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WTO News: The Road to Seattle - Issue VI August 10, 1999

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URGENT! DEADLINE APPROACHING!

LAST DAY TO REQUEST REGISTRATION FORM FOR ACCREDITATION: AUGUST 16

A reminder, that in order to become an accredited NGO for the WTO Ministerial Meeting, you need to send a letter to Geneva by AUGUST 16TH!

This information from the WTO website, accessible at:
http://www.wto.org/wto/ngo/ngojune.htm

Requests for registration accompanied by the presentation of NGO activities [how your NGO relates to trade] have to be sent by mail before 16 August 1999 to:

External Relations Division
Centre William Rappard
154 rue de Lausanne
1211 Geneva 21
Switzerland

ROOM REQUESTS THROUGH THE SHO MUST BE MADE BY AUGUST 15TH

http://www.wtoseattle.org/educationoutreach/ngo4.html

Submit information online for meeting room space through the Seattle Host Committee by 15 August.

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

A SKILLSHARE/TRAINING ON TRADE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

PLEASE ATTEND A SKILLSHARE/TRAINING
Hosted by the Asia-Pacific Environmental Exchange

AN INTRODUCTION TO:

ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS
ECOSYSTEM HEALTH
TRADE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

(You can learn about it in one day!)

When: Friday, August 13, 1999, beginning at 9:30 am until 4:00 p.m.
Where: Seattle Central Community Collage, 1701 Broadway, Seattle, WA
SCCC is located at the corner of Pine and Broadway on Capital Hill, enter at the main floor and follow the signs.

RSVP Dave Batker (253) 846-7436.

Resource Persons: Dr. Robert Costanza, Co-Founder of the International Society for Ecological Economics, the academic journals Ecosystem Health, and Ecological Economics as well as the Institute for Ecological Economics at the University of Maryland with Antonia Juhasz and Dave Batker will conduct a one day introductory skillshare/training in ecological economics, ecosystem health and trade. Employees of environmental organizations and other nonprofit organizations are invited.

Purpose: 1. To introduce the multidisciplinary fields of Ecological Economics and Ecosystem Health and provide an understandable primer on trade to NGO staff.

2. To identify organizations interested in applying the concepts, policies and tools of ecological economics and ecosystem health to their campaign work or participating in the events around the World Trade Organization in November.

Attend and receive: The book An Introduction to Ecological Economics by Costanza, Cumberland, Daly, Goodland and Norgaard at 40% off cover; articles on ecological economics and a training primer.

SCHEDULE

9:30 Introductions

10:00-11:30 Introduction to Ecological economics Robert Costanza and Dave Batker

Deforestation, overfishing, extinction, toxic waste, wetland loss, global warming, bad land use planning and other environmental problems are driven by economic activities. Economic theory has been insufficient in integrating many environmental concerns. The multidisciplinary field of ecological economics places the economy as a subset of the global environment rather than natural resources and the environment as minor sectors of the economy. Within the last ten years ecological economists have built tools for examining ecological services, valuation, risk and uncertainty, scale, distribution and allocation. Ecological economic analysis shifts decisions toward ecological sustainability, the precautionary principal, damage prevention, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem health. A great number of tools are now available to environmental groups for use in their campaigns.

11:30-12:30 Discussion: applications to your work.

12:30-1:00 Lunch provided

1:00-2:00 Introduction to Ecosystem Health, Dr. Robert Costanza

The multidisciplinary field of ecosystem health has arisen for two reasons: 1) the importance of understanding and protecting ecosystems and 2) the outstanding failure of traditional renewable resource management. Single stock analysis in fisheries, and monocrop forestry has resulted in a severe reduction in ecosystem attributes and benefits. Ecosystem health emphasizes retaining and restoring dynamic and beneficial ecosystems.

2:00-3:00 Discussion: applications to your work.

3:00-4:00 A primer on Trade and the Environment Dave Batker and Antonia Juhasz

Yes, trade affects your work, and you can understand it. Trade has environmental implications, from local environmental work to multilateral environmental agreements such as the Basel Convention and the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species. Why are economists so fervently promoting "free" trade? We will introduce the theory of comparative advantage and basic trade economics including critiques in a clear and understandable manor. We will examine forest, chemical and fisheries trade agreements under discussion at the 3rd Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization to take place in Seattle this November. Initiatives by environmental Seattle groups and how you can get involved will also be discussed.

Dave Batker is a Director of the Asia-Pacific Environmental Exchange. Antonia Juhasz is Forest Campaigner for American Lands Alliance.

FOREST REFORM RALLY SEPT 10-12

Please mark your calendars and send in your registration today for REWILDING: the 1999 Forest Reform Rally, September 10-12, 1999.

The Forest Reform Rally is sponsored this year by the Wild Utah Forest Campaign (a project of American Lands) and the Forest Reform Network. The event will take place in the inspiring High Uinta Mountains at Camp Steiner, only 1.5-2 hours east of Salt Lake City on the Mirror Lake Highway.

The most comprehensive agenda of forest issues ever is planned for REWILDING: the 13th Annual Forest Reform Rally and the first in the West since 1993. The WTO and forests, roadless areas, ending commercial logging, Big Wild, endangered species recovery, landscape restoration, corporate campaigns, forests and climate change, demand reduction, forest plan revision, fire ecology, grazing and mining, ORVs and other recreational threats to wildlands, non-federal forestland protection, and many more issues will be addressed. You don't want to miss the important information, discussion, and strategic planning sessions.

The Rally will also be an exciting opportunity to see one of America's wildest regions, the High Uintas. Camp Steiner is located on the border of the High Uintas Wilderness Area in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. This is the largest wilderness in Utah (460,000 acres) and one of the 20 largest wilderness areas in the lower 48 states. The camp is surrounded by striking old growth spruce/fir forests which are home to wolverine, lynx, pine marten, and wolves.

Field trips and skills sharing sessions will be held Friday; workshops and plenary sessions will begin Friday afternoon and continue until Sunday afternoon. Accommodations will be in three-sided Adirondak log cabins or in tentsites. The cabins are dorm style; showers and toilets are located nearby. Meals will be buffet style with vegetarian options.

Registration is $ 35.00 for early registration (before 8/28), and $45.00 for late (8/29-9/10).

Lodging and meals: Rally package = 2 nights lodging and 6 meals. Cabins = 60.00 per person, Tentsites = 45.00 per person.

Non-package rate: Cabins = 16.00 a night per person
Tentsites = 10.00 a night per person Meals* = 6.00 a meal

So, the package deal including EARLY registration for cabins would be 95.00 and tentsites 80.00

Please email your registration today to Susan Ash at mailto:wufc@xmission.com; checks should be made out to American Lands and sent to American Lands, 726 7th Street, SE, Washington, D.C. 20003

A REPORT FROM THE SEATTLE HOST COMMITTEE

[Thanks to Patti Goldman, mailto:pgoldman@earthjustice.org for forwarding this. Reminder: the SHO activities can also be seen on their website at http://www.wtoseattle.org/]

There was a high-profile Seattle Host Organization meeting today at which numerous USTR, State Department an WTO officials were present. I want to let you know about 2 developments.

1. SHO PROGRAMS

Last week, many of you attended a meeting at which Mike Mullen, chair of the SHO Program Committee, indicated that the environmental program sponsored by SHO during the week of the Ministerial could be planned by WRI and the environmental community without editorial control by the SHO. I know some of you had wanted that statement in writing. I want to let you know that Mike reiterated his understanding of how that program is proceeding. He stated that he met with WRI and the steering/advisory committee that would be assisting in convening that program. Leah Hair clarified to the group that NGOs from développing countries would be added to the steering/advisory committee. The response from SHO folks was enthusiastic. Ray Waldman, the director of the steering committee, wanted to have the SHO issue a press release touting the fact that the environmental community would be planning the conference with WRI. Leak cautioned that such a press release would be premature and that the steering/advisory committee's sole function would be to put on the conference. Still Ray and others from the SHO were excited and saw this as a way to demonstrate their inclusiveness.

2. ACCOMMODATIONS

On a more mundane note, the SHO is currently taking requests for NGO accommodations (hotel rooms) during the week of the Ministerial. Their priority is accredited NGOs, but they are taking requests without proof of accreditation since that won't come for quite some time. While each NGO is limited to 4 accredited individuals, hotel requests are not so limited. Requests are being honored on a first-come, first-serve basis. If the rooms runs out, the SHO will acquire more hotel space.

Please pass this information on to all who may be interested.

Patti

RECENT PRESS ON THE WTO/TRADE

U.S. LAWS DILUTED BY TRADE PACTS RULINGS STIR CRITICISM ACROSS POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Robert Collier, Glen Martin, Chronicle Staff Writers Saturday, July 24, 1999
San Francisco Chronicle

Question: What do the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Endangered Species Act and clean-air rules of the United States and Canada have in common?

Answer: They all have been weakened because of rulings by international trade tribunals, whose legal and diplomatic power is under growing, bipartisan criticism.

More disputes are brewing, and elected officials across the United States and in other nations are hopping mad. Currently under challenge at the trade tribunals are a wide range of issues related to national, state and municipal sovereignty, such as jury awards and laws protecting water quality and human rights.

The North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization, which began functioning in 1994 and 1995, respectively, established a system of three- member tribunals to resolve disputes over government measures that act, directly or indirectly, as trade barriers.

Governments that lose such rulings must amend domestic legislation or face heavy fines.

``Although there are benefits to getting more open markets, the unanswered -- and, until recently, unexamined -- question is whether Americans are willing to pay the high price of trading away our legislative power,'' said Robert Stumberg, a law professor at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Controversy has been spurred by recent cases such as these:
-- Gasoline. In 1997, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency weakened its Clean Air Act regulations to comply with a WTO ruling barring U.S. limits on contaminants in imported foreign gasoline. Venezuela claimed that the limits, which affected California and eight other states, acted as an unfair trade barrier.

-- Endangered turtles. Last October, the WTO ruled against the U.S. ban on shrimp imports from nations whose fishing fleets do not use devices to keep endangered sea turtles out of the nets. The Clinton administration is revising its implementation of the Endangered Species Act to comply with the WTO ruling.

-- Dolphin-safe tuna. This fall, U.S. supermarkets will again sell tuna that is caught using mile-long nets blamed for snaring and killing thousands of dolphins per year. Last year, Congress weakened the Marine Mammal Protection Act to comply with a 1992 WTO ruling against the U.S. ``dolphin-safe'' tuna certification.

-- State purchasing. Two U.S. federal courts have ruled that Massachusetts' ban on state contracts with firms doing business with Burma's military dictatorship is an unconstitutional intrusion on the federal government's foreign-policy powers. Massachusetts announced last week that it will appeal the rulings -- in which the judges cited a complaint filed in the WTO by the European Union and Japan -- to the Supreme Court, where it is expected to become a major test of federalism.

-- Jury awards. In October, Loewen Group, a large Canadian funeral corporation, filed a NAFTA lawsuit against the U.S. government, seeking $750 million in damages because of what it claimed was unfair treatment by a local jury in a Mississippi state court. In that case, Loewen had been convicted of fraudulently trying to corner the regional funeral market and was fined $500 million -- but instead of appealing the case through the U.S. legal system, Loewen settled out of court and made an end run to NAFTA.

-- MTBE. The Vancouver-based Methanex Corp. filed a $970 million NAFTA lawsuit last month against California's plan to ban MTBE, the gasoline additive that is blamed for polluting the state's groundwater. A similar
lawsuit filed last year by a U.S. company forced Canada to overturn its ban on a similar additive.

The MTBE case ``is what we predicted would happen under NAFTA and what we predict will happen under the WTO,'' said Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez. ``It's happened with dolphin-safe tuna, and it could happen with lots of other laws.

``This is the New World Order's assault on democracy,'' Miller said. ``Local legislation can be nullified because a secret trade tribunal says so. . . . It doesn't matter whether you're a Republican or Democrat, a conservative or liberal.

``What's at risk now is the drinking water of every Californian. The issue just got brought home in a big way.''

But others insist the new rules are helping to ensure fair treatment for
international investors and are boosting trade.

Jack Lindsey, chairman of Santa Barbara-based Sun Belt Water Inc., has sued Canada under NAFTA for $468 million after British Columbia enacted a moratorium on the export of water, canceling a 1991 contract that Sun Belt had signed to bring the province's water by tanker to Southern California.

``They refused to reach an equitable settlement with us,'' Lindsey said.
``All we are asking is that they honor the contract they originally signed with us, or pay us for breaching it.''

He acknowledges that international trade tribunals can essentially overrule some national laws: ``In the sense that a country has assigned certain rights to an international entity, some sovereignty has been surrendered. But these are decisions outlined in treaties that are freely and openly negotiated by elected representatives. It is a legal process.''

The Clinton administration is clearly embarrassed by the controversy over trade pacts it has championed. Officials of the State Department and the U.S. Trade Representative refused to comment on the record.

Many California lawmakers of both parties say they worry that their powers are under attack.

Assemblyman Robert Pacheco, a Los Angeles County Republican, said the MTBE lawsuit might open a Pandora's box.

``I'm concerned about the case's impact on California sovereignty, in terms of its impact on our ability to do away with something harmful to our citizens,'' Pacheco said. ``It will probably wind up being a test case about states' rights.''

California Attorney General Bill Lockyer and the cities of San Francisco, Los Angeles and Oakland have filed legal briefs supporting

Massachusetts in the lawsuit against its Burma boycott.

For the three cities, the decision to back Massachusetts is natural -- they and a half-dozen other California cities and counties have similar bans regarding Burma. The state government does not have any such law, but views the case as important nonetheless.

``The Massachusetts-Burma ruling is a potential interference in our powers as state and local governments,'' said Assistant Attorney General Thomas Gede, referring to a June 22 federal appeals court decision. ``We're confident that the Supreme Court will agree that the federal courts can't restrict how we choose to do our own purchasing.''

Gede said an unfavorable Supreme Court ruling could lead to attacks on other local measures -- such as the University of California's rules on sweatshop-free merchandise and the state's sanctions on European insurance firms involved in Holocaust-era claims -- that might be vulnerable to challenge in the WTO.

The root of the overall problem is that there is an inherent conflict between the decentralized U.S. federal system and foreign investors, said Christiane Hayashi, a San Francisco deputy city attorney.

``The WTO is trying to achieve for our trading partners a uniformity that doesn't exist,'' she said. ``The European Union wants to have uniform trading rules throughout the 50 states, because when San Francisco and others make local rules, it makes it more difficult for foreign corporations'' to standardize their products and services.

Last year, the city's Board of Supervisors, along with the National Association of Counties and a dozen other U.S. cities, adopted resolutions opposing the Multilateral Agreement on Investments, a proposed pact that is expected to be negotiated at the WTO.

``It's not so much that the sovereignty of the nation is being directly threatened,'' said Daniel Seligman, director of trade policy for the Sierra Club.

``It's more that trade has become a kind of de facto global government serving only one constituent -- transnational corporations. . . . You end up with corporate property rights that go well beyond what is provided by 200 years of Supreme Court rulings.''

BACKLASH

Critics of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization are trying to rein in their legal powers:

-- Insider access: On Wednesday, a lawsuit filed in Seattle federal court charged the U.S. Trade Representative and the Commerce Department with excluding environmental groups from official trade advisory committees while giving access to the timber industry. The plaintiffs include the Sierra Club, Oakland- based Pacific Environment and Resources Center and San Francisco-based International Forum on Globalization.

-- Enforcement of rulings: Congress is expected to vote in the next few weeks on an appropriations bill amendment sponsored by Rep. Dennis

Kucinich, D-Ohio, and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R- Fla. The measure would block the federal government from carrying out legal challenges to city and state laws that WTO and NAFTA panels have ruled to be trade barriers. A similar move last year lost by a 228-200 vote, and this year's vote is expected to be closer.

-- WTO summit: The WTO's November 29 to December 3 summit meeting in Seattle is expected to begin a new round of agreements involving investment, financial services and agriculture. But unions, environmentalists and poor nations want negotiations stopped, saying the WTO's powers should be limited, not expanded.

-- Robert Collier

A PLAN TO LET PUBLIC IN ON WTO TALKS

Clinton wants officials to hear from array of groups

Friday, August 6, 1999 By MICHAEL PAULSON
(mailto:michaelpaulson@seattle-pi.com)
SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER
WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON -- The Clinton administration wants to set aside the day before this fall's World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle to allow consumer, environmental and labor groups to air their concerns directly to the world's trade ministers. The move to provide a formal opportunity for public interest groups to address members of the often closed and secretive international organization comes as companies, countries, and a variety of organizations are stepping up their efforts to influence the Seattle gathering, which will be the largest trade meeting ever held in the United States.

Industries from chocolate manufacturers to liquor distillers want Congress to put their needs on the U.S. agenda, while members of Congress want to use the WTO to do everything from stemming the flow of filmmaking jobs to Canada to protecting U.S. steel and sugar industries.

And an army of public interest groups, concerned that trade liberalization is coming at the expense of the environment, food safety, consumers and workers, is planning a mix of protest and participation in their efforts to call attention to their critique of global trade liberalization.

Although many countries do not share the United States' concern about labor
and environmental issues, Deputy United States Trade Representative Susan
Esserman testified at a congressional hearing yesterday that her agency hopes
to offer consumer groups, business associations, environmental groups and
labor organizations a chance to publicly voice their views.

Her boss, Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, will be chairwoman

of the
Seattle meeting.

"We do think it's very important for members of civil society to have direct
access to the ministers," Esserman said. Then, citing a "very successful and
very positive" gathering in Geneva in March in which environmental groups
were allowed to speak to WTO trade ministers, Esserman said, "we are also
contemplating doing the very same thing on a range of issues the day before
the ministerial (meeting) begins in Seattle."

Esserman said the gathering for business, consumer, environmental and labor
groups might be a tough sell to some countries. "Many governments around the
world do not share our interest in labor, so there is a great deal of work
that needs to be done . . . to talk to other governments about the importance
of including the labor perspective."

Pressed by Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass., on whether the interest groups would
really have an opportunity to speak directly to foreign trade ministers,
Esserman said "we are seeking to include mechanisms for direct participation,
by labor, by environmental groups, so that they have a chance to directly
provide their views to the ministers in the WTO. This is something that we
have been urging on the other countries in the WTO who don't necessarily
share our interest in doing this. But we have very, very strongly advocated
doing it."

Critics of the fast pace at which the WTO is affecting world trade greeted
Esserman's proposal with skepticism. Although President Clinton hopes the
Seattle session will launch a new round of global trade negotiations, the
critics say the WTO would be better off pausing to reflect on the successes
and failures of past trade liberalization efforts.

"If we have this kind of forum the day before the ministers meet, not only is
it going to be too little, but it will be too late," said David Downes, a
senior attorney at the Center for International Environmental Law, who said
the United States government has not been aggressive enough in pushing
environmental concerns. "By the time the ministers sit down in Seattle, the

deal will have been done, so this will have as much show value as anything
else."

Environmentalists are concerned that in the rush to remove trade barriers
between nations, it is becoming too easy to override environmental standards
of various countries. That complaint is echoed by advocates of strict food
safety and labor standards, who argue that the most progressive countries are
being forced to give up some of their consumer and worker protections in the
interests of uniform global regulations.

"Our ultimate objective is that there should no longer be a downward
harmonization of health and food and environmental standards," said Mike
Dolan, the deputy director of the Global Trade Watch program of Public
Citizen, a consumer group founded by Ralph Nader. "There has been a trumping
of laws by faceless trade bureaucrats in Geneva, and it's not acceptable."

Dolan is helping a wide array of public interest groups prepare for the
Seattle meeting, and he promises a mix of tactics to try to influence it.

"There is a very intricate choreography of inside and outside activities by a
number of civil society groups," he said. "On the inside, accredited
non-governmental organizations will take whatever the World Trade
Organization is willing to offer in the way of seats near the table. On the
outside, there will be a series of organized symposia, press conferences and
strategy sessions, as well as demonstrations and protests. . ."

As for the proposed one-day event, Dolan said, "I can't wait to receive my
invitation to that. I'll believe it when I see it. Our challenge is to have a
seat at the table, and not merely near the table."

ACTIVISTS ON INTERNET RESHAPING RULES FOR GLOBAL ECONOMY

Chicago Tribune
July 5, 1999 Monday

By R.C. Longworth, Tribune Staff Writer.

They operate from cluttered offices and the conference rooms of airport
hotels. The Internet is their weapon, and indignation often is their
fuel.

Few people have ever heard of them, but they are beginning to reshape the
rule-making for the global economy.

Depending on your point of view, people such as Lori Wallach, Mark Weisbrot and Charles Arden-Clarke are noble warriors fighting to bring the
benefits of the global economy to the average person, or they are a band of hazily financed "vigilantes," as the Financial Times of London called them, out to torpedo globalization.

Wallach, Weisbrot and Arden-Clarke are three of thousands of activists and
lobbyists around the world working, sometimes alone, sometimes in coalition, for the myriad groups known collectively as non-governmental organizations, or NGOs for short. Their targets are the many negotiations
going on around the world, often in secret, to write the new rules and regulations for the global economy.

In the process, these activists are baffling and often infuriating the business groups, government officials and global experts who until now have had this rule-making all to themselves.

But global governance is as new as the global economy itself.

What's happening in this economic arena are the first skirmishes in a battle for power and control that will stretch well into the 21st Century.

NGOs are in the thick of the battle.

Most recently, some 600 NGOs working together defeated an attempt by 29 of
the world's richest nations, including the United States, to write a treaty on foreign investment. The NGOs charged that the proposed global treaty, seemingly a technical exercise, would override local and national
laws on the environment and the rights of women and minorities.

Despite angry denials by the governments, the NGOs won and the talks collapsed.

Wallach is director of the Global Trade Watch for Public Citizen, the Washington-based consumer organization founded by Ralph Nader. Weisbrot is
research director for the Preamble Center, a small think tank and activist
group in Washington, D.C. Arden-Clarke oversees trade and investment for the World Wide Fund for Nature, on the outskirts of Geneva in Switzerland.

They and others like them belong to the vast and growing world of NGOs.

There are probably some 30,000 international NGOs, with more springing up every day. They range from such giants as CARE, Oxfam, Doctors Without
Borders, Save the Children, Amnesty International and the World Wildlife Fund to one-room outfits armed with little more than a filing cabinet, a laptop and a frequent-flier card.

The global vigilantes are learning the system and discovering how to make
their voices heard. As they do, they are slowly winning access to the
inner circles, where the rules-writers are working to cope with them.

The rise of the NGOs is also an exercise in democracy, sort of.

The governance of the global economy is moving from the control of elected
national governments into the hands of unelected global institutions such
as the World Trade Organization, also known as WTO, and the International
Monetary Fund, known as the IMF. The self-appointed role of the NGOs is to
inject a democratic voice into these institutions, but they themselves are
non-democratic groups, privately financed and answerable not to voters but
to their funders.

The final balance is far from settled.

Actually, NGOs have been around for decades. American and European NGOs
fought the slave trade in the early 19th Century. More recently, NGOs
spearheaded the 1998 treaty banning land mines and the Rome treaty setting
up the International Criminal Court and are key players in delivering aid
in Kosovo.

"Anyone who has been involved in negotiation of international
environmental treaties knows that NGOs are the animating force, not public
officials of nation states," said Henry Perritt Jr., dean of the
Chicago-Kent College of Law, in a recent speech in Chicago.

If the global economy is powered by technology and instant communications,
so are the NGOs. The Internet keeps them in touch with like-minded NGOs in
other nations and enables them to leap borders--just like global
corporations but unlike politicians or political parties, whose activity
is nation-based.

Many NGOs, such as CARE or Rotary International, concentrate not on
politics but on delivering aid or sponsoring international programs. The
political activism comes from NGOs such as Wallach's Public Citizen and
several thousand other organizations, many focusing on single issues such
as labor, women or the environment.

Their finest hour so far came last year, when more than 600 NGOs, welded
into a loose coalition, defeated the attempt by the world's 29 richest
nations to write a Multilateral Agreement on Investment, known as MAI. The
talks, held in a basement room at the Organization for Economic
Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris, broke down after publication

of the text of the draft agreement stirred broad political opposition, especially in Canada and France.

"Those talks were secret, which was outrageous," recalls Wallach, who coordinated the American NGOs involved in the campaign. "So we put out an international dragnet, with contacts with governments and agency officials."

In the spring of 1997, "we liberated three different copies of the text," Wallach says. This text was leaked by the Canadian delegation, which feared that MAI, by loosening limits on foreign investment, would swamp Canadian culture with a wave of Disney-style American culture. The Canadian delegation gave it to the Council of Canadians, the leading anti-MAI Canadian NGO, which passed it on to Public Citizen.

Using the Internet, Public Citizen and other organizations quickly circulated the text and their own interpretations of it, particularly to NGOs representing women, labor or the environment, all of which had their own reasons for fearing MAI.

Stories began to appear in the press, and pressure grew on governments. What had been technical talks involving bureaucrats suddenly became a political issue involving cabinet ministers.

"This is the democratization of foreign economic policy," said Weisbrot of the Preamble Center. "With the Internet, it's all more rapid. Before, the whole treaty wouldn't have been known about until it was too late to stop it."

Preamble and other organizations kept up a computerized drumbeat of information, think pieces in newspapers, analyses and arguments to groups around the world.

"Each country had a centralized organization that just looked at MAI," said Weisbrot, a native Chicagoan. "There was the World Development Movement in Britain, Ecoropa in France, the Third World Network in Malaysia.

"We had a joint MAI listserv, with 2,000 people on it," he said. "If there was a discussion over dinner in Geneva, there would be something on the listserv the next morning."

The national anti-MAI groups formed MAI International, which coordinated strategy, sometimes over the Internet, sometimes in face-to-face meetings.

"There's a limit to the Internet," Weisbrot said. "You really can't build trust over it. It's better for sharing information. But to coordinate strategy between people with 30 different interests, you really have to sit down with them."

Because of the battle over MAI and similar skirmishes with the WTO, "governments are taking us seriously now," he said. "They don't know exactly what to do with us but they do know that the old way doesn't work."

The old way, for most international organizations, is surrounded by secrecy, private documents and closed meetings. Compared with the relatively open U.S. system, most governments operate behind closed doors,
and international organizations reflect this.

The United Nations has accredited some 1,500 NGOs, and the World Bank involves NGOs in about half its projects.

But most of the negotiations on the new global economy go on in other organizations--the WTO, OECD, the Bank for International Settlements, all
bureaucratic bodies dealing with arcane and highly technical subjects--that have existed outside the glare of press or political scrutiny and aren't accustomed to dealing with it.

The WTO says it has put in a public gallery in its council chamber, invites some NGOs to observe major meetings and holds regular informal briefings for NGOs.

This new openness doesn't come naturally.

"All our meetings and sessions and panels are closed," said Keith Rockwell, the WTO spokesman in Geneva. "We're trying to set up informal talks with the NGOs, but there's no formal structure yet."

"The progress has been extremely slow," said Arden-Clarke, whose Fund for
Nature tries to get the WTO trade negotiators in Geneva to take environmental issues seriously. Most often, he said, it gets its information not from official WTO documents but from leaks from delegations.

But "the days of negotiating international treaties behind closed doors are numbered, if not over," Stephen Kobrin, a Wharton School professor, wrote in Foreign Policy magazine.

In trade and other negotiations, the NGOs are learning how to work the system, Arden-Clarke said.

"We honed our skills on MAI and, in the next round of WTO (trade) talks, we'll hone them further," he said. "We've learned how to hold coalitions together. We're learning how to influence negotiations--that we have to apply influence in national capitals on time, to influence national positions in international talks."

Another thing the NGOs are learning, he said, is "how badly governments work."

Many global economic negotiations, he said, are run by economic ministries, such as the U.S. Commerce Department, often without the knowledge or input of environmental ministries, such as the U.S. Interior
Department.

"The environmental ministries often know nothing about what's going on," he said. NGOs can often stir up debates within governments and influence global negotiations "just by telling the left hand what the right hand is
doing."

Global bodies such as the WTO "are learning that they have to talk to us at the beginning," he added. "If they come up with an agreement without doing this, NGOs can swing votes back home."

Arden-Clarke, Wallach and others said this is the point at which NGOs plug
into democracy, by telling political parties and elected officials in individual countries what's happening at global levels.

If successful, they said, they can influence domestic political action, which, in turn, affects each nation's policies in global talks.

GRAPHIC: PHOTOPHOTO: "Those talks were secret, which was outrageous," says
NGO activist Lori Wallach of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, which her group helped to defeat after organizing opposition. Photo for the Tribune by George Bridges.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY LAUNCHES NEW LIST-SERVE

This listserve has been established to provide up-to-date information to the environmental community regarding the Seattle Host Organization, its activities and related events leading up to and through the WTO Ministerial, and other non-Seattle Host Organization developments relating to the WTO Ministerial.

--- Patti Goldman
Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund

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1. To unsubscribe to this list send a blank-subject email message to "majordomo@onenw.org" with the following typed in the
body of the message:

unsubscribe wto-sho

2. If someone wants to join this list, they can send a blank-subject email message to "majordomo@onenw.org" with the following typed in the body of the message:

subscribe wto-sho

3. If you have any questions, or have technical problems with the list, please contact Beth Farmer at:

BethatEJ@aol.com

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE ACTIVE ON TRADE ISSUES?

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE ON WTO

[This was forwarded from Public Citizen, who credited a colleague of theirs for compiling the list. Contact Mike Dolan at mailto:mdolan@citizen.org for more information on the list's genesis.]

Seattle Citizen Committee: http://www.seattlewto.org

People For Fair Trade: http://www.peopleforfairtrade.org

PGA in Seattle: http://members.aol.com/mwmorrill/pga.htm
List archive:
http://www.listbot.com/cgibin/view_archive?Act=view_archive&list_id=WTOSeattlediscussion

Peoples Global Action (PGA): http://www.agp.org

Public Citizens Global Trade Watch: http://www.tradewatch.org
List archives: http://lists.essential.org/tw-list/
or http://lists.essential.org/mai-intl/

Ruckus Society: http://www.ruckus.org

Corporate Europe Observatory: http://www.xs4all.nl/~ceo

American Lands: http://www.americanlands.org/forestweb/newwto1.htm

"Road To Seattle": http://www.newsbulletin.org/bulletins/

MAI niet gezien: http://www.stelling.nl/mai

"Millennium Round" (a URL of EP Green Party): http://www.millennium-round.org

No2WTO Listarchive:
http://no2wto.listbot.com/cgibin/view_archive?Act=view_archive&list_id=no2wto

Ontario PIRG's MAI-not Project: http://mai.flora.org

"SHUTDOWN SEA-TOWN":
http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/8771/nowto.html

Third World Network: http://www.twnside.org.sg/souths/twn/trade.htm

Brian Jenkins anti-MAI page: http://www.nettrek.com.au/~brian/

BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany): http://www.snafu.de/~bund or www.bund.net

Center for Environmental Public Advocacy (Slovakia):
http://www.changenet.sk/cepa

Friends of the Earth:
http://www.foe.org/international/trade/wto/wto.html

Friends of the Earth Europe: http://www.foeeurope.org

Friends of the Earth Czech: http://www.duhafoe.cz

Friends of the Earth UK: http://www.foe.co.uk
Trade, Environment and Sustainability: http://www.foe.co.uk/foei/tes

KEPA Finland: http://www.kepa.fi

Movimiento contra la Europa de Maastricht: http://www.nodo50.org/maast

Observatoire de la Mondialisation: http://www.ecoropa.org/obs

Oxfam Belgium: http://www.oxfamsol.be

A SEED Europe: http://www.antenna.nl/aseed

A SEED Japan: http://www.jca.ax.apc.org/~aseed/

ATTAC: http://attac.org/ang/ (in french): http://www.attac.org

Corporate Watch: http://www.corpwatch.org

Critical Mass Seattle: http://www.oz.net/~nic/cm.html

Critical Mass Tokyo: http://www.jca.ax.apc.org/~aseed/bicycle2.htm

Earth First!: http://www.k2net.co.uk/ef

EuroDusnie: http://stad.dsl.nl/%7Erobbel/

Eyfa: http://antenna.nl/eyfa/

Food First: http://www.foodfirst.org

Food Not Bombs Seattle: http://www.scn.org/activism/foodnotbombs

Friends of the Eath international: http://www.foe.org

InterContinental Caravan: http://stad.dsl.nl/~caravan/

June 18th: http://www.j18.org

Les Peripheriques vous parlent: http://www.globenet.org/periph

PICIS Korea: http://www.jinbo.net/~picis/top_e.html

Reclaim the Streets!: http://www.gn.apc.org/rts

Transnational Institute: http://www.tni.org

Tusovka: http://www.savanne.ch/tusovka/en

GATT Watchdog: http://www.apec.gen.nz

Canadian Union of Postal Workers: http://www.cupw-sttp.org

Global Exchange: http://www.globalexchange.org

ORGANIZING OPPORTUNITIES

NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD MEETING

[Thanks to Emilie Nichols for forwarding this, mailto:emilie@ix.netcom.com]

Oct 13-17, in San Francisco... the annual conference of the National Lawyers Guild, but it isn't just lawyers.... It includes activist law students, legal workers, policy workers, agitators, and cool public interest attorneys. NLG has a long history of supporting radical social change in the US...over 50 years, and still going strong! See website at http://www.nlg.org.... There will be a Tobin Tax workshop at this conference as well....

PREAMBLE CENTER CONFERENCE ON GLOBALIZATION

[Thanks to Emilie Nichols for forwarding this, mailto:emilie@ix.netcom.com]

Nov. 12-14 in Chicago, the Preamble Center is organizing a gathering "to hear from local groups organizing for economic and environmental justice, national organizations, and international representatives from every continent...about the campagins and organizations challenging globalization..." See Conference Invitation at htpp://www.preamble.org/Conference_Invitation.html

50 YEARS IS ENOUGH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

[Thanks to Emilie Nichols for forwarding this, mailto:emilie@ix.netcom.com]

Sept 23-26 in Washington DC... the 50 Years is Enough annual conference, with several hundred anti-globalization activists. There will be a Tobin Tax workshop at the event again this year. Conference will be followed immediately by the annual World Bank and IMF meetings, a handy target for street demonstrations....

Contact mailto:wb50years@igc.org

To subscribe to WTO News: The Road to Seattle, send an email to listserv@iatp.org. In the body of the message write: subscribe road_to_seattle. To unsubscribe, send an email to listserv@iatp.org, with the message unsubscribe road_to_seattle.

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Submissions to the Road to Seattle should be sent to Renske van Staveren at: rvanstaveren@iatp.org, or faxed to Renske at: (1) 612-870-4846.