

3D -> Trade - Human Rights - Equitable Economy Annual Report 2003

What is 3D?

3D → Trade - Human Rights - Equitable Economy is a not-for-profit non-governmental organisation. 3D promotes collaboration amongst trade, development and human rights professionals, to ensure that trade rules are developed and applied in ways that promote an equitable economy.

Because the human rights framework holds such promising tools to promote economic equity, 3D's work aims to encourage reliance on this framework through a strategy of capacity-building, dialogue, coalition-building and practical work.

Our work focuses on the World Trade Organization (WTO). It does so bearing in mind the importance of national trade policy-making processes, bilateral and regional trade agreements, and economic policy made and applied through other institutions.

How long has 3D existed?

3D → Trade - Human Rights - Equitable Economy was formally created in June 2003, as an Association under Swiss law. Many of its activities are a continuation of information and dialogue projects carried out by 3D Associates since 2000. 3D Associates' activities relating to trade and human rights have now been subsumed into 3D → Trade - Human Rights - Equitable Economy.

Who are the people that make up 3D?

3D is made up of a small team of staff, external collaborators and Advisory Board members. The core team are Caroline Dommen, who founded and directs the organisation, and Davinia Ovet, who was recruited in March 2003, as Programme Coordinator. Caroline Dommen's has a background in law and policy relating to sustainable development, and Davinia Ovet's background is in International Business and Economic Law, with a focus on the transparency of international financial institutions.

In 2003 three external collaborators assisted the core team. Stewart Jackson set up our accounting system, and continues to ensure its smooth running. Sophie Frezza helped us develop our website and create a database, and oversees their operation. Esther Lam is writing the Practical Guide to the WTO for Human Rights professionals.

We also receive invaluable support on matters of process and of substance from our Advisory Board and Honorary Advisors.

What did 3D do in 2003?

A leading objective for 3D in 2003 was to define our strategy and priority activities and establish 3D's governance and internal structure, whilst continuing our substantive work.

We established 3D's Governance and Internal Structure

Therefore, in 2003 we dedicated considerable time to setting up the new organisation. 3D's Advisory Board and Steering Committee started work in mid-2003. Working closely with 3D's Director and Programme Coordinator, the Steering Committee adopted the Statutes of the organisation, appointed key staff members, and agreed to staff rules and office procedures to govern 3D's day-to-day work by October.

We also made good progress in following the steps necessary to ensure adequate social security coverage for all staff members, finalise the organization's registration with the Geneva state authorities, and obtain tax-free status. These elements will be fully in place in the early months of 2004.

By the end of 2003, 3D fulfilled the requirements to obtain its office space in the Maison des Associations, Geneva. The 'Maison' houses a variety of not-for-profit associations, including *La Porte du Tibet*, which promotes the right to self-determination of the Tibetan people, and the *Centre for Humanitarian Psychology*, which provides psychological support to humanitarian workers in the field. Amongst our Maison neighbours we work most closely with the *Center for International Environmental Law*, *Oxfam International*, the *International Gender and Trade Network*, the *Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy*, and the *World Organisation Against Torture*.

We are expecting to be able move into our own office by mid-2004. In the meantime, we are most grateful to the *Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy*, and the *Groupe pour une Suisse sans Armée*, who welcomed us as sub-tenants during 2003.

3D's Honorary Advisors

Mary Robinson, Executive Director of the Ethical Globalization Initiative, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and President of Ireland.

Diego García-Sayán, Judge of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and Chair of the UN's Working Group on Enforced Disappearances.

3D's Advisory Board

Robert Archer, International Council on Human Rights Policy, Geneva.

Carolyn Deere, Global Economic Governance Programme at Oxford University.

Brewster Grace, Quaker UN Office (QUNO), Geneva.

Mark Halle, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).

Paul Hunt, (Chair of 3D's Advisory Board), United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to health, Professor at the University of Essex, UK and at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

Elisabeth Tuerk, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), Geneva, currently working at UNCTAD.

Mariama Williams, Institute for Law and Economics, Kingston, Jamaica, and International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN).

We Developed our Programme Strategy and Priorities

To ensure that our planned activities responded to the needs of those with whom we work, we were able, as planned, to make good use of opportunities to consult with human rights advocates, trade professionals, development groups and others, about what could usefully be done to promote the public interest in international trade policy, and how the human rights framework could enhance this. In addition to discussions with individuals and in meetings held by others, we organised a number of consultations to this end during 2003.

In April, for instance, we invited human rights advocates to a meeting in Geneva, to tell us what they felt 3D could usefully provide in terms of resources, information tools and other services to enhance their work on trade. This meeting was attended by about 20 people from around the world, many of whom were in Geneva for the UN's annual Human Rights Commission.

By September 2003, on the basis of these consultations, we defined out the activities that 3D would implement as a matter of priority. These include (1) continuing to provide information, expertise and analysis on human rights and trade to those who request it, (2) analysing the human rights impact of trade and trade-related rules, with an initial focus on intellectual property rules and access to medicines, and (3) promoting awareness of how the human rights framework can be applied to promote equitable, development-oriented and people-friendly outcomes from trade policy.

These activities fall within the categories of capacity-building, dialogues and coalition-building.

We Carried out the Following Activities

Capacity-building

The two main ways in which 3D fulfils the capacity-building element of its mandate is by providing written or personal input into other organizations' training events. In 2003, 3D provided personal input by teaching a full day session on trade, in the annual summer school of the International Metalworkers' Federation, co-organized by Geneva's Université Ouvrière (workers' university). We gave a presentation on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to the International Service for Human Rights training programme for human rights advocates in April, and in November spoke to Sudanese human rights advocates on possible human rights implications of Sudan joining the WTO.

Late in 2003, we prepared a chapter on the WTO for the Diplomacy Training Programme (Australia) for use in training events with human rights advocates, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. This was first used in a training programme held in Bangkok, in February 2004.

We also fulfilled our objective of offering written resources on trade and human rights, prepared under own initiative, to respond to specific needs. In September, for instance, we prepared a Glossary to help non-trade specialists find their way around the fast-evolving jargon of international trade policy which proved most useful to the many non-trade specialists following events at and around the Cancun Ministerial. We also compiled a list

of events of interest to NGOs during the Cancun WTO Ministerial Conference. The fact that many of the leading civil society groups working on trade used this rather than produce their own attestations to the relevance and usefulness of 3D's work.

We also prepared a compilation of the ways that the UN human rights treaty supervisory mechanisms (treaty bodies) have considered trade-related issues in their work so far, which has been distributed widely to people working in this area, and will be indexed and added to our website by mid-2004. Based on this compilation, Davinia Ovetton wrote a critique of the treaty body's ability to promote international policy coherence, which has been accepted for publication.

We are particularly looking forward to the completion of the Practical Guide to the WTO. This Guide will be published in May 2004 in partnership with the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia), in response to a long-standing need for this kind of tool. The Guide will constitute a simply-worded, accurate and practical insight into how international trade rules are developed and applied. It is designed to help human rights groups direct their activities on economic justice to the point where they can be most effective.

In accordance with its mandate, 3D responds whenever possible to invitations to speak about trade, human rights and an equitable economy. In 2003 for instance we participated in a meeting of the Asia-Europe Foundation on international investment rules and human rights; we served as a panellist on a roundtable discussion on agriculture and the right to food organized during the Cancun Ministerial Conference by Rights & Democracy and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank; we spoke about the possibilities for and limits to WTO reform, at a Forum organised by the Heinrich Boell Forum in Cancun; and we presented a paper on human rights at the Conference on the Global Governance of Trade, Environment and Sustainable Development, organised by Ecologic in Berlin in October. We also participated in a planning meeting of the Ethical Globalization Initiative, in Bellagio, Italy, in November.

Dialogues and Coalition-building

We attach great importance to creating opportunities for dialogue and promoting collaborative approaches amongst human rights advocates, development groups and others working in support of economic equity.

To this end, in 2003, we worked informally with Paul Hunt, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, in preparing his mission to the WTO. We also worked informally with Oxfam and some other Geneva-based development NGOs to identify difficulties with the conditions imposed on least-developed countries negotiating to join the WTO. This work focused primarily on Cambodia, and we were able to act as a conduit, circulating information about public interest and human rights concerns with regard to Cambodia's WTO membership package to a range of human rights advocates, in South-East Asia and elsewhere. This was done to a large extent through the trade and investment listserv of the International Network on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net).

On a more general level, we informally acted as the moderator of ESCR-Net's trade and investment listserv during the year, sending out emails on average once or twice a week to

flag issues on the international trade agenda that had human rights dimensions, and inviting responses or activities from human rights advocates in response.

During the inaugural conference of ESCR-Net, in June, in Chiang Mai, 3D played an active role, not only in gathering groups and individuals together to develop common strategies for trade-related work, but also in the conference more broadly, for instance by facilitating the daily break-out sessions, and through coordinating and facilitating the workshop entitled Effective human rights approaches to trade liberalisation. We continued the conversations that began in Chiang Mai about how ESCR-Net might move its work on international trade, finance and investment forwards, through the listserv, and amongst human rights advocates present in Cancun for the WTO Ministerial Conference. In 2004 3D will continue to actively work with ESCR-Net to promote understanding and interest amongst human rights advocates around the world about how they can usefully respond to human rights inconsistent aspects of trade and economic liberalisation.

Another important event for us in 2003 was the Panel discussion we organised in Cancun, in collaboration with Rights & Democracy, entitled "Towards Development: Human Rights and the WTO Agenda." The panelists – Mary Robinson, Susan Whelan, Mariclaire Acosta Urquidi, Dominique Njinkeu and Paul Hunt – and the subject-matter drew a large crowd (by Cancun standards) of about 70 people and led to an interesting discussion. The report of the panel, distributed widely in French and in Spanish, also proved to be a useful resource for those unable to be present at the discussion.

Practical work

As 3D becomes more firmly established, it will give increasing priority to concrete initiatives to demonstrate to human rights advocates and trade professionals how the application of human rights mechanisms can ensure that trade rules are developed and applied in a way that contributes to an equitable economy.

In late 2003, we started preparing the first of a dozen country briefings on the human rights dimensions of trade-related intellectual property rules that affect access to medicines. The first countries we looked at were El Salvador and Uganda. Country briefings on Ecuador, the European Union and others will follow. These country briefings are primarily destined for members of the UN human rights treaty bodies, and seek to enhance their ability to raise trade-related human rights concerns with government officials with responsibility for human rights. The objective of this is to broaden participation in discussions about international trade policy, at the national and international levels, to contribute to policy coherence, and to demonstrate how human rights mechanisms can be applied in practice to ensure fairer, more balance trade rules and thus promote an equitable economy.

For more information on 3D's background, objectives and current activities, as well as the reports of the activities cited in this report, please visit www.3dthree.org