Deere Birkbeck, Carolyn; Harbourd, Meg

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Carolyn Deere Birkbeck and Meg Harbourd
July 2011
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Developing Country Coalitions in the WTO: Strategies for Improving the Influence of the WTO's Weakest and Poorest Members

A Working Paper Produced in collaboration with the IDEAS Centre, Geneva.

Carolyn Deere Birkbeck[1] and Meg Harbourd

July 2011

Small and poor developing countries face well-known structural constraints and power asymmetries in their international economic relations Their limited economic weight often produces pessimism about the prospects for such countries to international trade negotiations. For many developing countries, participation in coalitions with other developing countries as well as in groupings and alliances with developed countries, is an increasingly popular strategy for boosting their influence.

This paper explores what is known about when and how coalitions are effective. It reviews perceptions about the effectiveness of coalitions in enhancing the representation and participation of developing countries in WTO decision-making, and their impact on outcomes, with any eye to yielding lessons for the weakest, smallest and poorest WTO members. In so doing, it considers the following questions: 1) What are the factors that help coalitions work effectively? 2) What could help the weakest and poorest WTO Members achieve greater impact through coalitions? 3) Are different strategies and tactics needed in the agenda-setting and negotiating phases of negotiations as compared to the final deal-making phase? and 4) What level of resources and energy does it makes sense for countries to devote to different kinds of coalitions?

The analysis presented in this paper draws both from a review of the scholarly literature and from interviews with leading developing and developed country trade negotiators, experts and support organizations in Geneva, and senior officials in the WTO Secretariat active in the WTO negotiation process. A starting point for this paper is that in addition to the practice of coalitions, *perceptions* of their accountability, credibility and effectiveness also matter.

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[1] Carolyn Deere Birkbeck is a Senior Researcher and Director of the Global Trade Governance Project at University of Oxford's Global Economic Governance Programme (GEG). She is the editor of Deere Birkbeck (2011) *Making Global Trade Governance Work for Developing Countries: Perspectives and Proposals from Developing Countries*, Cambridge University Press. The working paper was prepared for the IDEAS Centre in Geneva and relied on interviews with numerous delegations in Geneva, staff of the WTO Secretariat and a small group consultation with some members of the African and LDC groups in Geneva. The author also thanks a number of readers including Debapriya Bhattacharya, Rashid Kaukab, Nicolas Imboden, Onyukwu Onyukwu and Mustafizur Rahman' for their comments on a draft of the paper.

The paper proceeds in four parts. Part I briefly reviews the challenges facing small and poor states in multilateral trade negotiations, and the evolution of developing country engagement in coalitions. It also introduces the typology of different coalitions used in this paper, highlighting variation in regard to the purpose, composition, and negotiating strategies of coalitions, their degree of external support, internal coordination, and selection process for leadership and representation. Part 2 summarizes some of the specific challenges that face the weakest, smallest and poorest WTO members in their participation in and use of coalitions. Part 3 explores perspectives on the performance of different kinds of coalitions and the factors that explain perceived success stories. Part 4 briefly discusses questions that arise regarding the strategic use of coalitions by developing countries, with a focus on the African Group. Part 5 sets out options and recommendations for consideration by developed and developing country WTO Members and the WTO Secretariat.

1. Background

1.1 Challenges Facing Small and Poor States in Multilateral Trade Negotiations

A core preoccupation of those keen to ensure greater fairness in the multilateral trading system is the representation of small, weak and poor countries in WTO negotiations and in ensuring their participation in the WTO system generate concrete benefits for them.

A first challenge facing small and poor WTO members in multilateral trade negotiations is their small economic size. Limited political weight, high levels of trade and aid dependence, and the relatively small number of products or services traded internationally mean that the leverage of such countries in international negotiations is low and their vulnerability to external pressures high.

A second set of challenges to greater influence on the part of smaller and weaker states concerns their participation in WTO negotiations. Indeed, many developing countries are constrained by well-documented weaknesses in negotiating strategies and tactics and in mechanisms for ensuring oversight and accountability of negotiators by national governments and parliaments, as well as poor leadership, poor personal incentives for negotiators, and psychological factors that limit perceived prospects for success in negotiations (Jones et al. 2009). There are many proposals for boosting the effective participation of countries, ranging from more consistent attendance at WTO meetings, giving great national priority to trade policy, and more effective mobilization of available resources, capabilities and tactics, including through greater engagement with domestic stakeholders. At the same time, however, the financial and human resources required for such improvements are beyond those available to most individual small and poor states.

The structure and the processes of decision-making and negotiations at the WTO pose a third set of challenges for small and poor states.[2] The scope of the WTO negotiating agenda is far beyond the institutional resources and analytical capacity of most small

[2] A number of existing studies of trade decision-making offer a range of proposals for boosting participation at the WTO, as well as lessons from existing experiences, such as the efforts of the Cotton Four . See, for instance, Anderson et. al., 2006; Anderson and Valenzuela 2007; Blackhurst et. al. 2000; FairTrade Campaign 2010; Ohiorhenuan 2005; Oyejide and Lyakura 2005; and Wang 1997. A core focus has been on boosting African participation at Ministerial meetings (SEATINI 2003).

and poor countries to follow. Moreover, the effective participation of such countries in WTO negotiations is limited by the inability of their governments to engage in the sheer number of overlapping meetings, many on highly technical subjects, and their exclusion from key small group meetings where crucial decisions are made. Most poor and weak countries have delegations in Geneva of only 2 or 3 professional staff and receive little by way of substantive input and guidance on national interests from their counterparts in capital. The challenges of improving representation in WTO negotiations are particularly high for those small and poor countries without permanent missions in Geneva (Nordstrom 2002; Weekes et al 2001).

1.2. The Evolution and Status of Developing Country Engagement in Coalitions at the WTO

Political cooperation, technical collaboration, and collective advocacy among small and poor developing countries is an increasingly popular strategy to leverage what power and potential for influence they do have.[3] Developing country coalitions in the multilateral trading system are not new, but they have evolved significantly.[4] The Group of 77 (G77) developing countries has operated in the international trade arena since the 1960s. Along with the non-aligned movement (NAM), it has played a particularly significant role in UNCTAD, and has made periodic political statements on WTO matters. One of the first WTO-specific negotiating coalitions of developing countries was the Informal Group of Developing Countries (IGDC), which was formed by a sub-set of developing countries in the lead up to the launch of the Uruguay Round, and became the G-10 in 1982 (Patel 2007; Ismail 2007). A number of developing countries have also participated in coalitions with developed countries. For instance, during the Uruguay Round, the Café au Lai group, combined both developing and developed countries with a focus on trade in services, and was led by Switzerland and Colombia. In addition, a group of developing countries with a strong interest in gaining greater access to developed country markets for their agricultural exports joined the Cairns Group, which was founded in 1986 to promote agricultural trade liberalization.

The Doha Round of WTO negotiations has been notable for the far greater use of coalitions by WTO Members than in earlier GATT Rounds. Moreover, developing countries now lead and participate in a greater number of these coalitions than in earlier GATT negotiation processes. Optimists argue that the rise of coalitions, and of several large emerging developing countries at the centre of WTO decision-making, is attenuating the asymmetries of power in WTO negotiations. Certainly, the current stalemate in Doha negotiations (although views on whether or not this is a good thing vary) is partly a reflection of the impact that developing countries and their coalitions can now exert on the process and the outcomes of WTO negotiations. However, more sceptical analysts argue that while the efforts of developing country coalitions have altered the 'atmospherics' of trade negotiations, for many of the poorest and weakest countries they have diminished the appearance but not the reality, of exclusion from the process. They caution that structural power asymmetries remain a significant obstacle for the poorest and weakest WTO Members, which continue to experience significant frustration with the structure and process of WTO negotiations and decision-making. Indeed, some critics argue that optimism about the rise of coalitions

[3] See, for example, Yu 2008; Page 2003; Patel 2003; Patel 2007; and Rolland 2007.
[4] See Narlikar 2004.

at the WTO is giving unwarranted legitimacy to a negotiating process that remains fundamentally flawed in terms of opportunities for effective representation and participation by small and weak countries, particularly given the realities of their own resource, power and organizational constraints.

1.3. Why Coalitions?

Collective bargaining through coalitions, alliances or regional groups is a key mechanism that countries can use to influence outcomes in multilateral trade negotiations. For developing countries, membership in one or more coalitions can ease the challenges and constraints they face in negotiating and decision-making processes at the WTO, and boost their chance of influencing the agenda and outcomes of WTO negotiations in several ways (Yu 2011).

First, coalitions can help countries build negotiating positions and proposals where their understanding of issues might otherwise be weak. By pooling resources, countries can gain greater access to technical assistance, share information, and gather more diplomatic and political intelligence.

Second, by working together, the market size and political weight of a group of countries is greater than their individual weight.

Third, participation in coalitions can expand the prospect of representation of countries in key fora such as the WTO's 'Green Rooms' and other small group meetings. Also, by nominating a suitable delegate to represent those groups, their interests can be represented in multiple places.

Fourth, countries sometimes join coalitions simply to ensure that their specific interests are heard by that coalition or to raise their profile with trading partners This tactic is possible because participation in most coalitions does not bind the member of the groups to that which a representative or other members of the group agree.

Fifth, where countries seek an outcome to negotiations, the growing use of coalitions can be seen as advantageous because it can help build convergence among the broad WTO membership by facilitating learning and the forging of compromises (Ismail and Vickers 2011).

Finally, the growing use of coalitions is seen as a strategy for transforming the exclusivity of the WTO's 'green room' process. Previously, closed-consultations included only a handful of developing countries on an individual basis. With the expanding role of coalitions, the composition of Green Room has grown such that key players and others relevant groups are more often represented, making for a more transparent, legitimate and effective consultation process. However, there are guidelines to ensure that such broad representation always occurs (and there are many small group processes within and beyond the Green Rooms where it does not). Further, important systemic obstacles to effective developing country participation still remain and progress in the extent to which countries benefit from participation in small groups has been uneven. For instance, although some coalitions have improved

their internal communication strategies and information dissemination, many such mechanisms within coalitions and their process for ensuring accountable representation remain weak (see Part 2 of this paper). In addition, not all countries are represented equally in or by coalitions, and so still may lack a significant role in relevant debates.

1.4. Typology of Coalitions

The academic literature on collective bargaining yields a useful set of categories to differentiate among the spectrum of collaborations among countries in multilateral trade arena.

In terms of composition, there are at least three kinds of groupings among countries in the WTO context; a) issue-based coalitions (e.g., the G-20, the G-33, the NAMA-11, the Core Group on Trade Facilitation); b) characteristic-based or like-minded groups, such as groups of countries with similar levels of development or weight in world trade (e.g., the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group, the Small Vulnerable Economies (SVE) Group, and the G-77/China); and c) region-based groupings (e.g., the African Group, the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group, the Group of Latin American countries (GRULAC)). Notably, there are also groupings that combine developed and developing countries (e.g., the Cairns Group and the Friends of Fish). (Table 1 presents an overview of WTO groups in each of these categories. a more detailed overview of the membership and purpose of these coalitions is provided in Appendix 1).

The purpose of coalitions varies considerably. Some groups focus on advocacy and lobbying on broad political priorities, whereas others are targeted negotiating groups keen to advance deal-making on specific topics. Some groups are single-issue coalitions whereas others advance a broad set of priorities and political perspectives. Some groups form to respond to a specific threat and dissolve after a certain period.

Negotiating strategy also differs between coalitions. The strategy adopted may be defensive (e.g., blocking) or offensive, or it may focus on a single-issue versus a wide variety of cross-cutting issues. In some cases, the purpose of groupings is not to advance specific proposals in negotiations, but rather to defend broad principles or to provide a regional view on particular issues (such as the choice of Chairs for WTO negotiating groups). Historically, many developing country coalitions have pursued ‘distributive’ negotiating strategies (where the focus is getting or protecting the largest possible segment of a given ‘pie’ of potential trade benefits). More recently, there are cases where a more ‘integrative’ approach is being explored (e.g., where the focus is on collaborating to explore possibilities to increase the overall size of the pie and to find solutions that yield improvements for all parties) (Odell 2006).

The internal functioning and degree of formality of developing country groupings also vary and evolve over time. Some of this variation derives from differences in the purpose of particular coalitions. In some cases, coalitions have multiple purposes and so the internal mechanisms used are not always effectively aligned with the kinds of goals to which coalition aspires, particularly where distinct purposes are not well clarified within the group. Variables include the selection process and criteria for

leadership of coalitions, the approach to representation (e.g., whether representatives are given a negotiating mandate on behalf of the group), internal coordination mechanisms, and the degree of efficiency in nominating focal points and discerning issues of importance to the group. The degree of substantive support received by a coalition also differs. Support may be received from the WTO Secretariat, from one of the members of the coalitions, or it could come in the form of research support from non-government organisations (NGOs), research institutes, and academics, or through financing from an international donor.

Table 1. Negotiating Groups at the WTO

Regional Negotiating Coalitions and Other Regional Groupings	**Issue-Based Negotiating Coalitions**	**Groups and Coalitions Based on Common Characteristics**
Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP)	Cairns Group	Least Developed Countries (LDCs)
Africa Group	Cotton-4 (C4)	Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	Core Group in Trade Facilitation (CGTF)	Small, Vulnerable Economies (SVEs)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC)	Five Interested Party's (FIPs)	G-4
Other Regional Groupings*	FIPs Plus	G-4 plus Japan
APEC*	Friends of Anti-Dumping Negotiations (FANs)	G-6
Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)*	Friends of Fish (FoF)	G-7
Common Market of the Southern Cone (Mercosur)*	G-10	G-90
European Union (EU)**	G-11	G-110
Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)	G-20	
	G-33	
Organization of Eastern Caribbean States***	NAMA 11	
Southern African Customs Union***	'Paragraph 6' Countries	
	Friends of Ambition (NAMA)	
	Low income countries in transition	
	RAMS	
	Tropical Products Group	

* Regional groupings listed in this section are not generally considered 'negotiating coalitions' per se. However, they do occasionally submit joint proposals and statements to WTO meetings and committees.
** The European is not a coalition per se in the commonly-used since. Rather, it is formally constituted by its members as the negotiator at the WTO on their behalf.
*** These entities are also formal international organizations or unions of countries. While they do not necessarily negotiate collectively at the WTO, they do participate in some aspects of the WTO's work as a regional entity (e.g., in the Trade Policy Review process).

2. Challenges Facing Developing Countries in their Engagement with Coalitions

While most commentators agree that developing country engagement in coalitions represents an important political advance, there remain a number of challenges to the effectiveness of coalition building efforts. Differences in the effectiveness and capability of groups (e.g., between negotiating and advocacy groups) raises questions as to what kind of collective bargaining strategies have worked well and could be used to their advantage in ongoing and future negotiations.[5] Following is a brief summary of challenges and strategic questions.

Inadequate Resources and Expertise: Many coalitions face difficulty in making an effective contribution to negotiations due to lack of expertise and analytical capacity. It is impossible for smaller and poorer countries to participate well, even when they are members of coalitions, if they do not have the necessary knowledge of the issues being discussed or their national interests in respect of those issues.

Diversity and Divergent Interests within Groups: Divergent interests can result in a group operating on the basis of the 'lowest common denominator', with the result that the interests of concern to specific countries or sub-groups are not reflected in the group's overall negotiating position.[6] Power asymmetries within groups can be significant and the influence of individual countries on the groups they belong to varies. In some cases, the position of smaller countries is compromised as a result of being involved in a coalition. Negotiators from some small states report, for instance, that they have negligible influence over the group, leading to the further marginalization of their interests. In other instances, where negotiators do not hold the necessary knowledge on a certain issue or their national interests have not been well-clarified, they may end up opposing proposals that may have benefited their country or supporting decisions that will disadvantage it. At the other end of the spectrum, some countries report a high level of influence on coalitions, particularly where that country acts as the spokesperson for the group.

The strategies that countries adopt in situations where the group does not agree with their position often reflect internal power asymmetries within coalitions. One negotiator from a relatively small country said that in order to increase their power within a group, the government bands together in a further sub-regional grouping. Some countries, on the other hand, consider they are large enough to 'go it alone if necessary'; one country's delegate said their country adopts a 'take-it-or-leave-it' approach, clearly exploiting their relative power. Several negotiators interviewed mentioned that the benefits of group positions on some topics of negotiation are not evenly shared, with LDCs particularly marginalised within groups. From a more

[5] For a detailed review of the various negotiating strategies pursued by developing country coalitions in the lead up to the Uruguay Round, see Narlikar 2004.
[6] A commonly cited example of divergent interests within a group were the Doha negotiations relating preference erosion of the LDCs in the context of Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) discussions.

systemic perspective, divergences and protracted bargaining within a group or coalition can also slow the overall negotiation process down.

Appropriate Size of Coalitions: Research on the inner workings of collective representation, has explored the trade-offs between enlarging a constituency to increase collective bargaining power and the weakening of group strength that can result.[7] Greater heterogeneity of interests in larger groups can make it harder to forge a shared agenda and harder to agree on concessions in negotiations. Unity in such large or heterogeneous coalitions can be supported by factors such as shared ideals, values and goals, in addition to institutional arrangements that foster co-operation. In this regard, factors affecting constituency unity include pre-existing regional institutions, a strong institutional framework, clear leadership to bind the coalition, and the use of side payments.

Effective Leadership and Representation: The dynamics of group leadership can yield differential benefits for members of coalitions and impact the group's influence on negotiations. There is evidence to suggest that the most successful small states are those that primarily operate solo but manage to bring the weight of a group behind them. Mauritius, for instance, was cited by several negotiators and experts interviewed for this paper as developing detailed positions on negotiation topics related to sugar, which others then followed. A private sector representative of Mauritius echoed this point stating that: 'the fact that we were coordinators of focal groups in ACP and African group, we were able to canvas issues and get issues moving'. However, other diplomats interviewed for this study cautioned against over-emphasizing how effective a strategy of gaining visibility is in generating outcomes. They caution that countries may look strong 'only because those around them are so weak'. Another senior diplomat noted: 'In the WTO, even the tiniest state with a fine 'wordsmith' can win a debate. This isn't the same as winning in a negotiation.'

Several developing country coalitions, including the African, ACP and LDC Groups, have formalized the practice of delegating certain member states to act as 'focal points' to lead the group on specific issue-area negotiations. That is, at least one country mission is charged with representing the coalition's position in relevant negotiating committees and working groups on most major WTO issues. Further, these groups often designate a member of the group to represent them when the group is invited to participate in Green Room or other small-group meetings. There are, however, problems with inadequate reporting back on what occurs. An effective coalition representative must have the trust of all the member states, they must be able to communicate effectively, and reliably convey information back to the other members of the group. They must also have experience and detailed knowledge of the issue they are working on. Coalitions that rely, for instance, on rotating leadership among members according to the alphabetical order of countries take on a number of important risks, namely that they will select representatives who are inadequately equipped in terms of expertise, credibility, language-skills or personality to ensure that the group's interests are being suitably conveyed and represented. In some cases, when acting as the spokesperson of a group, some leading countries place greater emphasis on those aspects of negotiations where they have a particular self-interest. In the worst cases, the group is simply seen as an instrument of the particular country

[7] See, for instance, Woods and Lombardi (2006).

that holds the leadership/spokesperson role at a given time, thus undermining perceptions among negotiator partners of the legitimacy and credibility of the group as a whole. Overlapping group memberships sometimes cause contradictions in what positions are being taken by individual members of coalitions.

Internal Coordination and Accountability: The internal decision-making procedures and information-flow of a negotiating group can have a decisive impact on its efficacy. The LDC group, for instance, operates from a principle of consensus, which means that group members spend considerable time trying to coordinate interests. Issue-specific focal points also devote considerable energy to informing and lobbying members within the group. While there are good reasons for a consensus-based approach, a downside is that it can limit the ability of the group to engage responsively in negotiations. While many critics rightly argue that their ought properly to be scope in the WTO negotiation process for 'time-out' to enable individual countries and coalition to consult with relevant stakeholders, the hard reality is that the deal-making phase of negotiations, whether in Geneva or at Ministerial meetings has not yet been adequately reformed in this direction.To mitigate the challenges associated with having to go back to the members to renegotiate changes in positions, a consensus-based approach could be usefully supplemented by efforts to articulate and agree upon numerous fall-back positions as part of a coalition's negotiating strategy.

Challenges Facing Coalitions at Different Stages of Negotiations: The effectiveness of coalition engagement in WTO negotiations varies according to the stage of negotiations. While some coalitions have successfully got particular issues of national interest onto the trade negotiating agenda, the negotiating ability of groups often disperses or breaks down at deal-making points. Indeed, some coalitions also suffer from lack of attention to negotiating strategy once negotiations are underway, particularly in terms of ensuring high-level political involvement, adequately briefing ministers, and engaging representatives with adequate political clout (including knowledge and expertise). The performance of coalitions in which some of the WTO's smallest and poorest Members participate is widely considered to have been greater in getting issues 'onto the agenda' than in securing particular outcomes. In the agenda-setting phase, such coalitions have been particularly adept at using efforts to reframe the policy debate, shape public opinion and adapt the discourse of policy makers (by, for instance, appealing to the media and using alliances with NGOs).[8] Diplomats from several countries developed countries interviewed for this paper reported uncertainty about who is the most appropriate contact within developing country coalitions and raised questions about their strategy, observing that coalitions have too rarely devised a set of top priorities and fall back positions that would better equip them to negotiate and forge deals.

Challenges to Engagement with More Powerful States and Coalitions: Even among coalitions, power asymmetries exist. Even where a large number of developing countries combine resources, they may still find themselves overwhelmed by the technical expertise and economic power of a far smaller coalition of developed countries. Some developing countries face the challenge that while a coalition they

[8] See Jones et. al. 2010,

belong to may be invited to 'participate' in small group meetings or consultations, it does not mean that their interests will be heard, taken seriously or responded to. Some developing country coalitions and their representatives face difficulties attaining timely appointments with representatives of more powerful coalitions and delegations, and are overlooked by interest groups that they are keen to have the opportunity to meet. A further challenge is that few developing countries coalitions devote attention to managing external perceptions of their internal coordination and accountability, or to communicating strategically about their purpose. Both of these shortcomings impact perceptions of the coherence of coalitions and their credibility as negotiating partners.

3. Coalition Effectiveness: A Story of Variation

Across coalitions, effectiveness in negotiations varies, as do the perceptions of coalitions by other negotiating partners. Importantly, the experience and lessons of coalition-building for larger developing countries, regional powers and the key emerging economies may diverge considerably from those of small and weak WTO Members. This section reviews perceptions of both developing and developed country governments and experts on the effectiveness of three different kinds of coalitions: issue-based coalitions, characteristic-based groupings and regional groupings. To preface the following discussion, a brief explanation of the term 'effectiveness' is in order. In a less complicated world, the effectiveness of a coalition will be judged solely in terms of achievement of its stated negotiating objectives. However, in the complex political environment of the WTO, the objectives of coalitions may be multi-layered and may not be clearly stated, sometimes intentionally. Indeed, the publicly stated objectives of a coalition may not be its real objectives and objectives may change over time. Further, while ultimate impact on negotiations may be widely considered the best indicator of effectiveness, for many of the WTO's smallest and poorest countries, the mere fact of being noticed, heard and taken seriously in international negotiations may be considered a significant achievement in terms of their own foreign policy objectives, with positive ramifications well beyond the trade arena.

3.1. Issue-based Coalitions

Interviews conducted for this policy brief revealed a widely-held perception that issue-specific coalitions are most effective in the tussle of negotiations because shared interests make it easier to reach a consensus among members. Among the range of issue-based coalitions at the WTO, the Group of 20 and the Cairns group stand out as those most cited as examples of effective coalitions.

The G20, formed in 2003, comprises 23 developing countries pressing for ambitious reforms of agriculture in developed countries with some flexibility for developing countries. The G-20 consolidated its influence by being specific about its position on negotiating issues (i.e., by regularly contributing specific negotiating proposals) and significantly recast the agenda of the WTO's agriculture negotiations. It is recognized as having access to considerable technical expertise and resources. The G20's negotiating capacity has been bolstered by strong and consistent Brazilian leadership, access to technical expertise (particularly through think-tanks and research institutes in Brazil), perceptions that it has well researched positions, active input into proposals from coalition members, and its use of regular, well-organized meetings at the

technical, head of delegation and political levels. A further bolstering force is that the G-20 combines countries with considerable size and significant international trade presence. The engagement of Brazil and India, for instance, in the coalition has prompted efforts to merge their offensive and defensive agricultural interests into a joint negotiating position. The weight of the coalition's membership as a whole has helped them to counter pressures on Members to leave the group (ensuring, for instance, that the group did not collapse after the 2003 Cancun Ministerial Conference) (Yu 2011). The G20 also includes some far less developed countries, and some with apparently diverging or uncertain interests in the coalition's agenda. A positive view on this heterogeneity is that the group has worked to bridge differences among its members and thus to contribute to the search for an outcome to negotiations suitable for all members.

But the G20 also faces challenges. The diversity among G-20 members is perceived by some delegations and experts to undermine the potential for cohesion and ultimately for influence on negotiations. The G20's effectiveness as a strategic, lobbying coalition in the agenda-setting phase of negotiations be difficult to match in the end-game of negotiations, when countries come closer to having to make binding, individual trade commitments. In this regard, sceptics argue that the group has faced difficulties influencing the final details of negotiations because it has been unable to reach internal consensus on several key technical issues as negotiations have advanced. They also note that despite efforts at internal coordination within the G20, coherence and accountability have been harder to maintain as negotiations progress. Already, there has been evidence that the coalition has difficulty in ensuring that powerful leaders, like Brazil, represent G-20 interests in addition to their national interests in small group WTO negotiations.

The Cairns Group, a coalition of 19 agricultural exporting nations lobbying for agricultural trade liberalization, has been active since 1986. While its relevance has waned in the more recent phases of agriculture negotiations at the WTO, it is widely cited as an effective coalition due to its successful internal coordination. This can largely be attributed to consistent access to resources, institutional support, and technical knowledge in the form of organizational leadership from the Australian government and research support from Australia's leading agriculture research centre.

The G-10 is also frequently highlighted as an example of an effective issue-based coalition (focused on agriculture) that involves both developed and developing countries. Its strengths are considered the group's combined 'trade presence' in agriculture, the varied scope of its membership, and the ability of its members to provide both technical and critical input on negotiating issues.

The SVE group provides another example of an issue-based coalition. The SVE group has three different sub-groups that examine different issues, one on agriculture (which consists of 14 members); one on non-agricultural market access (NAMA) (which consists of 19 members); and one on rules (which consists of 14 members). The SVE group designates focal point coordinators that follow particular issues and attend issue-specific meetings on their behalf. Like other groups, the SVE group faces challenges of coordination and leadership, including problems of uneven participation in group meetings and inadequate follow-up communication between focal point coordinators and other group members. Assessments of the SVE group's

effectiveness vary. The clearest sign of success is that the SVE group has successfully advocated for the inclusion of SVEs as a particular category of country across the Doha Round negotiating texts. That said, the expansion of the 'small islands developing states' group into a 'small vulnerable economies' group highlights both the tensions and opportunities that can arise between the effort to achieve concrete interest-based outcomes and the pressures to expand the overall size of a coalition.

On the one hand, some negotiators interviewed for this policy brief believe that the expansion of the coalition to include non-island states undermined its effectiveness, most significantly because the meaning of 'smallness' in the context of some non-island states is difficult to define and defend. While the decision to increase group membership can boost political weight within the context of WTO negotiations, they highlighted that where the membership is too extensive, it could be contested by other WTO members. Another risk cited by interviewees was that the range of competing interests within the group may also make concessions from other WTO members to the group more costly.

On the other hand, interviews conducted with several SVE delegates for this policy brief revealed a strong belief in their own success, particularly when measured in terms of WTO recognition of their special status without creating a sub-category (which seemed to be the biggest hurdle in their way when negotiations started) and the incorporation of special provisions for SVEs in various draft modalities produced during the Doha negotiations. Interestingly, these successes could be attributed at least partly to the flexible definition of the group which meant that the actual composition of SVE group was different in various negotiating areas (as described above). As such, it can be argued that enlarging the group beyond small island states and making the composition flexible allowed the group to get the recognition as well as special and tailored treatment in different negotiating areas.

Finally, the 'Cotton 4', comprised of four small West African countries, is a further example of an issue-based coalition. The Cotton 4's success at propelling the issue of cotton subsidies onto the Doha Round agenda has been well documented (see Box 1 below for a summary of lessons). The effort to combine individual efforts to advocate cutting cotton subsidies gave the issue greater political weight than if one country had worked alone. The initiative was also bolstered by successful outreach to garner support from ACP countries, African states and other LDCs, as well as from emerging states such as Argentina, Brazil and India and groups such as the G20, the G90 and the Cairns Group. However, beyond provisions of adjustment assistance, and assurances of 'more to come', the 'Cotton 4' countries have not yet secured any concessions from the United States in terms of reduced subsidies. Indeed, sceptics argue that to date, despite the political attention to the issue, the Cotton 4 countries have not obtained any meaningful reduction in subsidies and that there is no certainty about the level of ambition that will be achieved in the final Doha deal, if indeed there is one.

The experience of the Cotton Four highlights the importance of exploring how success in agenda-setting can be translated to success in securing actual commercial benefits from more powerful trading partners? It also raises the question of whether the successful aspects of the Cotton Four's strategy (see Box 1) are replicable by other African countries? In addition, the case of the Cotton Four also highlights that for

some of the poorest and weakest participants in the trading system, the importance among national political goals of achieving any influence on negotiations, even if only in the agenda-setting stage, may be very high. As noted in Box1 below, the Cotton Four used the Doha negotiations 'to reinforce their diplomatic presence in Geneva, acquire new negotiation skills, strengthen their own coordination mechanism and shape their role and place within the negotiation process.' Indeed, as noted above, in judging the effectiveness of developing country coalitions, while ultimate impact on negotiations is clearly the highest prize to be won, the mere fact of being noticed, heard and taken seriously in international negotiations may be a significant achievement for the foreign policy of countries, with positive ramifications well beyond the trade arena.

Box 1: Lessons from the Cotton 4

The cotton case allowed the Cotton Four to learn from the system and the system to learn from the Cotton Four. Achievements have been fourfold:

- Cotton Four countries have been able to draw attention to the issue of cotton and they have received aid money for their cotton sectors
- The Cotton Four has become an established coalition within the Doha talks. The Cotton Four representative has a seat in agriculture-related green room meetings and the Cotton Four coordinator is part of mini-ministerial meetings
- DDR will not be concluded without any commitments being made on cotton. There have been so many statements on cotton by the Director General and other major players within the WTO system that the system itself would lose face without a result on cotton
- The Cotton Four has shown that poor developing countries can use the system and have an impact on the multilateral trading system.

The Cotton Four used these long years of negotiation to reinforce their diplomatic presence in Geneva, acquire new negotiation skills, strengthen their own coordination mechanism and shape their role and place within the negotiation process.

Today, there is no certainty that Doha will deliver for the African cotton producers nor if, or when the negotiations will conclude. However, two things are currently true:

- There will be no result of the Doha negotiations without addressing the cotton issue
- A meaningful and substantial result in the cotton negotiations is only possible if cotton subsidy reform is embedded in a larger effort to reform agriculture subsidies in rich countries.

Source: Fairtrade Campaign (2010).

3.2. Characteristic-based Coalitions

Among characteristic-based coalitions, the effectiveness of very large and broad coalitions, such as the G-77/China, the G-90 and the G110, was considered highest by interviewees when they focus on political statements and advocacy on broad principles, such as the importance of addressing development priorities in the Doha Round. Notably, it was suggested that even when some groups based on common characteristics take a strong position on more specific issues they can also be effective. For example, the LDC Group, which combines the WTO's 32 poorest members, is considered to have sufficiently specific goals and strong commonly-agreed positions on certain key issues to effectively maintain pressure for attention to them (e.g., on S&D Treatment, duty-free/quota-free market access, extension of the LDC deadline for implementation of the TRIPS Agreement). In this regard, the LDC group has been a useful vehicle for boosting the legitimacy of specific negotiating objectives such as attention to special and differential treatment for LDCs.

Within the LDC group, leadership is rotated among group members that are willing and able to provide the necessary human, administrative, and logistical resources in their missions in Geneva. Typically, the ambassador of the country acting as the coordinator, supported by their Geneva-based staff, takes responsibility for the organization of group meetings and the task of coordinating the overall actions and positions of members. The LDC group also selects 'issue focal points' that are willing and able to take the lead on specific negotiating issues. The selected country then assigns one of their technical-level experts or delegates in the Geneva missions to take charge of suggesting, formulating and organizing group positions and actions (Yu 2011).

In recognition that members of the LDC group are at a considerable disadvantage in WTO negotiations, the LDC Group receives some direct support from the WTO Secretariat. A staff member from the WTO Secretariat is, for instance, assigned to assist the LDC Group during their meetings to take-minutes, or in some cases and upon request, to assist them with understanding and analysing specific negotiating issues. The LDC group also draws on support from the secretariats of other groupings they belong to (such as the ACP group), organizational support from the WTO Secretariat, and technical advice and support from Geneva-based organizations such as UNCTAD, AITIC (now closed), the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), the South Centre, and the IDEAS Centre.

3.3. Regional Groupings and Coalitions

Among the diversity of regional groupings active to varying degrees at the WTO, the most obvious and formalized example is the European Union. No other regional economic agreement or customs union negotiates as a single entity at the WTO. For instance, neither SACU, WAEMU, COMESA, the OECS, nor Mercosur negotiate as a single entity or as a regional group at the WTO (although SACU and the OECS are subject to joint trade policy reviews). There are, however, several regional groupings that do collaborate significantly in other ways in the course of WTO negotiations and decision-making.

The strengths of regional groups as a means of enhancing negotiating leverage derive from common histories, shared cultures and similar development levels (Narlikar 2004). Weaknesses include divergent member interests, overlapping membership across sometimes competing coalitions, and limited experience in collective negotiations with external actors. Regional groupings often struggle, for instance, to find sufficient commonality of interest to present a compelling position to negotiating partners.

The Caribbean region is perceived by negotiators from a range of other small states as having relatively effective regional co-ordination for trade negotiations at the regional and multilateral level (Jones et al 2010: 32-33). The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has been active in multilateral trade negotiations since 1997 through the CARICOM Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM). The CRNM has 12 members and negotiates across the range of WTO issue areas, with particular emphasis on the need for special and differential treatment for small economies in the agricultural negotiations. The CRNM provides policy advice and leads the region's negotiating team, which comprises CRNM technical officials, ambassadors and senior officials from member states, and independent experts. The negotiating team is overseen by trade ministers from Member countries. Alongside praise for the Caribbean region's strategy for coordination, however, there have been concerns that technical oversight of the CRNM from trade ministers is relatively weak and that the accountability of the CRNM negotiating team to member states is constrained by the varying capacity of individual CRNM member states to provide input, which in turn can result in a lack of clear political direction.[9] In the absence of clear positions from member states, there have been concerns that the CRNM and wider negotiating team have had to rely on their own discretion and views in formulating negotiating positions and strategies. Further, the EU and other external donors finance a significant portion of the core budget of the CRNM. The reliance on contributions from external donors, reinforces concerns about inadequate accountability to local stakeholders and member states.

The African Group, which consists of all African WTO Members, sets forth joint positions on many WTO negotiating issues. It was established in 1997 and currently boasts a membership of 42 states. Like the LDCs, the African Group generally rotate the task of leadership and coordination among members. It also selects 'focal points' to take charge of suggesting, formulating and organizing group positions and actions (Yu 2011). Views on the effectiveness of the African Group at the WTO vary. The group is recognized for producing statements and declarations on many negotiating issues and before most Ministerial meetings. In general, the African Group's influence tends to be limited to broad political matters, rather than on specific negotiation issues. While the groups has been associated with strong positions on some selected negotiating issues, particularly since the Seattle WTO Ministerial, few interviewees could cite examples of where language of draft texts or WTO decisions is specifically attributable to the African group. Interviews conducted for this study revealed a perception that the group only achieves internal consensus because positions are agreed upon to avoid conflicts within the group, meaning that it is not always clear whether broad statements are a true reflection of the position of the whole group, a dominant country within the group, or the presiding coordinator.

[9] The following analysis draws from Jones et al (2010: 32-33).

Challenges to internal coordination within the African group reflect the challenges of limited capacity that the countries face individually. Common problems that hinder collective thinking and the efficiency of the coalition that were cited by interviewees for this study included language barriers among the delegates; the tendency for busy delegates to arrive and leave group meetings at different times; and lack of clear instructions for delegates from capitals. Further, the African Group does not always nominate sufficiently expert delegates or ambassadors to ensure suitable representation, which has a detrimental impact on their coalition's effectiveness. As for the LDC group, a staff person from the WTO Secretariat is assigned to assist the African Group during their meetings.

To address challenges of limited individual capacity and the costs associated with establishing or boosting representation in Geneva, some regional groups of developing countries have established offices or secretariats in Geneva, sometimes with the support of developed country donors. The African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group,[10], for instance, has offices in Geneva supported by the European Union among other donors. The African Union, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and the Pacific Islands Forum also each have offices in Geneva.[11] To support the work of developing country members of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Secretariat has supported a Geneva representative and researchers, and is preparing to support office space for member countries in need of greater representation in Geneva.

4. Strategic Use of Coalitions: What Lessons for the Poorest Countries?

Some small and poor states have made participation in a variety of coalitions and regional groupings a central part of their negotiating strategy. According to officials from one small state, this strategy increases their political weight; strengthens their ability to advance national interests; and improves access to information about other countries' interests. Mauritius, for instance, has pursued an interest-driven approach to coalitions, leading it to participate in a wide range of groupings, including some seemingly unlikely associations with developed countries. On the issue of how participation in other coalitions can enhance a country's negotiating strategy, one Mauritian negotiator observed: 'You learn also what are the red lines of the others, but they learn your red lines'. Where interests diverge within a group, Mauritius highlighted the strategy of working to limit the agenda to topics of mutual interest.

Further examples of strategic use of coalitions concerns developing country participation in the G-33 and G-20 coalitions in the WTO agricultural negotiations. Both of these coalitions are active, issue-based coalitions with a number of common members. In such cases, some WTO members have found it strategically useful to help establish and/or participate in two active coalitions with different but overlapping compositions within the same area of negotiations to achieve both their offensive and defensive interests.

Although rarely documented or analysed, a number of African countries and LDCs supplement their engagement in regional groups (such as the African or ACP group)

[10] The Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) was established in 2001 and has 58 members with preferential trading relations with the European Union.
[11] The Pacific Island Forum (PIF) was established in 1971 and has 7 member countries and 2 observer countries.

and/or characteristic-based groups (such as the LDC group, the G-90 and the G-110) with participation in issue-specific coalitions and negotiating groups (See Tables 2 and 3 below).

While it is true that the majority of African countries and LDCs concentrate their participation on regional and/or characteristic based coalitions of a large number of countries, the evidence shows that a number of countries also participate in one or more issue-based coalitions. This practice is worthy of more detailed study to better understand the rationale for countries in diversifying their engagement beyond characteristic-based or regional groupings, and also to determine how and when this benefits countries.

In considering options for more effective African engagement in trade negotiations and coalitions, it is important to acknowledge that the specific trade interests of African countries can vary widely as do their national economic circumstances and priorities. The region includes rising economies, developing countries and LDCs. Those African countries not classified as LDCs sometimes express frustration and concern about the implications for their competitiveness of the special treatment given to poorer neighbouring countries, with which they nonetheless share many of the same development challenges. Interviews conducted for this study reveal that few African countries either expect, or rely on, the more economically powerful countries of their region, such as South Africa and Nigeria, to adequately reflect or advance their interests. Many African trade officials also complain of a lack of detailed understanding within their countries of the implications of different trade proposals, which in turn undermines their participation in negotiations and their ability to form effective coalitions.

The prospects for effective collective action by African countries are further complicated by the multiplicity of intersecting trade negotiations underway. The countries of the region are divided into several separate regional economic communities (e.g., for West Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa), but rarely organize their participation in WTO negotiations along these lines. Further, many African countries are simultaneously engaged in negotiations with the European Union, for which they are required to organize themselves sub-regionally in groupings that do not coincide with the regional economic communities noted above.

5. Improving Representation and Influence of the WTO's Weakest Members: Selected Proposals and Options for Discussion

This section presents a number of proposals and options for improving the representation of the WTO's weakest and smallest members under four headings: 1) improving coalition effectiveness and accountability; 2) reform of WTO decision-making and negotiating processes; 3) improvements at the national level by developing countries; and 4) reducing abuses of power.

Table 2. Variation in African Countries' Participation in Coalitions at the WTO

Country	ACP Group	Africa Group	G-90	G-110	LDCs	LLDCs	G-33	CGTF	C4	Para 6 countries	RAMs	NAMA 11	G2	G10	SVEs
Angola	X	X	X	X	X										
Benin	X	X	X	X	X		X		X						
Botswana	X	X	X	X		X		X							
Burkina Faso	X	X	X	X	X	X			X						
Burundi	X	X	X	X	X	X									
Cameroon	X	X	X	X											
Cape Verde		X	X	X							X				
Central African Republic	X	X	X	X	X	X									
Chad	X	X	X	X	X	X			X						
Congo	X	X	X	X						X					
Congo (Democratic Republic)	X	X	X	X	X										
Côte d'Ivoire	X	X	X	X						X					
Djibouti	X	X	X	X	X										
Egypt		X	X					X				X	X		
Gabon	X	X	X	X											
Gambia	X	X	X	X	X										
Ghana	X	X	X	X						X					
Guinea	X	X	X	X	X										
Guinea Bissau	X	X	X	X	X										
Kenya	X	X	X	X			X	X		X					
Lesotho	X	X	X	X	X	X									
Madagascar	X	X	X	X	X		X								
Malawi	X	X	X	X	X	X									
Mali	X	X	X	X	X	X			X						
Mauritania	X	X	X	X	X										
Mauritius	X	X	X	X			X	X		X				X	X
Morocco		X	X	X											
Mozambique	X	X	X	X	X		X								
Namibia	X	X	X	X								X			
Niger	X	X	X	X	X	X									
Nigeria	X	X	X	X			X	X		X			X		
Rwanda	X	X	X	X	X	X		X							
Senegal	X	X	X	X	X		X								
Sierra Leone	X	X	X	X	X										
South Africa	X	X	X	X								X	X		
Swaziland	X	X	X	X	X										
Tanzania	X	X	X	X	X		X	X					X		
Togo	X	X	X	X	X										
Tunisia		X	X	X								X			
Uganda	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Zambia		X	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Zimbabwe	X	X	X	X	X			X		X			X		

Table 3. Variation in LDC Participation in Coalitions at the WTO

Country	ACP Group	Africa Group	G-90	G-110	LDCs	G-33	LLDCs	CGTF	C4	Para 6 countries	RAMs	PIF	G20	G10	SVEs	ASEAN	CARICOM
Angola	X	X	X	X	X												
Bangladesh			X	X	X			X									
Benin	X	X	X	X	X		X		X								
Burkina Faso	X	X	X	X	X		X		X								
Burundi	X	X	X	X	X		X										
Cambodia			X	X	X											X	
Central African Republic	X	X	X	X	X												
Chad	X	X	X	X	X		X		X								
Congo (Democratic Republic)	X	X	X	X	X												
Djibouti	X	X	X	X	X												
Gambia	X	X	X	X	X												
Guinea	X	X	X	X	X												
Guinea Bissau	X	X	X	X	X												
Haiti	X		X	X	X	X											X
Lesotho	X	X	X	X	X		X										
Madagascar	X	X	X	X	X	X											
Malawi	X	X	X	X	X		X										
Maldives			X	X	X												
Mali	X	X	X	X	X		X		X								
Mauritania	X	X	X	X	X												
Mozambique	X	X	X	X	X	X											
Myanmar			X	X	X											X	
Nepal			X	X	X		X										
Niger	X	X	X	X	X		X										
Rwanda	X	X	X	X	X		X	X									
Senegal	X	X	X	X	X	X											
Sierra Leone	X	X	X	X	X												
Solomon Islands	X		X	X	X							X					
Tanzania	X	X	X	X	X	X		X					X				
Togo	X	X	X	X	X												
Uganda	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X									
Zambia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X									

5.1. Improving Coalition Effectiveness and Accountability

- Improve the internal workings and management of coalitions, including on issues such as principles for representation of coalition members, mechanisms for internal transparency, institutionalized coordination, and selection of leadership. This should also include boosting investment in the working relationships among delegates for smooth intra- and inter-group coordination, particularly given the high turn-over of delegates for some countries.

- Adopt clear accountability guidelines for Members selected to represent coalitions, particularly those delegated to attend WTO green room meetings, to ensure that they carefully listen to all views beforehand, follow the mandate given by the group, faithfully report back on discussions, and consult with

interested members in a timely fashion. Groups, whether larger or small, need to be specific about how much responsibility they delegate and representatives need then to hold themselves responsible not just to inform but to actively consult coalition members.

- Improve briefings of the selected representatives by coalition members in advance of restricted group meetings to devise strategies, clarify interests and identify fall-back positions where relevant. The need for boosted accountability mechanisms is particularly high where there are disparities among the countries within a group in terms of their ability to provide oversight of the group and its representatives (Jones et al 2010: 32).

- Seek sustainable and multi-year institutional support for coalition activities (such as support for research, negotiation-specific analysis, tactical advice, coordination, staffing, web presence, briefings on key issues and WTO documents, assistance in the formulation of negotiating proposals, etc).

- Improve analytical capacity and access to expert advice. Where the research capacity of members is inadequate, one solution is to use 'outside' help more frequently and systematically. This could include building/sustaining an informal support system with organisations that countries already approach for advice, such as the ICTSD, the South Centre, the IDEAS Centre and UNCTAD, as well as better coordinating and streamlining requests. Key priorities include advisory papers that outline the implications of certain issues for individual countries and help to garner a general understanding of negotiating issues. Importantly, given that the specifics of negotiations evolve over time, the need for information is constant and iterative, rather than one-off. For some coalitions, the establishment of Secretariats may be relevant, whereas for others this approach could risk overcomplicating and bureaucratizing processes that could thwart flexibility and divert attention to the politics of managing their secretariat.

- Boost attention of coalitions and their Membership to negotiating strategy and tactics. Within large coalitions, countries need guidelines for how they negotiate both within their group and with others. The achievement of impact in negotiations calls for going beyond a focus on representation and participation to one of effective negotiation. This in turn will rely on individual coalition members having clearer instructions from their capitals as to what is acceptable or not at the national level (see Section 5.3. below). It will often require countries to negotiate and compromise within coalitions in order to develop a position that is firm and credible to others. At the same time, countries may need to build into that position the scope for compromise in their engagement with others. As negotiations move beyond the agenda-setting phase to the negotiation phase, coalitions need to devise concrete negotiating positions with a clear set of guidelines for their representatives on 'plan B' and fall-back positions based on an advance consideration of possible scenarios that might emerge. Coalitions of small and poor countries can also seek to replicate the successes they have had in the agenda-setting phase of negotiations for some issues in harnessing public opinion and the media, reframing issues to emphasize the need for fairness, and building

collaborations with a diversity of stakeholders, including in developed countries.

- Consider strategic choice of coalition memberships: Given their resource constraints, a pressing strategic issue for small and poor WTO Members is not just whether to join coalitions, but how to use their participation in coalitions strategically and to ensure that coalitions are tactically successful. Often the two issues of coalition-membership and negotiating tactics are treated as separate but complementary issues. However, negotiating strategy with regard to engagement in coalitions is vitally important as an issue in its own right. That is, countries need to consider when and how participation in a given coalition makes sense as a negotiating tactic and how to behave strategically within those coalitions. Rather than relying only on regional and characteristic-based groupings, countries should give greater strategic consideration to where and how their interests might be served by complementing this engagement with participation in issue-based coalitions. For some countries, resource limitations will no doubt arise as a constraint to participation in a broader range of coalitions, but some reflection on the issue by small and weak WTO Members remains warranted.

- Reflect strategically on the appropriate relationships between the coalitions of small and poor states, and other issue-based coalitions that may be more powerful, as well as with regional powers. Key considerations are how to ensure that regional priorities, such as those of the African group as a whole, are properly represented in coalitions such as the G20 and what kinds of consultations and representation is desired from regional powers, if indeed they are willing and credibly able to provide such representation.

- Explore options to create more institutional support for the LDC group in Geneva, to support their engagement in the Doha Round negotiations and the WTO's regular Committee work (Bhattacharya 2008; Kaushik and Mukiibi 2011).[12] There are already proposals for LDCs to create their own institution, complemented by resources from international donors, which would support LDCs in WTO negotiations and undertake activities such as examining and summarizing for national officials the suite of reports and submissions from Member states, Secretariat studies and WTO notifications.

- WTO-based coalitions of developing countries could also benefit from more effective coordination with coalitions in other inter-governmental processes, particularly in Geneva. Interviews conducted for this paper highlighted cases, for instances, where two ambassadors from the same country were taking diverging positions on similar matters in different fora. This challenge was cited most for those countries with different ambassadors for the WTO on the one hand and for various UN agencies, on the other (e.g., UNCTAD/WIPO/WHO/ILO).

[12] For more on the challenges of improving LDC participation in the WTO, see Bhattacharya (2008).

5.2. Advocacy on Reform of WTO Decision-making and Negotiating Processes

- Advocate for democratization of WTO decision-making processes. Weak and small countries should not take for granted the support of other developing countries' in advancing their particular interests (Grynberg and Remy 2003). Further, the rise of some developing countries to the centre of WTO decision-making does not obviate the need for reform of WTO governance to allow for more adequate participation by weak and small states (Bernal 2011; Bhattacharya 2008; Deere Birkbeck 2011).

- Promote more effective sequencing and predictability of negotiations. Small and poor states cannot follow all the subjects of the Doha Round simultaneously. A more predictable negotiation schedule would enable individual countries and their coalitions to prioritize the issues to which they devote in-depth analytical resources and government time. It would facilitate the ability of countries to move beyond broad political statements to devise concrete positions and fall-back positions on negotiating issues.

- Promote guidelines on the composition of the Green Room and other small group meetings. At present, the Director-General has considerable flexibility as to who is invited to small group meetings, as do other governments and Chairs that host such meetings. At present, there still remain too many discussions where large countries negotiate among themselves in smaller groups and on sectoral issues. The challenge here is that while some small and poor countries may not appear to have or express an immediate interest in all negotiations, smaller groups are often where the broader rules of the trading system are defined. Guidelines are required to ensure that the system is not divided into two-tiers, where small and poor countries are only engaged on a narrow set of issues, such as discussion of cotton, market access, and S&D, where as the broader systemic and regulatory issues that define the system are negotiated by larger players. While it is important that the chairs of small group meetings have some flexibility to invite the appropriate diversity of countries and coalitions, which may change over time, the remains a need for guidelines specifying that where subjects are of key interest to particular countries or directly impact poor countries (even if they are not the major trading powers or actors in that area), such countries should be invited.

- Improve transparency of green rooms and small group consultations. While representation and participation in the WTO's informal negotiating processes has widened, members of relevant coalitions are not always properly informed and briefed on what has occurred. For the smallest and poorest countries, there should be a fuller briefing of what has occurred in meetings. Moreover, in order that countries and their representatives can actually negotiate, rather than simply be represented, greater provision needs to be made for the possibility of back and forth between coalitions and their representatives. This in turn requires that there is a norm of 'time out' in the heat of negotiations to enable consultations to occur. The need for such time-out has always existed between individual government delegations and their stakeholders. To serve effectively their promise of enhancing transparency, representation and information flow,

coalitions also need the opportunity to communicate and negotiate internally; the growing role of coalitions in WTO negotiations increases the importance of such time. Without such measures, the risk is that the deference to coalitions may further marginalize the degree to which the smallest and poorest countries can engage in the process.

- The representation of small and poor developing countries at the WTO should not be left to a country's own financial resources or to the unpredictable generosity of individual WTO members who may provide assistance. Rather, the representation of WTO Members should be considered as central to the accountability and credibility of the WTO, for which financial provision is made systematically through the WTO's regular budget (Deere et. al. 2007).[13] Irrespective of the financial issues, it is possible that not all countries consider representation in Geneva a sufficiently high priority to devote the necessary political and human resources. However, in cases where countries to have a demonstrated commitment to achieving an effective presence in Geneva, a more systematic mechanism should be available where they can formally approach the WTO to complement the national financial resources they can afford to invest. There could also be consideration of establishing travel funds, as many other international organizations have, to facilitate the participation of technical experts from small and poor countries to participate in relevant committees and meetings.

- Boost the WTO's organizational support to coalitions of small and poor countries. The WTO Director General, the Deputy Director General's, and the disposition and actions of WTO Secretariat staff can all have a major impact on the degree and efficiency of engagement that developing country coalitions have in the organisation. The WTO must be impartial on the issues but not neutral with respect to the need to boost the participation of the smallest and poorest countries. A proactive stance is needed. While countries can turn to other sources for analytical and substantive inputs, the WTO Secretariat should step up its provision of input that it is uniquely positioned to provide. It could, for instance, provide more systematic objective information on the status and process of negotiations, and the implications for LDCs of various specific proposals under discussion, particularly when negotiations move into a rapid or technical phase.

5.3. Improvements at the National Level by Developing Countries

- Bolster national commitment and leadership on the part of developing countries of efforts to improve the benefits they derive from the multilateral trading system.

- Build national capacity for trade *negotiations* not just representation. This demands increased attention to building effective negotiating teams, addressing deficits in human resources, exploring mechanisms for increasing national access to information and expertise, and investing in improved

[13] Notably, countries can receive some subsidies from the Swiss government to ease the financial burden of establishing their presence in Geneva.

national processes for institutional coordination and communication between national governments and Geneva-based delegates, as well as in inter-ministerial consultations (including with non-economic ministries).

- Bolster the transparency of national trade policymaking and boost opportunities for stakeholder consultation and participation in that process and in national negotiating teams (Kaukab 2011).[14] Key priorities include addressing gaps between national and multilateral levels of trade governance; regular briefings by staff of Geneva Missions for the national consultative fora and for the parliamentarians; periodic visits of representatives of groups of stakeholders to Geneva during important negotiations; inclusion of representatives of all relevant groups of stakeholders in official delegations to the WTO Ministerial Conferences; and devising mechanisms for the incorporation of non-State stakeholders and parliamentarians in the smaller delegations that attend informal, smaller meetings during WTO Ministerial Conferences (Kaukab 2011).

5.4. Reducing the Abuse of Power

- More powerful countries in WTO negotiations should respect the efforts of small and poor developing countries to work collectively. Too often, when the coalitions of small and poor WTO members become vocal, effective, or develop concrete positions, the major players use their superior market and political power to make them bilateral concessions on other trade, development or political issues. This in turn can undermine the cohesion of developing country coalitions, sometimes prompting countries to change position or defect from groups. Importantly, such external pressures ultimately may work against major partners, making it harder to achieve the broader political consensus needed at the WTO and undermining the legitimacy of the institution and its processes.

- Support from major powers to support small and poor countries in the WTO, and their coalition-building efforts, should be channeled through third parties to reduce the potential for explicit or implicit pressures that unduly influence the positions of negotiators or their autonomy, and to diminish the potential for bias in the content of assistance.

- Developed country and other donors need to reduce the perception of economic threat under which many small and poor countries negotiate, whether this is related to aid or trade. Bilateral development donors should take measures within their own governments to insulate small and poor states from trade-related threats; to promote national trade priorities that are sensitive to development priorities; and to advance the case for institutional and procedural reforms at the WTO that would boost the ability of small and poor states to secure beneficial outcomes from negotiations.

[14] Also see CUTS International 2009a, b; Gallagher et. al. 2005; Jones et. al 2010; Halle and Wolfe 2007; and Saner 2010. Further case studies of practices at the national level can be found in da Motta Veiga (2007), Sen (2004), and Zeng and Mertha (2007). In addition, a number of studies explore other aspects of the 'domestic' governance of trade, such as the transparency of national trade administration and customs regimes (Marconini 2005),

APPENDIX ONE

Table 1

REGIONAL NEGOTIATIONING COALITIONS AND OTHER REGIONAL GROUPS		
Name (Date Formed)	**Description**	**Membership**
ACP (2001)	Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries with preferential trading relations with the EU	**WTO Members (58):** Angola, Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Rep., Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Congo (Democratic Rep.), Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Rep., Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe. **WTO Observers (10):** Bahamas, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Samoa, São Tomé and Principe, Seychelles, Sudan, Vanuatu **Not WTO members or observers (11):** Cook Islands, Eritrea, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Somalia, Timor-Lesté, Tuvalu
Africa Group (1997)	All African WTO Members. Holds joint positions on many negotiating issues.	**WTO members (42)**: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Rep., Chad, Congo, Congo (Democratic Rep.), Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
APEC*	Asia Pacific Economic Forum	**WTO members (20)**: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong China, Indonesia, Japan, Rep. Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, US, Viet Nam **WTO observers (1)**: Russia
ASEAN (1967)*	Association of South East Asian Nations Geneva Committee was constituted in 1973, and was especially active during the Uruguay Round. In the WTO, the group has delegated and coordinated issues	**WTO Members (9):** Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam **Not members or observers (1):** Laos

	within its membership, but has been limited to the exchange of information rather than the submission of joint proposals.	
CARICOM (1997)	Caribbean Community. The group has been active since 1997 with the establishment of the CARICOM Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM). The Group negotiates across the range of WTO issue areas, with particular reference to the need for special and differential treatment in the agricultural negotiations for small economies.	**WTO Members (12):** Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago **WTO Observers (1):** The Bahamas
EU**	European Union, in the WTO officially called European Communities	**WTO members (28)**: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom + European Union
GRULAC	Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries	
Mercosur (1991)***	Common Market of the Southern Cone, cooperation largely focused on agricultural negotiations.	**WTO members (4)**: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay
PIF (1971)***	Pacific Islands Forum	**WTO Members (7):** Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, **WTO Observers (2):** Samoa, Vanuatu **Non-WTO members or observers (8):** Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Tuvalu

ISSUE-BASED COALITIONS		
Name (Date Formed)	**Description**	**Membership**
Cairns Group (1986)	Group of agricultural exporting nations lobbying for agricultural trade liberalization.	**WTO Members (19):** Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand and Uruguay
C-4 (2003)	"Cotton Four" group of West African countries with specific interest in seeking cuts in cotton subsidies and tariffs.	**WTO Members (4):** Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali
CGTF (2005)	"Core Group in Trade Facilitation"	Bangladesh, Botswana, Egypt, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Philippines,

	group focused on ensuring special and differential treatment for developing countries in trade facilitation.	Rwanda, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe
FIPs (2004)	Five Interested Parties in agriculture	**WTO members (5):** Australia, Brazil, EU, India, US
FIPs plus (2005)	FIPs plus friends	**WTO Members (11):** FIPs plus Argentina, Canada, China, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland
Friends of Anti-Dumping Negotiations (FANs) (2003)	Coalition seeking more disciplines on the use of anti-dumping measures	**WTO members (15)**: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hong Kong China, Israel, Japan, Rep. of Korea, Mexico, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Turkey
Friends of Fish (FoFs) (1998)	Informal coalition seeking to significantly reduce fisheries subsidies. From time to time other WTO members also identify themselves as "Friends of Fish"	**WTO members (11)**: Argentina, Australia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, US
G-10 (2003)	Importers lobbying for multi-functionality of agriculture and need for high levels of domestic support and protection	**WTO members (9)**: Chinese Taipei, Rep. Korea, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Norway, Switzerland
G-11 (2005)	Full liberalization in tropical products	**WTO Members (11):** Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Peru, Nicaragua, Venezuala
G-20 (2003)	Coalition of developing countries pressing for ambitious reforms of agriculture in developed countries with some flexibility for developing countries	**WTO members (23)**: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zimbabwe
G-33 (2003)	Coalition of developing countries pressing for flexibility for developing countries to undertake limited market opening in agriculture	**WTO members (46)**: Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Rep., El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Rep. Korea, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tanzania, Trinidad & Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe
NAMA 11 (2004)	Coalition of developing countries seeking flexibilities to limit market opening in industrial goods trade and pushing for special and differential treatment for developing countries in the NAMA negotiations	**WTO members (10)**: Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Namibia, Philippines, South Africa, Tunisia, Venezuela

'Paragraph 6' Countries (2005)	Group of countries with less than 35% of nonagricultural products covered by legally bound tariff ceilings. They have agreed to increase their binding coverage substantially, but want to exempt some products. (In paragraph 6 of the first version of the NAMA text, later paragraph 8.)	**WTO members (12)**: Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ghana, Kenya, Macao China, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Zimbabwe
Friends of Ambition (NAMA)	Seeking to maximize tariff reductions and achieve real market access in NAMA. (Some nuanced differences in positions.)	**WTO members (35)**: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Rep., Denmark, Estonia, EU, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Rep., Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, US
Low-income economies in transition	Seeking to secure the same treatment as least developed countries. (Georgia formally withdrew, but in the agriculture draft the full list is: Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyz Rep, Moldova)	**WTO members (3)**: Armenia, Kyrgyz Rep., Moldova
RAMs (2003)	Recently acceded members (RAMs), ie, countries that negotiated and joined the WTO after 1995, seeking lesser commitments in the negotiations because of the liberalization they have undertaken as part of their membership agreements. Excludes least-developed countries because they will make no new commitments, and EU members	**WTO members (19)**: Albania, Armenia, Cape Verde, China, Croatia, Ecuador, FYR Macedonia, Georgia, Jordan, Kyrgyz Rep., Moldova, Mongolia, Oman, Panama, Saudi Arabia, Chinese Taipei, Tonga, Ukraine, Viet Nam
Tropical Products Group	Coalition of developing countries seeking greater market access for tropical products.	**WTO members (8)**: Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru

GROUPS AND COALITIONS BASED ON COMMON CHARACTERISTICS (e.g., level of development, weight in world trade)		
Name (Date Formed)	**Description**	**Membership**
LDCs (1999)	Least developed countries: the	**WTO members (32)**: Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Rep., Chad,

	world's poorest countries. The WTO uses the UN list. www.un.org/specialrep/ ohrlls/ldc/list.htm	Congo (Democratic Rep.), Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia **WTO observers (12)**: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Laos, Liberia, Samoa, São Tomé & Principe, Sudan, Vanuatu, Yemen
LLDCs	Landlocked Developing Countries	**WTO Members (22):** Armenia, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Krgyz Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Paraguay, Rwanda, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe **WTO Observers (8):** Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Lao People`s Democratic Republic, Tajikstan, Uzbekistan **Not WTO Members or Observers (1):** Turkmenistan
Small, Vulnerable Economies (SVEs) - agriculture (2003)	This list is based on sponsors of proposals. See also: list in Annex I of the 10 July 2008 revised draft agriculture modalities, and footnote 9 (paragraph 65) and paragraph 151.	**WTO members (14)**: Barbados, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominican Rep., El Salvador, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Trinidad & Tobago
Small, Vulnerable Economies (SVEs) – non-agricultural market access (NAMA)	This list is based on sponsors of proposals. See also: definition in paragraph 13 of the 10 July 2008 revised draft NAMA modalities	**WTO members (19)**: Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Bolivia, Dominca, Dominican Rep., El Salvador, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago
Small, Vulnerable Economies (SVEs) – Rules	Sponsors of TN/RL/W/226/Rev.5 (fisheries subsidies)	**WTO members (14)**: Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Rep., El Salvador, Fiji, Honduras, Jamaica, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Tonga
G-4 (2005)		**WTO Members (4):** Brazil, EU, India, US
G-4 plus Japan (2005)		**WTO Members (5):** G-4 plus Japan
G-6 (2005)		**WTO Members (6):** EU, US, Japan, Australia, Brazil, India
G-7		**WTO Members (6):** EU, US, Brazil, China, Australia and Japan
G-90 (2003)	Coalition combining the Africa Group, ACPs and LDCs	**WTO members (65)**: Angola, Antigua & Barbuda, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Rep., Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Congo (Democratic Rep.), Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Rep., Egypt, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe **WTO observers (14)**: Afghanistan, Bahamas, Bhutan, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Laos, Liberia, Samoa,

		São Tomé & Principe, Seychelles, Sudan, Vanuatu, Yemen **Not WTO members or observers (11)**: Cook Islands, Eritrea, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Somalia, Timor-Lesté, Tuvalu
G-110	Coalition made up of all G-20 members and all G-90 members used to advocate on issues for which a previous general common understanding exists, while abstaining from sensitive issue-specific negotiations where consensus is hard to reach	**WTO Members (88):** Angola, Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Rep., Chad, Chile, China, Cuba, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo (Democratic Rep.), Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Rep., Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, , Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe **WTO observers (14)**: Afghanistan, Bahamas, Bhutan, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Laos, Liberia, Samoa, São Tomé & Principe, Seychelles, Sudan, Vanuatu, Yemen **Not WTO members or observers (11)**: Cook Islands, Eritrea, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Somalia, Timor-Lesté, Tuvalu

* Regional groupings listed in this section are not generally considered 'negotiating coalitions' per se. However, they do occasionally submit joint proposals and statements to WTO meetings and committees.

** The European Union is the formally constituted as the WTO negotiator on behalf of its members, rather than a coalition per se.

*** These entities are also formal organizations or unions or countries. While they do not necessarily negotiate collectively at the WTO, their participation in some aspects of the WTO's work as a regional unit (e.g., in the Trade Policy Review process).

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The Global Economic Governance Programme
University College, Oxford OX1 4BH

Tel. +44 (0) 1865 276 639 or 279 630
Fax. +44 (0) 1865 276 659
Email: geg@univ.ox.ac.uk
www.globaleconomicgovernance.org