

Road to Bali
*Quest for Possible Common Positions
of South Asian Countries*

Bipul Chatterjee
CUTS International

Issues to be considered at Bali

- Issues tabled for an 'Early Harvest'
 - Issues of interest to developing countries
 - Trade Facilitation
 - Agriculture
 - LDC Issues
 - Other issues
 - Environmental Goods and Services
 - Expansion of the Information Technology Agreement
- Significance of the Bali Ministerial
 - *Reinvigorate faith in the multilateral trading system – why trade multilateralism is better?*

Agriculture

- G20 Proposal: Tariff rate quotas in agricultural trade
- G33 Proposal: Public stockholding for domestic food security and domestic food aid
 - Food prices to support “low-income or resource-poor producers” should not be included in the AMS
 - Exempt ceilings on subsidies for farm support programmes for rural development and rural livelihood by classifying them under Green Box support
 - Food security, land reform, drought management, flood control programs should be exempted from subsidy reduction commitments.
- Consensus seems distant: US does not support the G33 proposal on public stockholding for food but ...?

Trade Facilitation

- Elements of a possible agreement on Trade Facilitation
 - Advance rulings
 - Information on imports-exports should be freely available on the internet
 - Allowing pre-arrival clearance to allow expeditious release of goods
 - Transit formalities
 - Single window for documentation
- Concerns of developing countries on the resultant demands to revamp trade infrastructure

LDC Issues

- Duty-Free, Quota-Free Market Access
- Special and Differential Treatment in different agreements
- Intellectual Property Rights: Extension of transition period for LDCs
- Cotton: Substantial reduction in subsidies to cotton production in the US

Issues vis-à-vis Possible Common Positions

- LDCs (NFIDCs)
 - Future of food security at stake
 - Domestic food aid and public stockholding critical to address food shortage
- Developing Countries (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka)
 - Future of the G33 proposal: Hopes abound that certain farm subsidy programmes could be termed ‘minimally trade distorting’ programmes
 - Also, food stockholding and domestic food aid may fall under a *peace clause*
 - Concern over the future of export subsidy cuts in Bali for key food exporters
- The search for ‘*Balance*’ in the negotiations is ubiquitous
 - Trade Facilitation should be balanced by other gains for developing countries
 - TF and Agriculture are being weighed against each other in negotiations

Questions for Discussion

- Agriculture
 - What will be the implications of the Bali package on the question of 'food security' in the region?
 - Could there be a 'post-Bali' work programme?

- LDC Issues
 - Will the Bali Ministerial enable better integration of LDCs within the trading system?

- Trade Facilitation
 - Is the final draft likely to be limited to 'best endeavour'?