until the United States has a new president and a renewed fast-track mandate; whether the WTO will actually undertake the long, hard process of institutional reform.

For WTO opponents, there are other lingering concerns. First, governments and corporations still have the power they had before Seattle to use WTO rules to ratchet down unwanted laws, policies and programs in Canada. On culture, for example, the Chretien government's promises of a carve-out fizzled in Seattle, with only the faintest hope of a preamble statement that would have been without any teeth in any case. Secondly, there is the public spin being put forward that it is the WTO, not NGOs, who is the real friend to the developing world. Yet, many Third World governments and NGOS view the attempt by the U.S. and other First World countries to place environmental and labour clauses into trade agreements, not only as another way to dominate the South, but also as a form of hypocrisy since the U.S. has refused to

sign most of the ILO core labour accords and some MEAs like the biosafety protocol. Third, there are concerns about the response of big business to the fiasco in Seattle. It is sure to regroup and come back with cosmetic proposals while solidifying its power over governments. Right now, for example, the CEOs of the world's top corporations are meeting with political leaders [e.g. Bill Clinton, Tony Blair] at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where they are talking about promoting a social responsibility image for big business through voluntary compacts.

In the likelihood that negotiations will proceed on the built-in agenda items at the WTO, however, there are at least three sets of critical issues that require close scrutiny by civil society groups here in Canada and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

*Agriculture:* Under previous Uruguay Round commitments, new negotiations in agriculture were slated to begin by January 1, 2000. The U.S. is determined to move ahead with these talks in spite of the lack of consensus in Seattle. It has to show that the WTO is still alive and well and cannot afford to drop the issues contained in this portfolio. Further, because agriculture was so contentious in Seattle, if there is no agreement forthcoming on this sector, it is hard to see how the larger talks could be restarted. But if the logjams in agriculture can be broken, the stage can be set for a whole new round. Primarily because of the EU rejection, the Seattle text now carries little or no weight. Whenever the agricultural negotiations begin, they will likely focus on the basic issues of market access, domestic support and export subsidies. Given the current farm crisis here in Canada and elsewhere, it is crucial that these talks be closely monitored and that a critical eye be kept on the Canadian government which has adopted an agribusiness rather than a multi-functional view of agriculture. At the same time, 'non-trade concerns' such as food safety will likely be contentious issues in these negotiations. Canada, along with other major exporters of biotech food products insist that food safety regulations based on health or environmental reasons must be subject to WTO rules [i.e. Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade]. The new Bio-Safety Protocol adopted in Montreal this past weekend is based on the same premiss.

*Services:* Although the Seattle text on service negotiations appeared to have general support, it not clear that these talks will proceed apart from the Agricultural negotiations.

---

<sup>1</sup> For more details on the WTO negotiating agenda, see Scott Sinclair's *WTO Briefing Note* regarding what happened in Seattle and what next in Geneva. Available at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Nevertheless, the U.S. fully expects that the GATS negotiations will go ahead as scheduled starting from the Seattle text. The built-in mandate includes "achieving a progressively higher level of liberalization" of services and "the reduction or elimination of the adverse effects on trade in services of measures as a means of providing effective market access." The Seattle text clearly states that states that "no service sector or mode of supply shall be excluded a priori." From a Canadian perspective, this means that health, education, social, culture, postal, energy, water and other environmental services will be, from the outset, on the table. DFAIT officials are now saying that the rest of this year will be used to develop a "consensus" amongst Canadians for negotiation on these issues. Meanwhile, the GATS negotiating mandate allows for the use of "horizontal" approaches whereby the rules would be applied to all service sectors and modes of delivery. It also allows for more low profile means of negotiations such as sectoral agreements which have been cobbled together in the past on issues basic telecommunications with little or no public awareness. Furthermore, it is quite possible that government procurement will be included in the services.

*Intellectual Property:* While intellectual property rights were not part of the built-in agenda, the TRIPS Agreement in the WTO contains clauses designed to trigger negotiations on specific matters. For example, developing countries and transition-economy countries were given five years, until January 1, 2000, in the Uruguay Round to apply the provisions of TRIPS. Although developing countries sought extensions in Seattle; the U.S. and Canada were opposed to granting them. As a result, a country by country review of TRIPS implementation is due to take place this year, including the controversial Article 27.3 that allows member governments to exclude plants and animals other than microbiological products and processes. Whereas the global biotech industry, backed by the U.S., wants Article 27.3 removed or substantially modified, the developing countries led by the African Group wants this protection against the patenting of life forms extended to include other natural processes and living organisms. Canada's role, particularly after the bio-safety protocol negotiations in Montreal, need to be closely scrutinized with a view to urgent action during this period.

#### **Discussion Starters**

- 1. Which of these sets of WTO negotiations are bound to have a direct impact on your members or constituency? How do you see the WTO negotiations affecting your work on these issues over the next 18 months?*
- 2. Does your organization have the means to monitor the WTO negotiations on your issues of concern? What kind of collective mechanisms should be set up to monitor and share information?*
- 3. What kinds of alliances can be built with other groups around these negotiations? What steps do we need to take together to hold Ottawa's 'feet to the fire' on these negotiations?*

## 4. Policy Demands

The win in Seattle provides the international civil society movement with an important opportunity. While we can have no illusions that the power brokers are already planning their comeback, which will include attempts at co-optation, we must realize that we have won an important battle. “The supposedly unstoppable force of economic globalization,” declared Public Citizens’ Lori Wallach, “met the truly unstoppable force of democracy.”

In post-Seattle meetings, WTO negotiators cannot even agree over what went wrong and whether or not they have any mandate to proceed. WTO Director-General, Michael Moore, has undertaken a bruising round of national consultations with disappointing results. He sees, he said recently, "no breakthrough-type meetings at dawn" and cautioned that the process would be long and painful. Not surprisingly, the U.S. is threatening an agriculture trade war if the sides stay entrenched. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, recently warned Europe that failure to bend on the issue agriculture could lead to Congress passing legislation to counter EU subsidies. France and Japan are holding talks to curb the power of the U.S. in international trade, even threatening to pull out of the WTO and create their own institutions. And the trouble doesn't stop there. Support is growing in Congress for a resolution calling for U.S. withdrawal from the WTO. While the bill isn't expected to garner enough support to override a Presidential veto, it is evidence of mounting U.S. public opinion against the WTO .

At this point, the challenge facing civil society movements is to seize the moment by building on the momentum generated by Seattle. What is needed is a citizens’ agenda of policy demands that can be used to forge a debate about democratic governance of the global economy and the future of the planet. The following are some pieces of this agenda.

WTO Negotiations: As Canadians, we need to develop a platform of policy demands on the key issues of concern to our own constituencies in the forthcoming set of WTO negotiations. In collaboration with the National Farmers’ Union and related allies in rural communities, we must take a clear stance on the multi-functional character of agriculture [re. food security, the environment, rural-urban relations, food safety] and, from this base, develop positions on the main areas of negotiation such as market access, domestic support and export subsidies. On food safety, we could invoke the precautionary principle to support the demand for a five year moratorium on the export of GE foods until independent tests have been satisfactorily conducted and completed. In regards to the service negotiations, we should insist that Ottawa take immediate steps to call for the removal of health, education and social services from the table. Countries should be allowed to set their own cultural policies through a new global accord that would be exempt from WTO rules. Water should also be removed from the list of environmental services and Ottawa should take further steps to ensure that water is fully exempted from the WTO as good, a service, or an investment. On the patenting of life forms, Ottawa should be pressed to support the maintenance of article 27.3 of TRIPS [re. exclusion of

animal and plant life forms from corporate patents] plus further protections against bio-piracy proposed by developing countries such as indigenous knowledge. Finally, we should begin work with our counterparts in Third World countries to develop a much more comprehensive and effective approach to ensuring labour standards, human rights and environmental safeguards.

*Citizens' Round:* In order to go on the offensive, we could further demand that the next round of global trade negotiations be a Citizens' Round based on a platform of democracy, sustainability and development priorities. During this Round, steps would be taken to conduct a critical assessment of the WTO and the global trade, investment and financial system on the development of communities, environmental sustainability and democratic rights. Discussions could take place on what areas of the 'global commons' should be carved out of WTO rules and fully exempted from trade markets, including seeds, genes, water, culture, and heritage, plus health, education and social services. To curb the expanding powers of the WTO, the Citizens' Round would seek to restrict the ability of governments and corporations to use WTO rules for overturning nation-state laws and practices that protect the environment, health, development and human rights. No new issues, such as the negotiation of a global investment treaty, would be added during this Round and measures would be taken to remove the WTO supremacy clauses in Multilateral Environment Agreements which, in effect, severely restricts governments in their use of the precautionary principle.

*Democratic Governance:* Indeed, the call for a Citizens' Round along these lines lays the ground for a set of demands requiring the democratization of the governing institutions that preside over global trade [and, for that matter, investment and finance as well]. To be sure, a great deal of work remains to be done on designing instruments of effective democratic governance for global trade. This task must, of course, be carried out with civil society movements in other countries, both North and South. In the meantime, however, concrete steps can be taken to curb the powers of the WTO. To make the global trade system more accountable to democratic legislatures, we should demand that all negotiated WTO rules and disciplines be subjected to full parliamentary scrutiny and ratification before they can be enacted. To overcome the WTO's power imbalances, its decision making structures must be completely overhauled to include full representation from the developing countries of the South, including the provision of necessary resources and infrastructure. To generate further counterweights to the WTO, a concerted plan to strengthen the ILO and the MEAs through enforcement mechanisms needs to be put together as well. At home, the structures of DFAIT must also be completely overhauled to include new mechanisms for civil society participation as well as more effective accountability measures regarding other government departments whose policies are affected by the WTO. Moreover, civil society groups in this country need to develop a more democratic means such as a constituent assembly for discussing, debating and reaching consensus on common policy positions to be advocated on global trade issues.

### **Discussion Starters**

1. *Do you think the time has come for civil society groups to seize the moment and go on the offensive? Would your group be willing to work on hammering out a common set of policy demands for the forthcoming WTO negotiations?*
2. *What do you think about the call for a Citizens' Round? Do you have any additional ideas or suggestions?*
3. *What educational work should be done with your members regarding this agenda?*

## **5. Campaign Strategies**

In this post-Seattle context, we also need to develop some new campaign strategies for the purpose of launching this citizens' agenda in relation to the WTO and the negotiations that are expected to take place over the next 18 months.

At the outset, we need to forge our own common platform for promoting the priorities outlined in the previous sections. For example, both the critical issues [section 3] and the policy demands [section 4] could provide a common basis for developing short term campaign strategies related to the WTO's agenda for negotiations over the next 18 months. Hopefully, the Trade and Investment Monitoring Project will be able to provide some assistance in giving precision to these strategies. In turn, this agenda needs to be further integrated with the longer term goal of demanding a Citizens' Round of trade negotiations focused on the priorities of development, sustainability and democracy. Moreover, this common platform needs to be cast in terms of the *fix or nix* strategies for transforming the WTO and DFAIT and building international alliances [re. political challenges in section 2 above]. From this common platform, campaign strategies could then be developed at organizational, national and international levels leading up to the next WTO Ministerial meetings.

In putting together a common platform for developing campaign strategies, it is important that several other elements and priorities be clarified. For example:

*Campaign Goals:* It is proposed that our campaign strategies be cast in terms of the long term goal of transforming the global and national trade policy regime. The prime objective here is to break the collusion that exists between governments and corporations in determining global trade and investment rules. The stage would be set by the common demand for a Citizens' Round of trade negotiations. The critical issues at stake in the forthcoming negotiations on services and agriculture --- healthcare, education, culture, environment, water, and social services, along with food security and food safety issues --- would be used as opportunities to call for a Citizens' Round. If the demands for a

Citizens' Round were rejected, then the goals of the campaign would shift to destabilizing and dismantling the WTO itself. A similar process of campaign goal setting could be developed in relation to demands for fundamental changes in DFAIT. These campaign goals, of course, should be infused with a vision of what kind of new institutions and mechanisms for democratic governance on trade and investment we would want to replace the WTO and DFAIT. Specific campaign objectives should also be spelled out for each of the major phases of the campaign: [i] current WTO negotiations; [ii] Citizens' Round demands; [iii] destabilizing & dismantling phase.

*Campaign Targets:* In developing our campaign strategies, the main institutions being targeted are the WTO and DFAIT. The tendency, however, is to make governments the prime targets of our campaigns. In an era of corporate-driven globalization, this approach alone is no longer sufficient. The prime targets of an effective campaign strategy must include the major corporate players that are the driving forces behind the trade policy making agenda. When it comes to mounting a campaign against the WTO, therefore, it is imperative that the main corporate players with a vested interest in liberalizing trade in relation to the broad range of sectors in agriculture and services be targeted, exposed and confronted through our action campaigns. The same goes for the corporate players that will play a key role in determining the DFAIT agenda for the negotiations in agriculture and services. Targeting the major TNC players is essential if our campaigns are going to be effective in breaking the corporate-government juggernaut. This does not, however, mean that governments should be left off the hook. On the contrary, both governments and corporations must be targeted. In turn, this means that civil society groups will have to develop skills and tools required for tackling corporations as well as governments through campaigns.

*Campaign Themes:* It is also important to reconsider the ways in which our campaigns are defined in terms of organizing themes and principles. All too often, there is a tendency to define campaigns on trade issues in legal and technical jargon. While a certain working knowledge of the WTO trade rules and mechanisms is required, campaigns focused on legal technicalities are guaranteed to dis-empower people. Our campaigns against the WTO and economic globalization must be organized in such a way as to mobilize our own constituencies and civil society at large. To do so, we must define our campaigns around themes that politically energize and mobilize people to act. As indicated above [section 2], the WTO's systematic assault on peoples' democratic rights is a dominant organizing theme. Whether we are talking about the making of WTO rules affecting — food safety and health care; or culture, education, and social services; or labour and environment standards; or the patenting of life forms — we are essentially touching on peoples' democratic rights and freedoms. In designing our campaigns, therefore, it is important that we energize people to fight for their democratic rights. Moreover, the hallmark of democracy is the right to be self governing peoples. By organizing our campaigns, for example, around the theme of fighting for democratic governance over trade and investment decisions, we would be doing some political literacy on the basic rights of

citizenship in a democratic society.

## 6. Movement Building

As the Battle of Seattle unfolded, the convergence of diverse sectors — workers, farmers, environmentalists — from diverse settings — grassroots, national, and international — with diverse backgrounds — youth, class, race which, in turn, illustrated the prospects for building a global citizens movement with the capacity to fight for democratic social change in this age of corporate-driven globalization.

Throughout the 1990s, pieces of a global citizens' movement have been gradually taking shape and form. The 50 Years is Enough campaign against the IMF and the World Bank brought together citizen movements from around the world, North and South, East and West. Similarly, the mobilization against the MAI sparked serious networking amongst citizen movements, not only in the member countries of the rich nations' club [i.e. the OECD], but also parts of the Third World. More recently, these movement building trends have been reinforced massive resistance against genetically engineered foods and the biotech industry, which began in Europe and has now spread to North America and parts of the South. The victories scored by these global campaigns, each aided by effective use of the Internet for instant communication and networking, set the stage for the movement building opportunities manifested in Seattle around the WTO. What perhaps made Seattle somewhat unique, however, was not only the political space it seemed to provide for peoples from diverse sectors and backgrounds to forge working alliances [e.g. workers and environmentalists, young and older activists] but also the largely democratic, decentralized and non-hierarchical character of the activities and events. As several observers noted, no one leader or organization was propped up as the centrepiece.

In developing our campaign strategies over the next 18 months leading up to another WTO Ministerial, it is crucial that time and energy be spent on building a stronger citizens movement out of our various constituency bases here in Canada on several fronts.

*National Movement:* The Battle of Seattle seems to have breathed new life into movement building prospects here in Canada. The MAI campaign had certainly re-ignited a citizens movement on issues of economic globalization in this country which had been largely dormant since the anti-NAFTA campaign was waged over seven years ago. The nature of the WTO as an emerging global government coupled with the scope of its negotiating agenda, provides an ideal target around which to build a citizens' movement as a democratic front against corporate-driven globalization. While there appears to be a heightened interest, the WTO and related pieces of the globalization agenda has not yet become a major program priority for most civil society groups in this country. If we are going to re-build and sustain a social movement along these lines, then steps need to be taken to make key issues of the WTO agenda a program priority for national, constituency-based organizations in each of the major sectors affected. One way to do this would be to design a plan of action to assist key civil society groups in developing their

own campaigns around critical WTO issues and concerns related to their particular constituencies. If, therefore, we decide to constitute ourselves as the Common Front on the WTO as proposed, then top priority should first be put on providing capacity building services to member groups.

*Grassroots Movements:* At the same time, there are local community groups and grassroots networks all across Canada which are becoming active on globalization issues. The Citizens' MAI Inquiry in 1998, for example, provided some concrete examples of these grassroots networks and their activities on these issues. While some of these groups are affiliated with one or more national organizations, many are not. Indeed, given the accelerated information and communication opportunities provided by the Internet, some local community groups no longer have to be dependent on major national organizations for the analysis and data they need to develop their own education and action campaigns. As a result, there is a growing gap or deepening gulf between national constituency-based organizations and grassroots community-based groups in this country. If we want to build a dynamic civil society movement around the WTO and related issues of globalization, then effective participation by grassroots community groups is imperative. Consequently, a plan of action should be developed to stimulate closer working relations between national organizations and grassroots networks, particularly through the planning and organizing of campaigns. And, eventually, when it comes to advocating a common policy agenda on behalf of civil society groups for the Citizens' Round, a constituent assembly composed of elected representatives from national organizations and grassroots networks could be organized.

*International Movements:* To greater or lesser degrees, the prospects for civil society movement building around the WTO and related pieces of the globalization agenda exists in other countries and regions throughout the world. In addition to the MAI and WTO campaigns to date, important working relations between Canadian and civil society groups in other countries have been generated through international projects and campaigns organized in response to the APEC, the FTAA [Common Frontiers] and the IMF [Halifax Initiative]. The time has come to consolidate our collective learnings from these international experiences with a view to considering what steps need to be taken next in building a global citizens' movement. The network that generated the international statement on the WTO co-signed by close to 2000 civil society groups around the world, will likely continue. But there is real need in this post-Seattle period to give serious attention to the task of developing some institutional capacities for global movement building in the longer term. As indicated above [section 2], there are also some major political and strategic challenges that need to be addressed as civil society groups on both a North-South and an East-West basis. To move forward, one option is to propose that a summit meeting of citizen movement leaders and/or representatives from various countries be organized for the purpose of developing common strategy guidelines for campaigns on the WTO agenda and institutional capacities for global movement building.

**Discussion Starter**

- 1. What does your group think of the idea of creating a common vehicle for developing national education and action campaigns on the WTO? Should we constitute ourselves as the 'Common Front on the WTO' for these purposes?*
- 2. If so, how could this best be done? Should it be a network or a coalition? Should a priority be put on building the capacities of participating groups for education and action on the WTO and related issues? If not, what should be the focus?*
- 3. What kind of resources and infrastructure would be needed? Would your organization be willing to contribute resources? How could our common work be organized in a dynamic and energizing way?*

In conclusion, we hope that you will [a] share this paper with co-workers in your organization, [b] organize some internal discussion on the ideas and questions outlined here, and [c] provide us with your feedback at our next meeting.