

Strengthen, Don't Weaken, UNCTAD's Role in Global Governance: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Development, Not More Crises

Sunday, April 22, 2012

To: Governments and Negotiators at the UNCTAD XIII in Doha, Qatar

Since the onset of the global financial and economic crises, UNCTAD has played an important role in identifying the key causes of the crises, assisting developing countries in seeking solutions to the impacts of the crises, and advocating for the reform of global economic and finance policies and governance in order to prevent similar crises from recurring. These are all key roles that no other multilateral economic institution has fulfilled from a development perspective. In fact, UNCTAD is well known for having predicted the crisis in advance, a fact that is to be commended, particularly given its paucity of resources compared to institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which failed to do so. This prescience builds on a long history of UNCTAD's contributions to development-oriented policies such as the Generalized System of Preferences, 0.7 percent GNI aid targets, debt cancellation, international commodity agreements, special and differential treatment at the WTO, and policy space, among many others.

Despite these important contributions, throughout the negotiations leading up to UNCTAD XIII, the developed countries have tried to rescind the important mandate of UNCTAD to work on issues of global macroeconomic and finance policies, and particularly to *participate in global governance* on these issues, which are so essential to global prosperity. In addition, the EU and "JUSCANZ" (Japan, the United States, Switzerland, Canada, South Korea, Australia, Norway, New Zealand, and Lichtenstein) have sought to impose a mandate on UNCTAD to push developing countries to adopt investor protection and trade policies in accordance with the corporate interests of developed countries, rather than in the interests of the successful use of trade and investment for the purposes of sustainable and inclusive growth within developing countries themselves.

The outcomes of the UNCTAD XIII conference in Doha, Qatar, April 21-26, 2012, must contribute to the transformations of the global economy that are necessary for true inclusive and sustainable development for all:

1. It is essential that the 2012 UNCTAD Declaration affirms, rather than retreats from, the progress made at the UNCTAD XII in Accra. This includes an agreement on the need for sustainable as well as inclusive growth, as well as the need for UNCTAD to work on the inter-related issues of finance, technology, investment, and sustainable development, among other key issues.
2. The collective policy analysis must recognize the root causes of the global crisis, its impacts, and mandate a role for UNCTAD to continue its excellent economic and finance research and critical analysis, in order to truly assist developing countries in creating solutions to the crises – rather than pushing them to implement more of the same deregulatory trade and investment policies that led to the global crises in the first place.
3. Finally, the role of UNCTAD as an alternative voice to the "Washington Consensus" paradigm – being the only multilateral economic institution focused on development – must be strengthened vis-à-vis the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank, the OECD, and the G20 in global economic governance decision-making.

In order to accomplish these transformations, we call on developed countries to abandon the pressure on the G77 negotiators, and instead work together with developing countries to ensure a forward-looking mandate for UNCTAD which must, among other issues:

- Specifically recognize the origins, spread, and impacts of the global crises, and mandate a role for UNCTAD which includes assisting developing countries as well as advocacy in the global governance arena in favor of sustainable and inclusive growth;
- Affirm the key role of UNCTAD's research and analysis on macroeconomic and financial issues, including exchange rates and global imbalances, as well as countercyclical fiscal policies that have helped stabilize economies during the global crisis.
- Include analysis that recognizes both the costs as well as opportunities of trade, and directs UNCTAD to assist developing countries in utilizing trade for their development, rather than just advising them to join the WTO and other "free" trade agreements.
- Mandate UNCTAD to determine the contours of a global trade framework that is truly development-oriented, and thus to identify the changes to the existing WTO and ongoing negotiations that are necessary to ensure that governments have the policy space to use trade for sustainable and inclusive development, and to regulate in the public interest.
- Affirm the importance of adequate regulation and supervision of financial markets, particularly with regard to crisis prevention and resolution, and mandate UNCTAD to play an active role in ensuring strong national and global financial regulatory rules.
- Acknowledge the problems of investor protection provisions in trade and investment agreements and mandate a role for UNCTAD in helping developing countries design investment policies that will benefit their sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as advocating for development-oriented best practices in investment policies globally.
- Recognize the major impacts of the crisis on employment, and mandate UNCTAD to work on the national level with developing countries in favor of job creation, and on the international level in favor of the Decent Work Agenda in concert with the ILO.
- Reassert the need to find solutions to the problem of volatility in the global commodities markets and the need for fair trade in global agricultural trade towards Food Security and Food Sovereignty, and mandate a research and advocacy role for UNCTAD on these issues, together with the FAO and particularly the Committee on Food Security.
- Affirm developed countries' commitments in ODA and Aid for Trade, as well as UNCTAD's key role in identifying the need for and developing mechanisms towards a sustainable sovereign debt work-out mechanism, bringing together diverse stake holders to create Responsible Lending and Borrowing principles and continued efforts on debt cancellation.
- Set forth clear analysis of the impact of climate change on sustainable and inclusive development, and mandate UNCTAD to contribute to the global effort to realize the objectives of sustainable and inclusive development vis-à-vis climate change.

These are but a few of the key issues that should form the foundation of the official declaration that is to guide UNCTAD's role over the next four years. More comprehensive analysis on each of these issues is detailed in the official Civil Society Declaration to UNCTAD XIII.

In light of the rhetoric surrounding the commitment to a more open, democratic, and participatory system of global governance that have become commonplace in recent years, we find the return to the semi-colonial approach of the developed countries in the UNCTAD negotiations outrageous. We commend the former leadership and staff of UNCTAD who spoke up against this unacceptable situation last week, as well as the G77 for their statement that called the EU and JUSCANZ to account for their intransigent positions.

As representatives of developed and developing countries of myriad stages of development, we know that our own prosperity is deeply entwined to the sustainable development of all, and thus we call on all governments of the North and South to join together, to affirm a strong role for UNCTAD in working towards sustainable and inclusive development for all.

Signed,

International Organizations

1. ACORD
2. ACP Civil Society Forum
3. ActionAid International
4. African Business Roundtable
5. Africa Trade Network (ATN)
6. Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)
7. Asia Europe People's Forum (AEPF)
8. Asia Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN)
9. CIDSE international alliance of 16 Catholic development agencies
10. Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt International (CADTM)
11. Consumers International
12. Convergencia de Movimientos de los Pueblos de las Américas (COMPA)
13. Dignity International
14. Dynamique des Organisations de la Société Civile d'Afrique Francophone (OSCAF)
15. Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF)
16. European Attac Network
17. European Coordination Via Campesina
18. European Network on Debt and Development (Eurodad)
19. European Solidarity Towards Equal Participation of People (Eurostep)
20. Federación Latinoamericana de Trabajadores de las Industrias (FLATIC)
21. Friends of the Earth International (FOEI)
22. Habitat International Coalition (HIC)
23. Hemispheric Social Alliance/Alianza Social Continental (HSA/ASC)
24. Alianza Internacional de Habitantes (International Alliance of Inhabitants)
25. International Grail Global Justice and Trade Agreements Network
26. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
27. International Union of Food workers (IUF)
28. Jubilee South - Asia/Pacific Movement on Debt and Development
29. Latin American Association of Micro, Small, and Medium Businesses (Asociación Latinoamericana de Micro, Pequeños y Medianos Empresarios, ALAMPYME)
30. LDC Watch
31. Mesa de Coordinación Latinoamericana de Comercio Justo
32. Movimiento Mesoamericano contra el Modelo Extractivo Minero (M4)
33. Nord-Sud XXI
34. OCAPROCE International
35. Oxfam International
36. Pacific Network on Globalization (PANG)
37. Public Services International (PSI)
38. Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas de América Latina (RAPAL)
39. Red Latinoamericana sobre Deuda, Desarrollo y Derechos (LATINDADD)
40. Seattle to Brussels Network
41. South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)
42. Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI)
43. Tax Justice Network
44. Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education)
45. Third World Network (TWN)
46. Third World Network – Africa
47. Transnational Institute
48. World Council of Churches
49. World Democratic Governance project association – WDGpa

National Organizations

50. 11.11.11, Belgium
51. African Commission of Health and Human Rights Promoters (CAPSDH), Ghana
52. African Forum for Alternatives, Senegal
53. African Services Committee New York, US
54. Alianza Mexicana por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos (AMAP), Mexico
55. Al-Jawf women Organization For Development, Yemen
56. Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL), Philippines
57. Alliance Sud, Switzerland
58. Alternative Information & Development Centre (AIDC), South Africa
59. American Jewish World Service
60. Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union (APVVU), India
61. Artisanal Fishers Association, South Africa
62. ASRAD, Mali
63. Association des Handicapés Moteurs du Sénégal
64. Association for Child Health, Nigeria
65. Attac Austria
66. Attac France
67. Attac Germany
68. Attac Japan
69. Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network
70. Banana Link, UK
71. Bharatiya Krishak Samaj (BKS), India
72. Bia'lii, Asesoría e Investigación, A.C, Mexico
73. CAFOD, UK
74. Campaign for a Life of Dignity for ALL (KAMP), Philippines
75. Campaign for the Welfare State, Norway
76. Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action/Trinidad and Tobago (CAFRA T&T)
77. Caribbean Policy Development Centre, Barbados
78. Center for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD), Bangladesh
79. Center of Concern, US
80. Central Única dos Trabalhadores do Brasil (CUT), Brazil
81. Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), India
82. Centro de Formación e Investigación. Municipal, A.C. (CEFIMAC), Mexico
83. Common Frontiers, Canada
84. Confederación de Trabajadores Rerum Novarum (CTRN), Costa Rica
85. Consejo de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo de Centroamerica, Guatemala
86. CNCD-11.11.11, Belgium
87. Comhlámh, Ireland
88. Comisión Nacional de Enlace (CNE), Costa Rica
89. Confederación de trabajadores del Comercio de Chile CONSFETRACOSI, Chile
90. Confederation of Labor and Allied Social Services, Philippines
91. Consumers Association of Penang, Malaysia
92. Coordination Climate Justice Sociale, Switzerland
93. Coordination des ONG Africaines des Droits de l'Homme et du Développement (CONGAF), Guinea
94. Council of Canadians
95. Debt and Development Coalition Ireland
96. Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, Philippines
97. ECA Watch Austria
98. Eco-Accord, Russia
99. Ecologistas en Acción, Spain
100. EcoNexus, UK

101. Economic Justice Network (EJN) of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa
102. Ecuador Decide
103. Ecumenical Peace Institute/ Northern California chapter of Clergy and Laity Concerned, US
104. Ekogaia Foundation, South Africa
105. Enda Tiers Monde, Senegal
106. Euronatura - Centro para o Direito Ambiental e Desenvolvimento Sustentado, Portugal
107. Fair, Italy
108. Faith Action for Community Equity, US
109. Faith Action Network of Washington, US
110. Fastenopfer Switzerland
111. Federation of Independent Trade Unions and NGOs (FITUN), Trinidad and Tobago
112. Foreign Policy in Focus, US
113. Foro Ciudadano de Participación por la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos (FOCO), Argentina
114. Foro Latinoamericano del Trabajo, Innovación e Integración (FLATI), Argentina
115. Forum Social Lémanique (FSL), Switzerland
116. Friends of the Earth, England Wales and Northern Ireland (FoE EWNI)
117. Friends of the Earth Hungary
118. Friends of the Earth Mauritius
119. Fundación Promoción Humana, Argentina
120. Fundación SES, Argentina
121. Ghana Trades Union Congress
122. Global Community Rights Framework Initiative, US
123. Global Exchange, US
124. Global-Local Links Project, US
125. GLOBAL 2000/Friends of the Earth Austria
126. Goliath Magazine, France
127. Groupe de Recherche et d'Action pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture et du Développement (GRAPAD), Benin
128. Grupo Tacuba, A. C., Mexico
129. Haitian-American Grassroot Coalition, US
130. Hecho en Bs As – empresa social, Argentina
131. Ibon International, Philippines
132. Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF), India
133. Indonesia for Global Justice
134. Information Group on Latin America (IGLA), Austria
135. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), US
136. Institute for Economic Research on Innovation, South Africa
137. International Forum on Globalization, US
138. International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID)
139. Jamaicans United for Sustainable Development
140. Jubilee Debt Campaign, UK
141. Jubilee Germany
142. Jubilee Justice Task Force of the United Church of Christ, US
143. Jubilee Oregon
144. Jubilee Scotland
145. Jubilee USA Network
146. KEPA, the Service Centre for Development Cooperation, Finland
147. Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre, Nigeria
148. Mundial de las Mujeres, Peru
149. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, US
150. Milwaukee Fair Trade Coalition, US
151. Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition, US
152. Missionary Oblates United States Province, US

153. Missionary Society of St. Columban, US
154. Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania (National Network of Farmers Groups in Tanzania, MVIWATA)
155. Mujeres para el Diálogo A.C. (MpD), Mexico
156. National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS)
157. National Labour and Economic Development Institute, South Africa
158. National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), Canada
159. New Trade Union Initiative, India
160. Norwegian Coalition for Debt Cancellation, Norway
161. Otros Mundos AC/Amigos de la Tierra, Mexico
162. Plate-forme des acteurs non étatiques pour le suivi de l'Accord de Cotonou (PFANE), Senegal
163. Platform Aarde Boer Consument, the Netherlands
164. Polaris Institute, Canada
165. Popular Campaign to Drop Egypt's Debt
166. Public Citizen, US
167. Public Service Alliance of Canada
168. Raid ATTAC Cadtm Tunisie, Tunisia
169. Red se Accion Ciudadana Frente al Libre Comercio Sinti Techan, El Salvador
170. Rede Brasileira Pela Integração dos Povos (REBRIP), Brazil
171. Rede Social de Justiça e Direitos Humanos, Brazil
172. Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio (RMALC), Mexico
173. Red Nacional Género y Economía (REDGE), Mexico
174. Red Peruana de Comercio Justo y Consumo Ético, Peru
175. Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)
176. Sahabat Alam Malaysia
177. SEARCH Foundation, Australia
178. SF Bay Area Jubilee Coalition, US
179. Siembra A.C., Mexico
180. Sierra Club, US
181. Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas (SME), Mexico
182. Sisters of the Holy Cross Congregation Justice Committee, US
183. Solidarité, France
184. South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, South Africa
185. SWISSAID, Swiss Foundation for Development Cooperation, Switzerland
186. Tax Research UK
187. Tchad Agir Pour L'environnement (TCHAPE), Chad
188. The Association of Non-Governmental Organisations in The Gambia (TANGO)
189. The Berne Declaration, Switzerland
190. The Oakland Institute, US
191. TPPWatch, New Zealand
192. Trades Union Congress, UK
193. Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)
194. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society, US
195. U.S. Labor Education in the Americas Project (USLEAP)
196. Village Suisse ONG, Switzerland
197. VOICE, Bangladesh
198. War on Want, UK
199. World Development Movement, UK
200. Worldview-The Gambia
201. X minus Y Solidarity Fund, the Netherlands
202. Youths Action, UK
203. Zwartkops Conservancy, South Africa

For more information, please contact Deborah James, at djames@cepr.net.