

Open Letter to WTO Director General — Pascal Lamy

The Council of Canadians has joined 124 other networks/organizations from 40 countries in signing the following letter directed to Pascal Lamy.

Mr Pascal Lamy
Director General of the WTO
April 18, 2006

Re: Using Non-inclusive Ministerials to Conclude the Doha Round

Dear Mr. Lamy,

We are deeply concerned about your call for some Ministers to meet in Geneva in late April and early May. We are opposed to such a Mini-Ministerial meeting that could lead to critical decisions being made by only a handful of Ministers. It is now too late for the majority of Ministers to make their way to Geneva, especially when it remains unclear what the agenda of the meeting will be, and therefore unclear if it will be worth Ministers' scarce financial resources and time. Therefore, we are calling on you as WTO Director General and chair of the TNC to cancel this ad hoc exclusive Ministerial-level gathering and ensure that all WTO member delegations are fully involved in any negotiations regarding the Doha Round.

Your proposal at the recent TNC that "the establishment of modalities as foreseen by the Hong Kong Declaration will require some sort of Ministerial involvement during the last week of April, with a safety net beginning of May" contradicts your previously stated commitment to a bottom-up approach to the negotiations. Any negotiations or decision-making process that happens at the end of April or at any time should be all-inclusive, transparent, and with the full participation of all members, as per the WTO mandate.

The current situation adds to the mounting concerns shared by civil society and many developing country officials: that exclusive meetings of certain countries to further negotiations in the WTO have become the main negotiating arena for the Doha Round. These exclusive meetings include the recent Senior Officials meeting of the WTO in Geneva on the 7-9th of March, the Mini-Ministerial meeting in London on the 10-11th of March, and the recent Micro-Ministerial in Rio on March 31-April 1, which you attended. While groups of Ministers, ambassadors and/or delegates are certainly free to meet informally, our concern is that these meetings have become the main negotiating fora.

The countries that are being excluded from these undemocratic and non-inclusive decision-making processes are, of course, the majority of the WTO's member countries, including the LDCs, the ACP, and the Africa Group. **These are the same countries which now face a Doha Round conclusion that, if implemented, would harm the majority of their populations, as confirmed by recent Carnegie, World Bank, and other studies, because of the manner in which the negotiations process has been dominated by the interests of the rich and powerful countries which have forced development issues off the agenda.**

If your call for Ministerial involvement is not to be seen as a wilful continuation of this undemocratic, top-down approach, then it is imperative that every member has equal access to the decision-making processes of the Doha Round.

We therefore demand that the entire membership of the WTO be invited to be involved in all processes and all meetings with regards to future WTO negotiations. The presence of some Ministers must not become a pretext for exclusive Green Room meetings where decisions are made without the presence of all WTO members.

May we remind you that articles 48 and 49 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration make abundantly clear that the Director General, above all, should be committed to ensure that the negotiations are open to all members of the WTO and that they should be conducted in such a manner that facilitates the effective participation of all in order to achieve benefits for all members and an overall balance in the outcome of the negotiations. This mandate however has been repeatedly violated over the course of the negotiations.

Sir, you have expressed a commitment to democratic process and transparent operation of the WTO. Yet your invitation to Ministers to come to Geneva seems inconsistent with your espoused commitments.

We have serious concerns that your proposed process is likely to be a recreation of the procedurally flawed situation that produced the July package in 2004, where only a select circle of Ministers were present at a Mini-Ministerial in Geneva, which became the main decision making and negotiating forum. Decisions were made without the full participation of the entire membership that were as critical as those of a formal Ministerial Conference.

If your past statements are to be more than rhetoric, we would like to hear from you, as to how you are implementing your responsibility to ensure that decision-making is based on the full participation of all members.

We seek your urgent consideration of the above matters and your prompt assurance that honest, democratic and inclusive processes, not the interests of the powerful few or looming timelines, will determine the process of WTO negotiations.

Yours truly,

cc: Permanent Representatives of Member States, WTO

ActionAid International
Advocacy and Monitoring Network on Sustainable Development (AM-Net), Japan
AID/WATCH, Australia
Albertine Rift Conservation Society, Uganda
Alianza Chilena por un Comercio Justo y Responsable (ACJR)
Alliance for Democracy, US
Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL), Philippines
Alliance to Expose GATS, Australia

Alternattiva Demokratika - The Green Party, Malta
ANAKBAYAN Sons and Daughters of the Nation, Philippines
Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), Lebanon
Arbeidssøkerforbundet I Norge, Norway
Arbeitsgemeinschaft Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (AGEZ), Austria
Association Pour le Développement Economique Social Environnemental du Nord (ADESEN),
Senegal
Attac Argentina
Attac Japan
Attac Norway
Aurat Foundation, Pakistan
Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFINET)
Bangladesh Krishok Federation
Berne Declaration, Switzerland
Both ENDS, The Netherlands
Brazilian Network for the Integration of the Peoples (REBRIP)
Campaign for the Welfare State, Norway
Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)
Capítulo Costa Rica de la Alianza Social Continental
Caritas Pakistan (Lahore), Pakistan
Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace, Sydney Australia
Centro Memorial DrMartin Luther King, Jr., Cuba
Citizens Trade Campaign, US
Coastal Development Partnership, Bangladesh
COECCoCeiba - Friends of the Earth, Costa Rica
College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP)
Comhlámh - The Irish Association of Development Workers
Common Frontiers, Canada
Community and Public Sector Union - State Public Services Federation Group, Australia
Consumers' Association of Penang, Malaysia
Corporate Europe Observatory, European Union
The Council of Canadians
Damaan Development Organization, Pakistan
The Development Fund, Norway
Ecologistas en Acción, Spain
Economic Justice & Development Organization (EJAD), Pakistan
Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, Philippines
Encuentro Popular, Costa Rica
Equations, India
ESK Pais Vasco, Spain
Fair, Italy
Fédération Syndicale Unitaire, France
Focus on the Global South, Philippines and Thailand
Food and Water Watch, US
Fórum Brasileiro das Organizações Não Governamentais e Movimentos
Sociais para o Meio Ambiente e o Desenvolvimento (FBOMS), Brazil
Forum za Levico, Slovenia
Foundation for Gaia, UK

Friends of the Earth, Australia
Friends of the Earth, Germany
Friends of the Earth, Malaysia
Friends of the Earth, US
Fundación Solón, Bolivia
Global Exchange, US
Globalization Monitor, Hong Kong
Globalization Watch Hiroshima, Japan
Green Circle Organization (GCO), Pakistan
India Women's Watch
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, US
Instituto de Estudos Sócioeconômicos (INESC), Brazil
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers
International Grail Justice and Trade Agreements Network
International Forum on Globalization
International Network Secretariat for Sustainability Watch, Uganda
International Union of Foodworkers
Japan Family Farmers Movement, NOUMINEN
KAIROS Canada
Kissan Bachao Tehreek Pakistan (KBT)
Labour, Health, and Human Rights Development Centre (LHAHRDEV), Nigeria
League of Filipino Students (LFS)
Lok Sanjh Foundation, Pakistan
Lutheran World Federation, Philippines
Millennium Solidarity Geneva Group, Switzerland
National Council of Churches in the Philippines
National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF), India
National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP)
Norwegian Farmers and Smallholders Union
Oakland Institute, US
Oxfam International
Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum
Pakistan Kissan Ittehad
Pattan Development Organization, Pakistan
Philippines Australia Union Link
Polaris Institute, Canada
Prakruti, India
Programme Plaidoyer pour une Intégration Economique Alternative (PAPDA), Haiti
Public Citizen, US
Public Services International
Red de Mujeres Transformando la Economia (REMTE), Ecuador
Save Bombay Committee, India
SEARCH Foundation, Australia
Shirkat Gah, Pakistan
Sierra Club, US and Canada
Sociologists without Borders, US
Soon Valley Development Programme (SVDP), Pakistan
South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAP-Pk)

Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI),
Zimbabwe
Speed Trust, Bangladesh
Stop the New Round! Coalition, Philippines
Student Christian Movement of the Philippines (SCMP)
Sungi Development Foundation, Pakistan
Sustainable Agriculture Action Group (SAAG), Pakistan
Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan
Taiwan NGOs Association for International Affairs (NAFIA)
Third World Network
Tradewatch, Italy
Transnational Institute (TNI), The Netherlands
UnitingCare NSW.ACT, Australia
Veterinarios Sin Fronteras, Spain
Village Friends Organizaion (VFO), Pakistan
War on Want, UK
Wemos Foundation, The Netherlands
Women in Development Europe (WIDE), Belgium
Women's Resource and Advocacy Centre, India
Womyns Agenda For Change, Cambodia
World Economy, Ecology and Development (WEED), Germany
Worldview, The Gambia
WTO Watch Qld, Australia
X minus Y Solidarity Fund, The Netherlands