

## AFTINET Bulletin No. 22, 5 July, 2001

If you would like to contribute material to the bulletin, please contact Pat Randal by email at [pranald@piac.asn.au](mailto:pranald@piac.asn.au). Our website is [www.aftinet.org.au](http://www.aftinet.org.au).

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### **1. Our World Is Not For Sale: Citizens' groups and movements launch global campaign on the WTO and corporate globalization.**

**The statement was circulated in Bulletin no 20 and is attached to this bulletin as a PDF document. Many organisations from Australia and other countries have signed it. If your organisation would like to sign, you can do so at [www.canadians.org](http://www.canadians.org)**

**Geneva** - On the occasion of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) first symposium with non-governmental organizations since the collapse of WTO talks in Seattle in 1999, citizens' groups and movements from around the globe will today launch a global campaign opposing the WTO's support for corporate globalization. The campaign 'Our World Is Not For Sale' already involves over 100 groups from 20 countries.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has invited representatives from governments, non-governmental organizations, the media, think tanks and universities to a two-day symposium in Geneva, 6-7 July, 2001. According to the WTO's Secretariat the symposium will discuss "critical issues confronting the world trading system." However, given that the biased Secretariat clearly supports the European Union's proposal - now apparently supported by the United States - to launch a new trade round at its Qatar Ministerial in November (opposed by key developing countries and many citizens' groups) and is also publishing campaign materials attacking civil society critiques of WTO, the outcome of such a meeting is clearly in doubt.

Representatives from many civil society groups around the world, deeply concerned about the severe, widespread social and environmental impacts of past, current and proposed WTO negotiations, view this symposium as a public relations tactic rather than a real attempt to discuss 'critical issues'. The symposium could enable the WTO to create an illusion of transparency and accessibility, when for many millions of marginalised peoples and even governments participating in current negotiations, nothing could be further from the truth. Post-Seattle proposals to shake up the WTO's internal processes and procedures, for example, seem to have been abandoned.

Leading up to Seattle, almost 1500 groups from 89 countries rallied under the campaign "WTO: No New Round - Turn Around", demanding a moratorium on further negotiations within the built-in agenda and opposing the introduction of new issues like investment and competition policy in the WTO. After the Seattle Ministerial, these same groups developed a joint proposal setting out steps to reduce the power and scope of the WTO. To date, however, these views, expressed by groups representing millions of people around the world, have not been addressed by the WTO.

*"The WTO has been 'institutionally' deaf to the concerns of the South. Implementation issues (righting existing imbalances) have been uppermost on developing countries' agenda since long before Seattle. Yet to date, despite promises, no progress has been made. Furthermore, Green Room meetings held in secret continue. The majority of developing countries are left out of this process. With the unequal power relations in the organization, a new round would exacerbate, not alleviate inequities for the South."* said Aileen Kwa from Focus on the Global South based in Thailand.

*"If the WTO Secretariat were sincere about discussing critical issues, it would stop dismissing developing nations and NGO's fundamental questions about the appropriate scope of WTO rules and the appropriate role of the WTO. Instead, the WTO staff is leading the push for a new WTO Round and is launching meetings like this with much fanfare, but no real intention of changing the agenda,"* added Tony Tujan from the IBON Foundation in the Philippines.

Many civil society groups are angry that their concerns about the WTO's corporate globalization agenda are being ignored. A number of these groups - including Focus on the Global South, Friends of the Earth International, the NGO Forum on Indonesian Development and Public Services International - will attend the WTO's symposium to express their shared views.

*"The upcoming Ministerial in Qatar represents a critical opportunity to turn around the current corporate-driven trade agenda. This is not the time to increase the WTO's power by introducing yet more issues. What we need right now is a moratorium on on-going negotiations and an assessment of the environmental and social impacts of existing rules and regulations. Nothing else will do."* said Ronnie Hall, from Friends of the Earth International.

*"Via Campesina feels that the first step must be taking the WTO out of agriculture" said Paul Nicholson, from Via Campesina, an international movement of farm organizations. "Millions of farmers around the world - in the South and the North - are being devastated by rules which prioritize trade over all other concerns, including hunger, the health of rural economies, the environment and food safety. A different set of rules, outside the WTO, is needed and needed now."*

The "Our World is Not For Sale" campaign will continue up to and beyond the next WTO Ministerial, gathering pace and support as new groups join the coalition.

*"Activists and organizations all over the world will be campaigning against a New Round and against further liberalization in the months leading up to the Qatar ministerial" said Alice Carl from Public Services International.*

## **2. Sydney Events**

### **a) Rally Sat July 7 Martin Place against IMF and repression in Papua New Guinea**

Five PNG students died and many were injured when police opened fire on a peaceful rally against the IMF program last week. Stop the PNG Government repressing students and Workers in PNG, and support the fight against the IMF and World Bank!

Rally this Saturday, 7th July 12pm World Bank Building (centre of Martin Place) (eyewitness reports from PNG students)

Public Meeting 2.30pm, Saturday UTS Tower Building for further discussion and planning.

**b) NOW WE THE PEOPLE CONFERENCE July 14-15, Newtown Theatre, 354 King St , Newtown.**

Over 400 participants are expected to take part in a major grassroots re-think about the direction Australian society has taken over the last 20 years under economic rationalism and corporate globalisation. The conference will adopt a declaration about an alternative path for a fairer, more equal Australia moving towards genuine environmental sustainability, regulating and restraining the rampant power of the global corporations.

Keynote speakers include Sharon Burrow, ACTU President, Quentin Dempster (journalist), Jenny Macklin ALP MHR, Bev Baker (NSW Parents & Citizens Fed), Kate Davison (National Union of Students) , Chris Dodds (ACOSS), Christine Milne (Greens) John Maitland (CFMEU), Pat Thompson (ATSIC), Senator Andrew Bartlett (Democrats)

There will be 20 different workshops over the two days at which more detailed topics on privatisation, ecological sustainability, indigenous rights, education, multiculturalism, banking, the WTO and human rights, rural protest, a women's agenda, and a strategy for the labour movement will be discussed, and positive ideas generated.

Saturday Night July 14 Fundraiser for East Timor FRETILIN

With Good Buddha, Red Dog with Vicki Nic, and BaBaLu, \$10, from 7.30 pm at Newtown Theatre

For more information on the conference program access to the conference, contact Peter or Michele on (02) 9211 4164. Email: [info@nowwethepeople.org](mailto:info@nowwethepeople.org)

Website: [www.nowwethepeople.org](http://www.nowwethepeople.org)

**c) Drop the Debt march and Rally Sun July 22nd 1pm, Archibald fountain, Hyde Park**

To coincide with the G8 summit in Genoa where debt is high on the agenda. The March will begin from the Archibald Fountain in Hyde Park and end in First Fleet Park where there will be music including African drum band and speakers including Fr Brian Gore & the Nigerian High Commissioner.

Participants are encouraged to wear red and black and to carry either placards or large white crosses in memory of those people who are dying because their governments are compelled by the international community to spend more on servicing debt than on health. Please also note e-mail action below. Contact person: Anne Lanyon 0409-190-467

**d) AID/WATCH Globalisation Seminar Tues 24th July, 5.30pm-7.30pm Parramatta Town Hall, level 2 Room A Church St Mall, Parramatta (near the train station)**

Chair and Introduction by AID/WATCH

Globalisation and Local Community Development in Australia Councillor David Borger (Parramatta Council, ALP Candidate for Parramatta)

Mineral Futures and Environmental Justice Geoff Evans (Mineral Policy Institute)

Alternatives to Industrial Agriculture Jo Immig (Organic Federation of Australia)

What would Fair Trade Look Like? (The WTO and labour) Natasha Holmes (Australian Manufacturing Workers Union)