



and bilateral trade accords (in the case of Chile); second, to negotiate new rules for the World Trade Organization (WTO).

#### CITIZENS' DIPLOMACY AND WORLD TRADE

To summarize, the current globalization strategy headed up by the United States consists of signing free trade agreements, continued application of multilateral bodies' policies and initiatives to deepen regional integration. This has caused growing tension in the internal political dynamic of different countries, who have to respond to their citizens' demands and the requirements of competition in the world market. It has also made increasingly large sectors of society aware that they are experiencing a growing sharpening of economic inequalities both domestically and among different nations. This has created the impressive emergence of multinational citizens' organizations who are no longer willing to stay away from decision-making centers where their fate is determined and try to exercise the new right of private subjects to intervene in world policy and strategies.

Since the 1990s, these organizations, the majority of which defend individual and collective political, economic, social and cultural rights, have creatively developed what has been dubbed "citizens' diplomacy." This consists of the formation of social movements, networks and local, national, regional and worldwide coalitions committed to the organization of protests and developing fair trade proposals. Citizens' diplomacy has operated in parallel, alternative fora held simultaneously with the meetings of multilateral institutions and international bodies. The aim is

#### SOME INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS AT THE FIFTH WTO MEETING IN CANCÚN

- International Network of Social Movements
- Third World Network
- Continental Social Alliance
- Global Exchange
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Oxfam
- Global Alliance for Trade Efficiency
- International Chamber of Commerce
- Greenpeace
- Caritas International

Citizens' diplomacy is mobilizing and developing proposals to stop and revert the growing deterioration in the quality of life for most of the world's population.

to defend their interests and those of certain communities that do not have the capacity to create an international representation, in order to democratize the decision-making process worldwide.

A paradigmatic example is the case of the social mobilizations and spaces for alternative work held at the same time as the failed Seattle WTO Ministerial Meeting, from November 30 to December 3, 1999. The trade ministers of the 148 WTO member countries and 961 civil society organizations from the world over kept these experiences in mind when they met from September 10 to 14, 2003 in Cancún.

#### FOREORDAINED FAILURE OF THE FIFTH WTO MEETING

The Fifth WTO Ministerial should have concentrated on promoting northern

development in the South in accordance with the Final Declaration of the Doha Meeting (held November 9-13, 2001). However, the mandate of the U.S. trade representative, Robert Zoellick, and his European Union colleagues was to negotiate investment, government procurement, competition policies and trade facilitation, issues that came out of the December 1996 Singapore meeting, as well as keep the questions of agricultural subsidies and intellectual property rights off the agenda.

Even before the Cancún meeting began, the contradiction of interests among the ministers was clear. The countries of the North were determined to advance in the negotiation of the Singapore non-trade issues, while the countries of the South demanded to start from agreements on lowering or eliminating developed countries' agricultural

subsidies and suspending patents for medications in order to avert a national health crisis in the poorest African countries.

Participants in the Cancún WTO Ministerial, as well as the citizens who organized parallel to it, predicted another failure of the multilateral forum. The WTO demonstrated its rigid form of organization incapable of facilitating agreements among its members. Trade liberalization, as stipulated in the WTO, mainly favors the developed countries because it simultaneously maintains their protectionist measures. At the same time, it does not contribute to

prise. The United States, the European Union and Japan did not imagine that these 21 countries were going to come to an agreement and form a common front against their protectionist agricultural policy.

The G21 was formed with the participation of three African countries (Egypt, South Africa and Nigeria), five Asian countries (China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines) and 12 Latin American countries: four from the Southern Cone (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay), all the Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela), two from

The victory of the social movement was due to demonstrations, the discussion of proposals in the parallel alternative fora and to the lobbying of civic organizations present in the official sessions.

the development of the backward countries because their trade rules (like comparative advantages, the omission of criteria about economic asymmetries and the lack of democracy in the negotiations) are structural limitations that counter a debate on policies to help developing countries achieve continued, long-term growth.

#### THE EMERGENCE OF THE GROUP OF 21

The lack of expectations and frustration about the reality of international agricultural trade sparked the formation of the Group of 21 (G21) at the Cancún meeting. This group of countries from the South, led by Brazil, China and India, represents half the world population and two-thirds of its peasants. The emergence of the G21 was a sur-

prise. Central America (Costa Rica and Guatemala), and, at the last minute, Mexico (a member of the North American Free Trade Agreement), leaving Cuba on the outs.

However, despite this coordinated action by Third World countries, their demands did significantly differ. For example, Brazil and Argentina wanted to lower the duties on their agricultural goods, while Mexico, India and China, with hundreds of millions of peasants living at subsistence levels, pressured to eliminate U.S. and European Union subsidized exports. In fact, what kept the Group of 21 together despite its fragility was the total lack of willingness on the part of the United States and Europe to liberalize their import policies or moderate their demand for open markets in the South. This zero-sum policy was fundamental for “derailing” the Cancún meeting.

#### CITIZENS' DIPLOMACY IN CANCÚN

The developed countries that have promoted today's globalization and trade liberalization are confronted with developing countries with quashed growth expectations and social resistance movements favoring fair trade. These confrontations among countries and civic organizations are a warning signal of the different and even opposed ideas of development. However, the world does not move forward in black and white, and confrontations among adversaries never resolves anything. Given this panorama, citizens' diplomacy is mobilizing and developing proposals to stop and revert the growing deterioration in the quality of life for most of the world's population.

Most of the organizations, networks and social movements of different nationalities that participated inside and outside Cancún thought the meeting collapsed because of the convergence of several factors. The determining factor was the emergence of the Group of 21, which maintained an unexpected, autonomous position of Southern countries against the trade and non-trade interests of the countries of the North. On the other hand, open contradictions on tariffs, particularly on steel, emerged among the great powers, especially between the United States and the European Union. They also thought that the victory of the social movement given the failure of the meeting, was due to the organization of demonstrations and protests in the streets (including the suicide of the Korean, Lee, who acted in accordance with the slogan “The WTO kills peasants.”); to the discussion and development of proposals in the parallel alternative fora; and to the lobbying of

civic organizations present in the official sessions. All these social mobilizations exerted constant pressure on the governments present there. This participation of civil society acquired legitimacy and is part of the global resistance or global justice movement. They mention other victories such as their contribution to the failure of the 1999 Seattle WTO meeting and the November 2003 Free Trade Area of the Americas summit in Miami.

The global movement that met in Cancún organized a very large number of activities and alternative fora. Some of the most important were the following: before the ministerial meeting began, the Convergence of Alternative Media, the Peasant Forum, the Indigenous Forum, the Fishermen's Forum, the Women's Forum and the Parliamentary Forum linked to the World Social Forum. Some of these fora continued after September 10 when the official meeting began, and other activities were also held: the Youth Camp, the Forum on Macroprojects, the Maquiladora Forum, the Union Forum, the Fair Trade Fair, the Cuba Solidarity Meeting, seminars on forests, the environment, war and free trade and on the specific issues being discussed in the official meeting. In addition, initiatives such as the American Social Forum and the "From Cancún to Miami" campaign were launched. Activities and meetings of the International Network of Social Movements and the Continental Campaign Against the FTAA were also held.

Besides the importance of these alternative debates, protests also played an important political and social role vis-à-vis the multilateral event that brought together most of the world's trade ministers. The first big mobiliza-

tion was called by *Vía Campesina*, a call answered by all the national and international actors present in the city. The most important delegation was the 200 Koreans among whom were peasants, union activists from the KCTU and people from civic and political organizations grouped together in the KOPA coalition. This coalition, with many activities to its credit in Korea, made the long trip to Cancún to participate in an organized, disciplined, combative fashion. The unfortunate suicide of Mr. Lee was interpreted by most of the demonstrators as a dramatic symbolic act about "the victims of neoliberal globalization,"

The resistance movement in Miami demonstrated against the expansion of free trade agreements because it considers them strategies in the construction of an empire based on greed, violence and power.

and was a catalyst particularly for the final demonstration. The Youth Caravan was another central actor who carried out daily street actions. The Center for Convergence also participated with very creative, imaginative activities, as it has in other events of the global resistance movement. The Our World Is Not for Sale Network made an outstanding contribution: accredited in the official ministerial meeting, it made lobbying efforts parallel to the protests and civil disobedience it carried out in the streets through its "inside and outside" coordination mechanism.

Clearly, both in the alternative activities and fora and in the demonstrations and protests, the issue of agriculture was ever present and the peasant organizations from the developing countries played a leadership role and had a broad presence. This was because the

agriculture issue (followed by that of intellectual property rights) was the most important negotiating point and the most conflictive on the agenda due to the subsidies and tariffs designed to favor mainly the United States and the European Union and which were not slated for debate.

According to the Mexican Action Network on Free Trade (RMALC), on September 13 a large demonstration was staged with the participation of unions, indigenous, women's, young people's, peasant, environmentalist, civic and other organizations from 82 countries. The protesters broke down

the double metal barrier that separated them from the police cordon to uphold their right to demonstrate; they symbolically burned the WTO in effigy and gave flowers to the police and then withdrew in an orderly fashion. A RMALC leader pointed to the movement's lessons as follows:

On the 14th the summit collapsed and the actions finished up with an impressive, educational demonstration, with Brother Lee as a symbol of struggle and without any arrests or injuries. The movement can celebrate it; it has left Cancún with a victory and many lessons in everyone's knapsacks.

The movement's ability to connect the global agenda with local matters and to act simultaneously internationally was not totally clearly demonstrated... Not all the international... and national

**SOME NORTH AMERICAN SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS  
AT THE FIFTH WTO MEETING IN CANCÚN**

**CANADA**

- Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA)
- Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-National Office
- Canadian Chamber of Commerce
- Canadian Environmental Law Association
- Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA)
- Centre for Trade Policy and Law (CTPL)
- Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN)
- National Farmers Union-Canada (NFU-Canada)
- North-South Institute (NSI)

**U.S.**

- American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
- Citizens Network for Sustainable Development
- Citizens Trade Campaign (CTC)
- Fair Trade Resource Network (FTRN)
- Farm Aid
- Food First
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)
- Manufacturers for Fair Trade Coalition (MFT)
- Public Citizen
- United Steelworkers of America

**MEXICO**

- National Association of Agricultural Producers' Sales Firms (ANEC)
- Mexican Center for Environmental Law (CEMDA)
- Fair Trade Mexico
- Workers Confederation of Mexico (CTM)
- Revolutionary Confederation of Workers and Peasants (CROC)
- DECA People's Team
- Chiapas Indigenous Ecological Federation (FIECH)
- Mexican Action Network on Free Trade (RMALC)
- Isthmus Union of Indigenous Communities
- National Union of Autonomous Regional Peasant Organizations (UNORCA)

forces that were expected actually came to Cancún. The matter for most concern... was the fact that despite the positive results... both before and during the activities in Cancún, divisions and a lack of coordination momentarily endangered things. There was a wor-

rying rebirth of sectoralist, anti-NGO, hegemony-seeking visions... which had been overcome in the global movement's different spaces in the spirit of multi-sectorial alliances, consensus-based unity, horizontal functioning and respect for each other.... So, despite the victory, the

movement came out of Cancún slightly damaged. And this has to be taken into account for future struggles.<sup>1</sup>

The global justice movement recognized the crucial importance of the Group of 21, wondering about its level of integration and its staying power in the short, medium and long term. However, it also maintained a critical approach by underlining that these governments' stance on the agricultural issue was limited because it only dealt with subsidies and access to the markets of the North, leaving aside the central questions of the protection of their own agricultural economies and food sovereignty and security, and taking no position on the Singapore issues.

FTAA "FLEXIBILITY" IN MIAMI

The participation of 12 Latin American countries in the Group of 21 in Cancún was a determining factor for the Eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) from November 19 to 21 in Miami. Real progress on agriculture in Cancún was a precondition for the success of the negotiations of the 34 Latin American trade ministers in Miami. A little over one-third of the ministers concluded that the Cancún WTO meeting lacked the political will to come to a consensus and that the 2005 time limit for the negotiations was unrealistic. For this reason, the FTAA's hemispheric agenda met with serious problems, coming up against the imposition of protectionism at home (the United States) and liberalism abroad (Latin America).

The FTAA project, originally proposed by the United States, was ambitious: it aimed to liberalize the exchange of

goods and eliminate barriers to the flow of capital and services from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, an area with 800 million inhabitants who generate U.S.\$13 trillion a year in output. The Miami agenda was committed to 10 negotiating issues: market access; agriculture (without touching on the reduction of U.S. subsidies); services; investment; public procurement; intellectual property; competition policies; subsidies; anti-dumping rules; compensatory rights; and conflict resolution.

Nevertheless, with the Cancún precedent, the United States reduced the FTAA proposal to the construction of a “flexible agreement” compatible with the growing differences among the countries of the region about the rhythms and depth of liberalization. This was the result of the rough draft of the final declaration developed by the U.S. and Brazilian teams (these two countries co-chaired the Miami meeting). This means that the 34 countries involved in the process will commit to different levels of economic opening.

In that framework, the United States desisted from negotiating trade agreements by consensus and divided up its objectives. It announced negotiations aimed at trade agreements with four South American countries (Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia), strengthening negotiations it already is carrying out with five central American countries, incorporating the Dominican Republic from the Caribbean region, and beginning talks with Panama. In conclusion, Washington will maintain negotiations with South America, Central America and the Caribbean in a series of steps that weaken the original potential of the FTAA.

On the other hand, Brazil emphasized the differing levels of develop-

ment in the region’s economies and recognized the FTAA as a minimum agreement that would allow each country to move forward in bilateral treaties and incorporate some of the concerns of the union, environmentalist and peasant groups that have opposed the original proposal in several parts of the hemisphere.

Meanwhile, the resistance movement in Miami demonstrated against the invasion and occupation of Iraq, soldiers’ counterinsurgency training in the School of the Americas and the expansion of free trade agreements like the FTAA because it considers them strategies in

the construction of an empire based on greed, violence and power. Participants declared that these policies are not making the world safer just as their economic policies are not creating prosperity.

On November 20 there was a huge march and rally headed up by 2,000 members of the United Steel Workers of America (USWA), the largest contingent, that also included Brazilians, Colombians, Argentines, Canadians, Mexicans and for the first time representatives from different social organizations from the global justice movement. There were union contingents from the textile indus-

<b>PARTICIPATION OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FIFTH WTO MEETING BY CONTINENTS</b>	
<b>AFRICA</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>AMERICAS</b>	<b>407</b>
North America	
Canada	84
United States	236
México	33
Central America and the Caribbean	11
South America	43
<b>ASIA</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>EUROPE</b>	<b>331</b>
<b>OCEANIA</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>961</b>

Many governments have opposed making the FTAA a “flexible agreement”, prompting a great intensification of citizens’ diplomacy in both the North and the South.

try, government employees, electrical workers, service workers and machinists, alongside retirees, the Black Block, artists and alcoholics, among others. They shouted slogans about the environment, against the privatization of water, in defense of immigrants, against U.S. intervention in Colombia and Venezuela and a broad gamut of issues, all united in their rejection of the FTAA.

March organizers denounced the overwhelming police presence and the systematic violation of demonstrators' human rights in their attempts to silence the protest against the FTAA. USWA international President Leo Girard stated that the police would never be able to stop the movement for economic and social justice in the Americas. The undisputed leadership of U.S. steel workers and their leaders was due to the benefits they receive from U.S. tariffs imposed on steel imports from the European Union and seven other nations (among them Brazil, Japan, South Korea and Switzerland). A decision on the conflict among these countries was handed down by the appeals body, the WTO's highest tribunal, which stipulated that the U.S. tariffs violated the rules of international trade. A few days later, the U.S. government accepted the elimination of duties on steel.

In a parallel forum, the Inter-American Regional Labor Organization (ORIT) hosted a hemisphere-wide labor meeting with representatives from union confederations and associations in which they explained workers' concrete experiences, from the Mexican border's maquiladora plants to the Argentine crisis. Participants included representatives of the Continental Social Alliance, the Landless Movement from Brazil, Vía Campesina, Mexico's Au-

thentic Workers' Front (FAT) and leaders from the AFL-CIO. Everyone present criticized the negative results of trade liberalization policies and privatization for the workers of the Americas.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In the two years since September 11, the U.S. situation has become more complex. The president has not managed to legitimize the war in the Middle East given the lack of proof to back up his decision or the increase in military spending. This has meant that Bush has unilaterally promoted his foreign security policy. He has not been able to create security and trust in the U.S. public, among whom the fear of international terrorism continues to increase. It is the public that has been the most negatively affected by this, while President Bush's popularity has dropped and his chances for re-election in 2004 have been endangered.

On the other hand, in the third quarter of 2003, the U.S. economy has begun to recover, but the shadow of several years of economic recession and the deficit in job creation continue to prevail. The solution of making the FTAA a "flexible agreement" and imposing trade liberalization and protectionist advantages through the WTO has been opposed by many governments and prompted a great intensification of citizens' diplomacy in both the North and the South.

Millions of voices demanding humanitarian trade participate in a process aimed at bringing together different perspectives to build "an alternative vision based on global social justice and a balanced role for government and the mar-

ket," to paraphrase Joseph Stiglitz in his new book, *The Roaring Nineties*.<sup>2</sup> ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Héctor de la Cueva, "La batalla de Cancún: Balance de una victoria," *Observatorio Social de América Latina (OSAL)*, no. 11 (Buenos Aires: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, 2003), pp. 6-8. Other views about the resistance movement were taken from the same source.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Stiglitz, *The Roaring Nineties: A New History of the World's Most Prosperous Decade* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003).

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