

**Dear Excellency,**

**Re: MEMORANDUM ON THE NEED TO IMPROVE INTERNAL  
TRANSPARENCY AND PARTICIPATION IN THE WTO**

We, the undersigned non-governmental organisations and civil society groups would like to put forward a Memorandum on the Need to Improve Internal Transparency and Participation in the WTO.

Through the Memorandum, we wish to highlight the serious problems of the lack of internal transparency and the lack of participation of developing countries in decision-making processes in the World Trade Organisation.

Our organisations have for several years been involved in WTO issues and in the activities of the WTO and we have been able to observe at close range the WTO's operations, methods of work and decision-making procedures. Over the years we have become increasingly concerned about the lack of proper rules of procedures, the lack of transparency as well as the lack of participation, or the exclusion of a majority of Members in decision making processes.

Although these shortcomings have been pointed out and highlighted by WTO Members, NGOs and the media, and although reforms have been talked about and promised many times through the years, the situation has not improved. It has in fact worsened.

This lack of internal transparency, participation and democracy is appalling in such an important international organisation whose decisions and actions have such far reaching effects on the lives of billions of people and the environment upon which they depend. It is even more ironic and inexcusable in an agency that prides itself for being a "rules-based organisation" and for championing the principles of "transparency, non-discrimination and procedural fairness."

Our Memorandum highlights some of the significant problems in the WTO internal processes under three categories: general, processes before Ministerial Conferences, and processes during Ministerials. The Memorandum presents a listing of the problems – and concrete proposals to improve the decision-making

process -- under three categories: general, processes preparatory to Ministerial Conferences, and during Ministerials.

We believe that without such reforms of the procedures and practices relating to internal transparency and participation, there can be little hope of reforms to the existing imbalances in many of the rules of the WTO which are adversely impacting on the lives of people around the world. Worse, new rules that are detrimental to people and the environment may be introduced.

We therefore hope that our proposals will be seriously considered and that they be put in effect in the present crucial period before the Cancun Ministerial and at Cancun itself.

Yours sincerely,

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