



**Press Release**  
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## **1 billion hungry – NGOs call for new trade rules supportive of rights New book provides blueprint for more just trade system**

Geneva, 27 November 2009 - On the eve of the WTO Ministerial, a new book highlights the need for a fundamental reshaping of international trade and investment rules to put human rights, particularly the right to adequate food, at the centre of economic and development policy.

The book, “**The Global Food Challenge**,” by leading civil society trade experts at the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA), FoodFirst Information and Action Network (FIAN), the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), Brot für Alle, Brot für die Welt, Germanwatch and Heinrich Böll Foundation, calls on governments to bear in mind their obligation to respect, protect and realize the right to food when negotiating new trade agreements.

The number of undernourished people in the world has set a scandalous new record of one billion in 2009, in spite of a record grain harvest in 2008. “The idea that food security can best be achieved mainly through cheap imports has proved to be an illusion,” says Armin Paasch, trade expert with FIAN and editor of the book. Following trade liberalisation, many developing countries suffered repeated import surges of rice, maize, milk powder and meat. “First, cheap imports destroyed local production capacity. When agricultural commodity prices sky-rocketed in 2007-2008, imports became unaffordable and hunger swapped over to the slums of mega-cities,” he explains.

Estimates of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) indicate that prices, while increasing in general, will become much more volatile in the future. “New trade rules must provide governments with enough policy space to counter price fluctuations,” says Anne Laure Constantin, trade expert with IATP. “Governments have an obligation to realize the right to food for all. They must enable a sufficient income for small food producers and keep foodstuff affordable for poor consumers at the same time,” she says.

In the new book, various authors, including Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, propose new ways to integrate human rights principles into trade and investment

policies. The book includes chapters on commodity speculation, on investment in agriculture, on gender and on the impacts of climate change, among other issues.

“Business as usual is no option,” explains Angeline Munzara, Food Campaign Coordinator of EAA. “We cannot continue to liberalise markets and ignore the incredible suffering of one billion hungry people. The brutal reality is that this hunger exists even though we already produce enough nutritious food to feed everyone on the planet. We expect from our governments more creative solutions to the global food crisis than just a completion of the outdated Doha Round.”

*For a preview, download the brochure on:*

[http://www.e-alliance.ch/fileadmin/user\\_upload/docs/16\\_pages\\_Geneve.pdf](http://www.e-alliance.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/docs/16_pages_Geneve.pdf)

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The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance is a broad international network of churches and Christian organizations cooperating in advocacy on food and HIV and AIDS. The Alliance is based in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information about the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and the Prescription for Life Campaign, please see <http://www.e-alliance.ch/>