

# Chapter 6 The WTO Agreement on Agriculture

After reading this chapter you will be able to

- Explain how the trend towards food trade liberalization affects human rights
- Describe how the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture consolidates the strength of large agribusiness
- Know how to find out what your country's position is in WTO negotiations relating to agriculture
- Find civil society groups already actively campaigning for fairer trade in agriculture, with whom you can work

## 6.1 Why does the WTO have an Agreement on Agriculture?

GATT – the WTO's predecessor – succeeded largely in freeing trade by removing barriers that cause obstacles to the movement of certain goods across borders. Until 1994 these multilateral trade rules applied predominantly to manufactured goods rather than agricultural products. Prior to this, major trading countries like the US and the EU had insisted on exemptions and waivers from GATT to allow them to continue providing massive subsidies to their agricultural sectors. The resulting artificial maintenance of high levels of production led to the sale of agricultural surpluses on the world market at prices below their cost of production, a practice known as dumping. Dumping has continued – increased even – since the creation of the WTO.

These distortions in agricultural trade led to pressure from many countries in the 1980s to establish multilateral trade rules to create a more fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system. The US and EU began showing interest primarily because their domestic agricultural subsidy programmes were becoming so expensive as to be unsustainable. Food-exporting developing countries favoured rules as a means to stabilize and increase world prices for food exports, hoping that this would provide additional export earnings to alleviate poverty and to further development goals. Many developing country markets were already open to cheap and dumped agricultural products from the US and EC, due to International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank structural adjustments programmes that required them to liberalize their economies and open their markets to foreign products.

Furthermore, the most powerful set of actors in favour of an AoA were transnational commodity traders and processors, such as Cargill and Monsanto. These saw in the prospect of new global rules on agriculture trade the possibility of accessing new markets, particularly in developing countries, and thus the prospect of increasing concentration of the market share they already held.

In the **Uruguay Round** negotiations – which led to the creation of the WTO – states agreed in 1994 to create *inter alia* multilateral trade rules for the liberalization of agricultural goods. These rules are embodied in the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) which came into force, like the other WTO agreements, in 1995. The main provisions are summarized in Box 6.1.

## 6.2 Why does free trade in agriculture not make everyone better off?

In theory, trade liberalization enhances efficiency, thus enabling trading countries to make welfare gains.

It is true that growth of agricultural production is one key to reducing poverty in many developing countries. It is also the case that agricultural imports can complement local production and provide alternative sources of nutrition and dietary choices. And exporting local produce can offer new markets and opportunities for employment and income.

### Box 6.1 The Agreement on Agriculture

#### The AoA has three pillars: market access, domestic support and export subsidies

**Market Access:** aims to reduce border obstacles to imports of agricultural products, such as taxes and duties – commonly known as tariffs. Furthermore, countries had to abolish restrictions on the quantity of agricultural goods entering their markets. All other barriers that were not tariffs, known as ‘non-tariff barriers’ and including health standards or packaging requirements, had to be converted into tariffs, a process known as “tariffication.” The Special Safeguard (SSG) is a tariff mechanism that provides temporary protection against sudden import surges or falls in world prices. However, only countries that underwent tariffication can apply the SSG. Many countries, particularly developing countries, did not undergo tariffication because they did not have a significant amount of non-tariff barriers. In Asia, only Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand are eligible to use the SSG – the rest are left with no mechanism to protect themselves from floods of food imports.

**Domestic Support:** this is the WTO name for the subsidies given by governments to farmers for specific agricultural products, or for agricultural infrastructure and research. Developed countries are the major providers of domestic support for their farmers. The stated objective of the domestic support pillar of the AoA was to reduce the amount of money going into production of farm goods that are subsequently exported, in other words to reduce subsidies that distort the otherwise free trade of agricultural products. The amount of support is measured on the basis of an “Aggregate Measure of Support” (AMS) which is a measure that attempts to calculate all the financial factors that influence a farmer to produce a certain product.

**Export Subsidies:** the AoA’s approach to export subsidies is to list the export subsidies that WTO Members have to reduce, and to ban the introduction of new subsidies. Export subsidies are harmful because they directly support exporters, most commonly agribusinesses or transnational commodity traders, enabling them to displace local producers – most commonly small-scale farmers in the countries to which they sell their goods – with artificially cheap products.

However, trade liberalization in agriculture is often detrimental to local production and consumption. Industrialized and export-oriented production requires access to land, water, technology, infrastructure and capital which most small-scale farmers do not have access to or cannot afford. Transnational commodity traders and processors, predominantly from developed countries, have the means to invest in the production, processing, transporting and trading process giving them a massive advantage over small-scale producers elsewhere. In addition local farmers in developing countries suffer from competition by cheap imports from more efficient or subsidized producers, typically agribusiness in rich countries.

#### The plight of small corn farmers in the Philippines

The high capital costs of entry into commercial food markets and the importance of infrastructure, which is non-existent in the more marginal areas from which people will be displaced, means most of the benefits from commercial agriculture will accrue to more prosperous producers.

Kevin Watkins, *Field Trip Report: The Philippines* Manila, 1995

In fact, food trade is of interest primarily to a handful of big agribusiness companies. Only about 20% of food is traded internationally. More important is the fact that a few big agribusinesses – such as Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland Company – dominate the food trade. In addition, many of these transnationals, particularly in the US, are the beneficiaries of billions of dollars of subsidies from the government to enable them to maintain and increase their share of world agricultural markets. This enables them to be the main perpetrators of dumping, further impoverishing small-scale farmers in developing countries.

Thus, giving priority to increasing international trade is no substitute for stimulating a domestically-oriented agricultural sector. Indeed most food is produced for local consumption (90% in developing countries) and only a small proportion is traded internationally, which means that a solely trade-oriented approach has little relevance for many countries. A solely trade-oriented approach can increase food insecurity, first, because relying on imported food displaces local production; and second, there is no guarantee that food produced for export to rich countries will be accepted by them.

Access to developed country markets depends on producers being able to meet specific international standards. Many developing countries do not have the capacity or infrastructure to meet these standards, which in many cases are onerous and complicated. Moreover, food safety, packaging or other standards applied by European or North American countries are often applied as a pretext to limit imports from developing countries. There are many, many examples of this, affecting exports of tea, coffee, vegetables, fish, shrimp and other products from Asian countries into Europe. One instance is the banning by the Australian Government in mid-2002 of the import of Philippine Cavendish bananas on the basis that there was a risk the banana carried pests and diseases. Yet the Philippine bananas had been shipped since the 1960s to countries with high quarantine standards including Japan and New Zealand. The real reason for the ban was the insistence of the Australian banana lobby, who risked losing their share of the banana market.<sup>1</sup>

### 6.3 How does the AoA affect standards of living?

According to its Preamble, the aims of the WTO are to raise living standards, ensure full employment and increase incomes (see section 1.2). As part of the WTO Agreement, the AoA is meant to further these aims. There are several reasons why the agreement may not do so.

- Firstly, the AoA is biased in favour of developed countries and their agricultural support programmes. The AoA establishes a number of so-called **boxes** (Box 6.2) which allow developed countries to maintain a large portion of their domestic support programmes and prevent developing countries from taking legal action against the consequent dumping of agricultural commodities. According to Devinder Sharma, “the colourful band of boxes – green box, blue box and amber box – have come in handy for the rich countries to protect its subsidies to agriculture, and at the same time dump the surpluses all over the world.”<sup>2</sup>
- Second, WTO processes are regularly criticized for lacking **transparency** and making it impossible for developing countries to participate equally in negotiations and decision-making. Even though developing countries make up two-thirds of the membership of the WTO, their strength in numbers does not translate into greater influence over decision-making. Informal processes, such as **mini-ministerials** and the **green room** meetings, are not part of the official procedures of the WTO. They are nevertheless strongly endorsed as mechanisms which allow the negotiations to move forward, although they are in conflict with rules which state that decision-making shall be done by consensus with each Member having one vote.<sup>3</sup> In the current negotiations for example, the US, EU, Australia, Brazil and India, decided to establish a non-group of 5 in order to thrash out a framework on agriculture, adopted in July 2004. Many developing countries, especially those from the Africa region who were excluded from this “non-group” were angered by the non-transparent and exclusive nature of these meetings.
- Finally, most WTO Members act according to a dominant belief that trade liberalization is the only way to achieve development, growth and poverty reduction. This faith in trade has

<sup>1</sup> Hiramani Ghimire and Ratnakar Adhikari, *Agricultural Trade Liberalization and its Impact on South Asia*, SAWTEE and CUTS-CITEE, 2001; and Hernani de Leon, *Banana Growers Won't Throw in the Towel Just Yet*, Business World, July 3, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Devinder Sharma, *WTO and Agriculture: The Great Trade Robbery*, Forum for Biotechnology and Food Security, New Delhi, 2003

<sup>3</sup> WTO, *The Legal Texts: The Result of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations*, 1999

### Box 6.2 The coloured boxes

Subsidies are classified into three groups depending on their trade-distorting impact and their effect on the amount of production. This helps determine whether or not they need to be reduced and whether action can be taken against them under the WTO dispute settlement mechanism.

The **amber box** contains subsidies that significantly distort trade and affect the amount of production. They must be reduced, and are open to legal challenge by other WTO Members.

The **blue box** (Article 6.5 AoA) allows countries unlimited spending for direct payments to farmers if the payments are linked to programmes that limit the amount of production. These are open to challenge by other WTO Members, but are exempt from the obligation to be reduced.

The **green box** contains support that is assumed to have no effect on production. This includes payments linked to environmental programmes, pest and disease control, infrastructure development and domestic food aid. It also includes direct payments to producers if those payments are not linked to current production. Green box subsidies are not subject to the obligation to be reduced.

evolved to the point where today liberalization is often seen not just as a means to development but rather an end in itself. The result is that the WTO seems to have forsaken the objective of human development or improving standards of living, and replaced it with the quest for liberalization. Importantly from a human rights perspective, the model of agricultural trade liberalization promoted by the AoA encourages industrialized and export-oriented agricultural production, favouring transnational commodity traders and processors over small-scale farmers.

Although since the AoA, developing countries have reduced their barriers to agricultural imports, industrialized countries sustain high levels of production and sell products at artificially low prices through their agricultural support programmes, which are legitimized in the AoA by the boxes (see Box 6.2 above) and export subsidies. The wide-scale dumping in developing countries has displaced local production and caused food import bills to rise, threatening the right to food, to an adequate standard of living and to life.

The AoA constitutes only one of the mechanisms promoting trade liberalization and export-orientation and therefore can only be understood in its interaction with other policy forces. Many developing countries have also undergone World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment programmes prior to and during the WTO negotiations, as well as having entered into bilateral and regional trade agreements which often impose more wide-ranging liberalization commitments than the WTO. Structural adjustment programmes, in particular, have forced developing country markets to open to foreign imports and have radically reshaped many

#### The Indian dairy sector under threat from dumping

In India, the dairy sector has been hit hard by subsidized exports from the EU. In 1999-2000 India imported over 130,000 tonnes of EU skim milk powder. This was the result of EUR 5 million export subsidies that were provided to EU producers. EU subsidies to butter exports are also extortionately high. Consequently, butter oil import into India has grown at an average rate of 7.7% annually. This has had a dampening effect on prices of *ghee* in the domestic market. Ironically, India is the biggest producer of milk in the world. What is more worrying for India is that there are now signs of declining productivity growth for many agricultural products in India which will have severe implications for the majority of the population.

Devinder Sharma, *WTO and Agriculture: The Great Trade Robbery*, 2003.

**Why are some civil society groups calling for “WTO out of Agriculture?”**

Neo-liberal policies prioritize international trade, and not food for the people. They haven't contributed at all to hunger eradication in the world. On the contrary, they have increased the peoples' dependence on agricultural imports, and have strengthened the industrialization of agriculture, thus jeopardizing the genetic, cultural and environmental heritage of our planet, as well as our health. They have forced hundreds of millions of farmers to give up their traditional agricultural practices, to rural exodus or to emigration. International institutions such as IMF (International Monetary Fund), the World Bank, and WTO (World Trade Organization) have implemented those policies dictated by the interests of large transnational companies and superpowers. International (WTO), regional (Free Trade Area of the Americas-FTAA) or bilateral “free” trade agreements of agricultural products actually allow those companies to control the globalized food market. WTO is a completely inadequate institution to deal with food and agriculture-related issues. Therefore Via Campesina wants WTO out of agriculture.

Via Campesina, a coalition of rural women, peasants, small farmers, rural workers and indigenous people from Asia, Europe, America and Africa who were the first group to call for the WTO out of Agriculture.

**Box 6.3 Annual rates of growth for selected crops in India, 1980-2000**

| Crop            | Production Level<br>(1980-81 to 1989-90) | Production Level<br>(1990-91 to 2000-01) |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Rice            | 3.62                                     | 1.79                                     |
| Wheat           | 3.57                                     | 3.04                                     |
| Coarse Cereals  | 0.40                                     | 0.06                                     |
| Pulses          | 1.52                                     | -0.58                                    |
| Food Grains     | 2.85                                     | 1.66                                     |
| Non-food Grains | 3.77                                     | 1.86                                     |
| Oilseeds        | 5.20                                     | 0.66                                     |
| Sugar Cane      | 2.70                                     | 2.62                                     |
| Cotton          | 2.80                                     | 0.92                                     |
| All Crops       | 3.19                                     | 1.73                                     |

Government of India (2002), quoted in Devinder Sharma, *WTO and Agriculture: The Great Trade Robbery*, 2003.

sectors of their economies. Whilst structural adjustment policies initiated the process of export-oriented agriculture, this has been reinforced, deepened and locked-in by the liberalization commitments that developing countries have to undertake under the AoA.

It is the combination of these global policies that promote a model of agriculture which may be suitable for agribusinesses and agricultural exports but is frequently detrimental to small-scale farmers, rural livelihoods and human rights.

**6.4 Why are LDCs and net food-importing countries the biggest losers in agricultural liberalization?**

During the Uruguay Round there was general recognition that the AoA would have negative effects in **least developed countries** (LDCs) and other developing countries that import the majority of their food, known as net food-importing developing countries (NFIDCs). The *Marakesh Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme*

### The effects of freeing imports of rice in the Philippines

Rice production in the Philippines provides employment and a source of livelihood for two million farmers – 20% of the agricultural work force. With the ratification of the AoA, the Government had to open its markets. This caused many mechanisms which had promoted rice production and protected rice farmers from cheap rice imports, to be reduced or eliminated. The price of imported rice was made the same as that of locally-produced rice but this provided little protection to local rice producers because the convenience and advantage of sourcing rice from one single transnational commodity trader abroad, instead of incurring the costs associated with consolidating and building stocks from many local suppliers, gave preference to the few foreign suppliers over the millions of small-scale rice producers.

Walden Bello, *The WTO and the Demise of Philippine Agriculture*.

Human rights groups could contact their closest ActionAid office for information on how to campaign for food security in LDCs and NFIDCs.

See [www.actionaid.org.uk/index.asp?section\\_id=19](http://www.actionaid.org.uk/index.asp?section_id=19) or section 6.7 below for contact details.

Many civil society groups are active in proposing the form and content of an SSM and expertise from human rights groups could bring welcome support to this work. See section 6.7 below and Chapter 8 for contact details of civil society groups working on agriculture.

*on Least Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries* was adopted at the final conference of the Round, promising additional support to these countries. However, the Decision was legally ambiguous as well as vague in terms of mechanisms, timing and the criteria for the provision of assistance, and it has not been properly implemented.

ActionAid is one NGO campaigning on this issue. It calls for:

- the establishment of a fund with the primary aim of financing programmes to enhance agricultural productivity, and, in times of high world prices, to give food aid in full grant form to NFIDCs and LDCs
- the development of national food security programmes within LDCs and NFIDCs with the participation of all stakeholders especially small-scale farmers
- reform of the Food Aid Convention of the FAO.<sup>4</sup>

ActionAid's proposals would have the effect of helping realization of the right to food and related rights in LDCs and NFIDCs.

## 6.5 What special mechanisms exist to help developing countries' agriculture?

Several mechanisms have been introduced in recognition of the difficulties freeing agricultural trade has created for developing countries.

**The July Framework** proposes that WTO Members adopt a **Special Safeguard Mechanism** (SSM) for developing countries to use to protect themselves against sudden import surges or falls in world prices for agricultural products. It is unclear what this mechanism will look like and whether it will be available to protect all agricultural sectors from dumping.

The July Framework also calls for the elimination of export subsidies. This would be an important step in reducing dumping by Northern agribusiness.

**Special and differential treatment** (S&D) is a mechanism that is supposed to address the disadvantages developing countries face in the world trading system and provide them with greater flexibility than developed countries. S&D is an important feature of all WTO agreements including the AoA. At the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha in 2001, Members agreed that:

“special and differential treatment for developing countries shall be an integral part of all elements of the negotiations (...) so as to be operationally effective and to enable developing countries to effectively take account of their development needs, including food security and rural development.”<sup>6</sup>

This seems a genuine attempt to recognise the inequalities that exist and implement measures that will remedy the inequalities and improve human rights. However, developed countries consistently fail to honour this commitment preferring to insist on meagre S&D provisions such as

<sup>4</sup> ActionAid, *The Marrakesh Decision*; FAO, *The Food Aid Convention*, [www.fao.org/Legal/rtf/fac99-e.htm](http://www.fao.org/Legal/rtf/fac99-e.htm)

<sup>6</sup> Paragraph 13, *Doha Ministerial Declaration*.

### The cotton dispute

Brazil challenged the US subsidies to its cotton producers, saying that they caused a decline in world cotton prices and reduced Brazilian cotton exports, thereby increasing poverty among farmers dependent on cotton production. In its ruling, the Panel agreed with Brazil that US subsidies to its cotton producers were in contravention of WTO rules on agriculture.

For a human rights analysis of the cotton dispute, see 3D and Ethical Globalization Initiative, *US and EU cotton production and export policies and their impact on West and Central Africa – Coming to grips with international human rights obligations*, 2004, available at [www.3dthree.org/en/pages.php?IDcat=5](http://www.3dthree.org/en/pages.php?IDcat=5)

longer implementation periods and lower reduction rates on agreed commitments. Developing countries have long insisted that these concessions do not address sufficiently the disadvantage and inequality. To this end, they have tabled 88 proposals to the WTO to improve S&D. The July Framework calls for a review of all outstanding proposals and asks for recommendations by July 2005. Implementing many of these proposals would help reduce the inequities of the international trading system which contribute to adverse human rights effects.

**The Dispute Settlement Mechanism** has recently issued rulings on two cases that have huge implications for the future of rich country agriculture subsidies. In June 2004, a WTO dispute panel ruled in favour of Brazil against US subsidy programmes for cotton. In September, a panel ruled against EU subsidization of sugar exports. These landmark cases set important precedents that may encourage other countries to launch disputes against heavily subsidized agricultural products.

Human rights groups concerned about the S&D proposals could join forces with those civil society groups advocating their implementation.

## 6.6 Which human rights are affected by the Agreement on Agriculture?

Rights affected by the AoA include the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to work, the right to food, the right to health and the right to life (unavailability of food can lead to illness and death).

These rights are set out in a range of legally-binding treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The ICESCR also requires that States “take steps individually and through international assistance and co-operation (...) to the maximum of [...] available resources” towards realization of the rights set out in the Covenant. Moreover, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights emphasized in its third General Comment that the ICESCR’s requirement that a state party take steps ‘to the maximum of available resources’ refers both to the resources available within a state and those available through international co-operation and assistance.

In Asia, the majority of people depend on the agricultural sector for employment and a source of income, guaranteeing the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to work. In India alone, 72% of the population lives in rural areas and the agricultural sector provides employment to about 60% of the country’s total labour force. This situation is true for many other Asian countries (see Box 6.4). Agricultural trade liberalization, promoted under the AoA, threatens the strong base of farmer-oriented agriculture in favour of industrialized and mechanized agriculture largely carried out and controlled by transnational commodity producers and traders from developed countries. The consequence is often a *de facto* discrimination against the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of society, contrary to human rights.

All agricultural products are subject to liberalization under the AoA. This is a concern especially with regard to staple foods that are vital for food security and which can guarantee the right to food. For example, the main food crop of Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, is rice. A study on the import pattern of food grains in these countries reveals that most

For a description of General Comments see Chapter 7.2

Protection of Special Products is an important proposal, and human rights advocates could join other civil society groups that are campaigning for it. See section 6.7 below and Chapter 8 4 for contact details of civil society groups working on this issue.

### Box 6.4 Percentage of population engaged in agriculture in selected Asian countries, 1999

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| India      | 60% |
| Bangladesh | 60% |
| Pakistan   | 53% |
| Thailand   | 52% |
| Sri Lanka  | 48% |

FAO, *Agriculture, Trade and Food Security: Issues and Options in the WTO Negotiations from the Perspective of Developing Countries, 1999.*

are not self-sufficient and are becoming increasingly dependent on rice imports. Over the period 1995 to 1999 the total import of rice in the South Asian region increased by 132%.<sup>7</sup> This increases the risk that South Asia will face worsening food insecurity, and with it the adverse affects on the enjoyment of human rights such as the right to food, to health and to an adequate standard of living.

To remedy this, developing countries are proposing, in the agriculture negotiations currently underway in the WTO, protection of **special products** that are vital in ensuring food security, rural development and rural livelihoods.

Another WTO agreement – TRIPS – also affects human rights in agriculture, because it makes it mandatory for countries to provide patent protection for micro-organisms, non-biological and micro-biological processes as well as providing protection for plant varieties either by patents, or by an “effective *sui generis* system.” The fear of such a system of patent protection on genetic resources for food and agriculture is that it could raise the cost of seed and agricultural inputs making them unaffordable for small-scale farmers in developing countries. Another problem is that TRIPS allows patenting of the shared knowledge of indigenous communities.

In effect, the TRIPS Agreement protects the rights of corporations, such as the biotechnology industry. To date, six multinationals control around 70% of the patents held on staple food crops. This could have serious implications for farmers’ rights to save, use, re-use, exchange and sell seeds if it means, as it could, that farmers would have to pay patent duties to save, use or exchange seeds in the way they have done for centuries. Seed companies such as Monsanto and Jaffer Brothers are already active in the seed markets of Pakistan. Under TRIPS, the Government of Pakistan is obliged to protect the intellectual property rights of the seeds marketed by those companies. The patenting of seeds coupled with technologies such as “terminator” technology<sup>8</sup> could have drastic effects on the human rights of farmers in all developing countries and is of particular concern in Asia.

<sup>7</sup> Hiramani Ghimire and Ratnakar Adhikari, *Agricultural Trade Liberalisation and its Impact on South Asia*, SAWTEE and CUTS-CITEE, 2001

<sup>8</sup> “Terminator” technology is a genetic technology designed to produce sterile seeds so that farmers become dependent on the market for seeds instead of being able to re-use seeds. Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Shafqat Munir and Syed Qasim Shah, *Impact of Trade Liberalization on Lives and Livelihoods of Mountain Communities in the Northern Areas of Pakistan*, Sustainable Development Policy Institute and SAWTEE, 2002.

### Chinese agriculture rapidly being displaced by cheaper imports

In China, where there has always been a strong agricultural sector, a sudden and unprecedented deficit in agricultural trade is occurring due to increasing imports from the US, Canada and Australia. In the first half of 2004, total imports of farm produce rose 62.5% to US\$14.35 billion with the US alone exporting US\$4.96 billion, a jump of 68.1% compared with the same period in 2003. In the first half of 2004 China imported 1.8 times as much grain as in the same period the previous year. This unprecedented and rapid change has raised concerns at the highest levels of the government about the food security of 1.3 billion people.

James Kynge, *China Fears Food Crisis as Imports Hit \$14 billion*, Financial Times, 22 August, 2004.

## 6.7 Actions, contacts and further reading

### Some suggested actions

- Lobby your government to negotiate for a strong Special Safeguard Mechanism that will protect farmers from dumping.
- Lobby your government to negotiate for the right of developing countries to self-select Special Products on the basis of food security, rural development and livelihoods.
- Identify your country's proposals in the agriculture negotiations
- Write to your country's trade negotiators in Geneva as well as your trade and agricultural ministries to remind them of their obligation, under human rights law, to ensure that any new agricultural trade commitments promotes the human rights of the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population.
- Identify which proposal your government has tabled at the WTO on Special and Differential treatment. Contact other civil society groups to identify whether the proposal will further human rights and then lobby your relevant ministries to ensure the proposal is pushed forward in the negotiations.

The WTO website dedicated to the agriculture negotiations is useful, at [www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/agric\\_e/negs\\_bkgmd00\\_contents\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/negs_bkgmd00_contents_e.htm).

### Some useful contacts

The main civil society groups and coalitions involved in campaigning on agriculture trade or on related human rights are:

#### International

- **ActionAid:** [www.actionaid.org.uk](http://www.actionaid.org.uk)
- **Catholic Institute for Overseas Development (CAFOD):** [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk)
- **Foodfirst International Action Network (FIAN):** [www.fian.org](http://www.fian.org)
- **Friends of the Earth:** [www.foe.org](http://www.foe.org)
- **Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP):** [www.iatp.org](http://www.iatp.org)
- **Oxfam:** [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)
- **Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI):** [www.seatini.org](http://www.seatini.org)
- **Third World Network (TWN):** [www.twinside.org.sg/](http://www.twinside.org.sg/)
- **Via Campesina:** [www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org)
- **World Wildlife Fund (WWF):** [www.wwf.org](http://www.wwf.org)

#### Asian

- **ActionAid Pakistan:** [www.actionaidpakistan.org](http://www.actionaidpakistan.org)
- **Asia Pacific Network on Food Sovereignty (APNFS):** [www.peoplesfoodsovereignty.org/](http://www.peoplesfoodsovereignty.org/)
- **Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS):** [www.cuts-india.org](http://www.cuts-india.org)
- **CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics and Environment (CUTS-CITEE):** [www.cuts-india.org](http://www.cuts-india.org)
- **Focus on the Global South (FOCUS):** [www.focusweb.org](http://www.focusweb.org)
- **Food First, Institute for Food and Development Policy:** [www.foodfirst.org](http://www.foodfirst.org)
- **Oxfam Hong Kong:** [www.oxfam.org.hk](http://www.oxfam.org.hk)
- **South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE):** [www.sawtee.org](http://www.sawtee.org)

### Further Reading

ActionAid, *WTO Agreement on Agriculture*, 2003.  
[www.actionaid.org.uk/index.asp?page\\_id=794](http://www.actionaid.org.uk/index.asp?page_id=794)

Walden Bello and Aileen Kwa, *Guide to the Agreement on Agriculture: Technicalities and Trade Tricks Explained*, Focus on the Global South, 1998.  
[www.focusweb.org/publications/1998/AOA.pdf](http://www.focusweb.org/publications/1998/AOA.pdf)

FIAN, *The AoA and the Right to Food*, 2003.  
[www.fian.org/fian/index.php?option=content&task=category&sectionid=4&id=20&Itemid=59](http://www.fian.org/fian/index.php?option=content&task=category&sectionid=4&id=20&Itemid=59)

Hiramani Ghimire and Ratnakar Adhikari, *Agricultural Trade Liberalization and its Impact on South Asia*, SAWTEE and CUTS-CITEE, 2001.

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, *World Trade Organization Agreement on Agriculture Basics*, WTO Cancun Series Paper No 2, 2003.

Sophia Murphy, *Managing the Invisible Hand – Markets, Farmers and International Trade*, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, April 2002.  
[www.tradeobservatory.org/library.cfm?RefID=25497](http://www.tradeobservatory.org/library.cfm?RefID=25497)