

杜哈回合與坎昆部長級會議

荷蘭經濟部對外經濟關係司司長
布隆斯馬

關鍵字：荷蘭、台灣、WTO、杜哈回合、坎昆部長級會議

中文摘要

我深信 WTO 有未來而且 WTO 的成功對荷蘭與台灣皆具有重大意義。不過或許對台灣而言遠比荷蘭更具重要性。雖然荷蘭本身是個小國，僅有一千六百萬的人口，但是我們是一個龐大國內市場歐洲聯盟(EU)的一部分。二〇〇四年 EU 已有二十五個成員國、四億多人口。EU 吸收我國出口的百分之八十。然而我們正越來越依賴歐洲以外的發展。這些發展影響到我們內向和外向貿易與投資的流通，乃至於我們經濟的情況。我們的經濟未來與亞洲、美國越來越密切。

台灣與荷蘭不同，沒有個像 EU 的龐大國內市場，其令人印象深刻的經濟成功主要是透過出口與海外直接投資來不斷地溶入世界經濟。據我所獲得的數據顯示，二〇〇二年台灣的貨品與服務的出口佔其 GDP 的百分之五十四。溶入世界經濟一方面會替一國帶來財富，但另一方面也會使該國變得脆弱。當台灣參與全球經濟不斷增加，更易受到國際政經變化的衝擊。台灣將需要一個公平而無歧視的國際競爭市場，即所謂透明性與可預測性，在此一穩定的遊戲平台上，台灣的貨品、服務與投資的流動將不會因突然遭受他國強加貿易障礙而蒙受損失。這就是為什麼台灣的 WTO 會籍如此重要的原因。WTO 是我剛提到的公平遊戲平台的最佳保證，該組織提供一個透明而不具歧視性規則的基本架構，

俾利國際貿易的運作。儘管如此，我們必須試圖改正 WTO 真正缺失。在這些缺失中最嚴重的莫過於最貧窮國家參與不足。據報導台灣農民似乎認為坎昆 WTO 協商的破壞對台灣而言不算是個壞消息。由於我對多邊貿易組織有堅定不移的信念，我對此不以為然。確實，坎昆會談若在農業達成協議可能會對農民生活造成不利的影響。但單從經濟上的重要性來看，農民的困境遠不及於台灣具有高度競爭優勢的產業如工業、機械與電器、資訊產品。切勿忘記農業在台灣 GDP 所佔的比率尚及百分之二。

多邊或區域貿易協定是否可以成為 WTO 的替代選擇？很多國家似乎認為可以，我卻難以苟同。多邊主義還有其他缺點。那些非具有吸引力市場的國家將會被遺棄。當較弱的國家與像美國或 EU 等經濟強權談判時總是居於不利的地位。

坎昆會失敗的主因與 WTO 本身的缺點有很大的關連性。可分為內容、戰術及過程等方面。內容：杜哈宣言所反應出的不是該回合討論所達成的真正共識，而是一紙籠統的妥協。包含 WTO 裡各種不同團體間的歧見。主要歧見為此回合討論的範圍。EU 等國家主張此回合的協商範圍應擴大至包括 WTO 新規範，但美國則只對市場的開放有興趣，發展中國家也盼望市場開放但卻不認為應該開放自己的市場。至於 WTO 規範，這些發展中國家不願有義務但卻有意提升現存的規範，使這些規範對自身有利。他們拒絕以非貿易關切作為他國對這些國家採取保護主義措施的藉口。戰術：如果坎昆會議給我的教訓是我們必須更加嚴肅地與發展中國家對話。我們習慣於認為一旦我們能促成歐洲、美國達成協議，問題就解決了。我們必須擺脫這種西方人的傲慢。過程：WTO 的決議使以共識為基礎。而且，缺乏明確的規則決定誰負責準備部長級會議或會議開始時由誰負責掌控，結果導致誰的版本才該作為協商的基礎。因此，有必要將決策過程合理化與簡潔化。

The Doha Round and the Cancún Ministerial Meeting

Dirk J. Bruinsma

Director-General for Foreign Economic Relations, Dutch Ministry of
Economic Affairs

Key words : Dutch, WTO, Taiwan, the Doha Round, the Cancún
Ministerial Meeting

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

There are two main reasons why I am honoured and pleased to be able to address this conference.

First of all, because the conference embodies the realisation that the WTO, and cooperation in the WTO context, is - and must be - an important element of economic relations between Taiwan and the Netherlands.

Second, because there is a great need for dialogue after the failure of Cancún. Not only the Doha round, but also the WTO and the multilateral trading system are at a critical stage. If we are to arrive at valid conclusions as to what went wrong and what needs to be done we must enter into a dialogue, not only at home or within our own continent, but also - I would even say in particular - with WTO members in other parts of the world. Without such enhanced inter-continental communication we are doomed to failure.

Asia is a key region in the international economy and hence in the WTO. In the Asian region Taiwan plays an important role. For instance, among the emerging markets of Asia Taiwan is the second

trade partner of the Netherlands. Therefore, I really appreciate the opportunity offered by today's conference to exchange views with you. In order to start this exchange of views, I will give you my own appreciation of the events in Cancún and my first - still tentative - ideas about what could and should be done to revive the Doha round and to secure the future health of the multilateral trading system.

But let me begin by stating my undiminished belief in the multilateral trading system as embodied in the WTO. I firmly believe that there is a future for the WTO and that both the Netherlands and Taiwan have a huge stake in its success.

Perhaps this is even more so for Taiwan than for the Netherlands. Even though the Netherlands itself is relatively small - 16 million inhabitants - we are part of a big 'domestic' market, the European Union, which next year will consist of 25 member states comprising more than 400 million people, and which takes about 80% of our exports.

But even we are increasingly dependent on developments outside Europe. These developments influence our inward and outward flows of trade and investment, and hence, the state of our economy. To an ever bigger extent our economic future is being shaped in Asia or in the United States.

Taiwan does not have a big 'domestic' market like the European Union. To a large extent its impressive economic successes are based on an increasing involvement - through exports and foreign direct investment - in the world economy. According to my figures, Taiwan's exports of goods and services made up almost 54% of its GDP in 2002.

Such involvement not only brings wealth, it also makes one vulnerable. As Taiwan's participation in the world economy grows, so will its need for a level international playing field without

discrimination, which is transparent and predictable. A level playing field which cannot be disrupted by the sudden imposition of arbitrary barriers against the movement of Taiwanese goods, services and investment.

That is why Taiwan's membership of the WTO is so vitally important. As is our own WTO membership. The WTO is our best possible guarantee for the level playing field I just described. It offers a transparent and non-discriminatory rule-based framework for the conduct of international trade. It offers transparency and non-discriminatory treatment.

It offers a machinery for negotiating new rules and trade concessions, in which all members can participate. And, last but not least, it offers a binding dispute settlement system which its members can use if another WTO member violates their rights.

The WTO may be indispensable, it is also far from perfect. The failure at Cancún once more made us aware of that. Its membership is large and diverse and often has widely divergent views on what should be done. There is the feeling among many developing countries that the WTO's existing rules reflect too much the interests of the developed countries, which used to dominate the organisation in the past, but which now constitute only a minority. Many of the least developed countries are too small and/or too poor to participate adequately in its work and, hence, feel excluded and marginalised. The WTO's present institutional structures and consensus-based procedures for decision-making often prove ineffective to cope with such challenges.

In addition, the WTO has a problem with the outside world, as was clearly shown by the huge numbers of demonstrating anti-globalists outside the gates of the Conference area at Cancún. In the eyes of many, the WTO is an undemocratic organisation geared exclusively to the economic interests of multinational companies, to

the detriment of the environment, social standards or public health and threatening the livelihood of traditional farmers in developing countries, or even in rich countries. One such farmer from Korea actually killed himself in Cancún in a tragic gesture to underscore his protest.

Most of the allegations against the WTO are simply not true or exaggerated. Often, too much is expected of the organisation. As a trade organisation the WTO cannot be reasonably expected to prevent environmental degradation or to bring about a better implementation of social standards or a more equitable income distribution. Many of the world's problems can only be tackled by national governments or by other international organisations.

Even though this may be so, we must try and rectify the WTO's real shortcomings. Foremost among these flaws is the inadequate participation of the poorest countries.

The tragedy is, that the best way to achieve a better integration of these countries into the multilateral trading system is through the Doha Development Round, which, because of the Cancún failure, is unlikely to make much progress in the foreseeable future.

If I am to believe a recent article in the Taipei Times, Taiwan's farmers seem to think that the breakdown of WTO negotiations is actually not bad news for Taiwan. After what I said earlier about my unwavering belief in the multilateral trading system you will not be surprised to learn that I profoundly disagree. Yes, it is true that a deal on agriculture in Cancún would probably have made the farmers' lives more difficult. But in terms of economic significance such difficulties are dwarfed by the lost opportunities in the sectors where Taiwan is highly competitive, like IT products, machinery and electrical equipment. Let us not forget that agriculture represents less than two percent of Taiwan's GDP.

Could bilateral or regional trade agreements be a plausible alternative? Many countries seem to think so. I do not share their view. As I said earlier, in an ever more globalising economy companies need a transparent, non-discriminatory playing field. A 'spaghetti bowl' of overlapping discriminatory free-trade agreements, each with their own set of participants, exceptions and rules of origin, can never provide that.

There are other drawbacks of bilateralism: Countries that do not possess attractive markets will be left out. Weaker countries will always be at a disadvantage when negotiating bilaterally with economic giants like the United States or the European Union. These giants will not be prepared to put an end to their trade-distorting subsidies in agriculture, for instance. If ever, they will only do so in the context of a deal in the WTO, where they can be sure that all their competitors will be bound by the same agreement.

Another problem with bilateral or regional free-trade agreements is their 'all-or-nothing' character. Even though it is possible to exempt a limited number of goods from the free-trade regime or to open one's borders only after a transitional period, the fact remains that 'substantially all the trade' has to be liberalized. There is no room for differentiation or for tailor-made solutions, like in the WTO. This is likely to create problems, especially for the economically weaker partners.

For all these reasons I do not believe that bilateral or regional trade agreements can provide lasting solutions to the needs of our companies. In spite of the current enthusiasm for bilateral trade initiatives a return to the WTO and the multilateral trading system will prove inevitable in the longer run.

Therefore, I firmly believe we must try and revive the Round. But in order to be able to do so, we must briefly look back to examine the

main causes of the Cancún failure. We cannot hope to find the right way forward without a proper analysis of what went wrong.

As I see it, there are three main causes of failure which have a lot to do with the shortcomings of the WTO itself, which I mentioned earlier.

The key words in this respect are: content, tactics and process.

Content: if one looks at the goals pursued by the various WTO partners, one sees a considerable divergence. On agriculture, on the cotton initiative, on non-agricultural market access and, of course, on the so-called Singapore issues. With the wisdom of hindsight one can note that the Doha declaration did not so much reflect a genuine consensus as to what the Round should be about, but rather a shaky textual compromise which merely papered over a continuing disagreement between the various groupings within the WTO. For a fleeting moment the political need for international success after the tragic events of 9/11 prevailed. But, deep down, disagreement remained. Disagreement which started in Seattle, and perhaps even earlier.

This disagreement concerns the scope of the Round: should it deal only with market access issues, or should it also aim at improved or new rules in areas of relevance to the world economy? And what, if any, should be the role of non-trade concerns in the WTO?

The EU and some other countries favour a broad round, including negotiations on new WTO rules, whereas the US is mainly interested in market access. Developing countries, too, want market access, but feel that they should not be asked to make a contribution of their own. As regards WTO rules, they do not want new obligations for themselves and want to rebalance existing rules in their favour. They reject non-trade concerns as a new vehicle for protection against their exports.

It is clear that even after Doha these underlying differences have remained. They have resulted in a string of missed deadlines and a growing lack of trust among the various groupings in the WTO. The question now is whether the Round can ever succeed without a new and -this time- proper consensus about its scope.

Tactics: This problem of continuing disagreement as regards the scope of the Round was compounded by a political element. The big surprise of Cancún was the sudden emergence of the G21, a group of developing countries which acted from a strongly-felt need to stand up against the rich Western countries. Ironically enough, it was the EU-US compromise text on agriculture, negotiated shortly before the start of the Cancún conference, which triggered the formation of the G21. I say ironically, because at the time the EU-US compromise was seen in Europe as an important breakthrough which would increase the chances of a successful Conference. Instead, it contributed to Cancún's failure.

A group of developing countries including big emerging economies like Brazil, India and China saw the compromise as just another attempt by the two developed giants to strike a self-serving deal and then to force that deal down the throats of the other WTO members. They were determined to show that the balance of power in the WTO has changed. They quickly drafted a counter proposal which demanded far greater concessions from both the EU and the US, but which hardly required any concessions at all from developing countries, whatever their level of development. Which, of course, is precisely the reason why the group was able to agree so quickly. In fact, the G21 consists of countries with widely diverging interests. It includes big agricultural exporters -Brazil, for instance- as well as countries mainly interested in keeping imports out - like India. What was surprising is the fact that, in spite of this divergence, the G21 managed to stick together throughout the Conference.



When the EU-US compromise text was used by the Chairman of the WTO's General Council, Mr. Perez de Castillo, in his draft Ministerial Declaration which he submitted to the Conference, the G21 refused to accept it as a basis for negotiations. Instead, they insisted that their own text be used as such. Given the "you-do-everything-we-do-nothing-character" of that text this was obviously a non-starter. This political deadlock resulted in a loss of two days, during which no negotiations took place. On agriculture, no real negotiations ever took place during the conference. Which is all the more regrettable because I am convinced that a reasonable deal was within reach.

It this to say that the emergence of the G21 is a bad thing? After Cancún the American negotiator Mr Zoellick and many others in the US seemed to think so. My own judgement is less categorical. I see great advantages in developing countries forming alliances to further their interests in the WTO. It can only lead to a better balance and, hence, to more equitable results. This, in turn, will strengthen the WTO's credibility and, thereby, its effectiveness. But in order for this to happen the formation of alliances among developing countries must go hand in hand with effective coordination systems. In addition, developing countries, the emerging economies in particular, must be willing to accept their part of the responsibility for the final result. And this requires a readiness to make certain concessions. At Cancún these two conditions were not - I hope not yet - met.

Process: I believe that a third main cause of failure was - what the EU's chief negotiator Mr. Lamy called - the 'medieval' procedures of the WTO. As you know, the WTO takes all its decisions by consensus. This is far from easy under any circumstances, particularly so now that its membership has grown to 148. But this problem is compounded by a lack of clear rules to determine who is responsible for the preparation of a Ministerial Conference or how it should be run once it has started. The roles and responsibilities of the WTO's director-general, the chairman of its General Council and of the host

country minister are unclear. This resulted in the fight I mentioned earlier - about whose text should serve as the basis for negotiations. This fight took up half the time available for the Conference and was, therefore, a major cause of Cancún's failure.

What can be done about these three main causes of failure?

Content: Should the scope of the Round be revised? Many now say that we should ditch the four Singapore Issues (investment, competition, trade facilitation and transparency in government procurement). I am hesitant. It is my firm belief that in the longer run the WTO and a globalizing world economic system need to include these issues.

Investment, because trade and investment are increasingly inter-linked. Trade flows generate investment flows and vice versa. Under these circumstances it would be strange to subject trade regulations to the discipline of the WTO, while leaving countries completely free as regards investment.

Competition, because competition rules are vital for maintaining a level playing field.

Transparency in government procurement, because it helps combat corruption and, hence, through a better spending of scarce resources, contributes to development.

Trade facilitation, because red tape at borders and burdensome customs formalities are often a bigger obstacle to trade these days than customs duties.

I am also convinced that new WTO rules on the Singapore Issues can be beneficial to developing countries. Of course, they will need a lot of technical assistance. And the new rules must be flexible enough to take account of their specific needs and capabilities.

Perhaps, we should start with an opt-in approach, like the present Government Procurement Agreement. This would bring the issues under the remit of the WTO, while allowing countries to remain outside until they are able and ready to join.

But perhaps the time is not even ripe for such an opt-in approach. Perhaps we must wait until the next Round. In the coming months this is something we must explore with our trading partners. I would be very much interested to hear your views on this matter.

Then there are non-trade concerns. I refer to a wide array of issues on the interface between trade rules and policies in other fields: environmental protection, social standards, public health, animal welfare etc. To the Netherlands and the EU these issues are important. The fact that WTO rules are often perceived as standing in the way of such non-trade goals is one of the main reasons why hordes of protesters take to the streets whenever a WTO Conference is held.

After many years of trying it would seem that the possibilities for finding a solution to this problem within the WTO are remote. Developing countries are simply too afraid to open the door to protectionist abuse of such solutions. Many developed countries, too, refuse to discuss them.

From a political point of view it will be very difficult for the EU to drop these issues from the agenda. I hope we can avoid that, but perhaps there is no alternative. In that case there will be a need for increased activity outside the WTO. To name a few possibilities: international treaties like the Biodiversity Protocol or active national policies stimulating one's multinational companies to behave in accordance with the OECD guidelines on corporate social responsibility in the conduct of their overseas business.

In addition, we should explore the role that could be played by institutions like the World Bank, the IMF, the ILO and MEA secretariats in promoting and upholding international standards in areas of non-trade concerns.

On this matter, too, I would be very much interested to hear your views.

Reducing - if we must - the scope of the Doha agenda will, by itself, not do the trick.

A courageous offer by the EU, the US and other developed countries on agriculture remains an absolute necessity if we are to

convince the developing countries that the rich countries are serious about the “development character” of the Doha Round. What the EU was willing to concede at the final stage of the Cancún Conference must remain on the table. At the very least!

Of course, the more advanced developing countries and big agricultural exporters like Brazil must play their part as well. The simple G21 approach of “we-do-nothing-you-do-everything” cannot work. Special treatment should be reserved for those countries that really need it.

The rich WTO members could also improve the negotiating climate by making confidence-building gestures towards the poorest developing countries. For instance, they could offer to apply more flexible rules of origin under their Generalised System of Preferences. This would really help, as the present rules often prevent these countries from benefitting in practice from the preferences they enjoy in theory.

Again, I would be interested to hear your views.

Tactics: If there is one lesson I have learnt at Cancún, it is that we must have a much more serious dialogue with the developing countries. Our natural tendency is still to think that we have solved our problems once we have managed to agree within the European Union and between the EU and the United States. We must shake off this Western arrogance. I hope that the bilateral EU-US deal on agriculture was the last of its kind.

The days of Blair House-type agreements are over!

Process: Though I would like to see a streamlining of WTO procedures, I do not want to emphasise this aspect too much. That is because there are no easy solutions in this field.

Of course, it would help if developing countries would form coalitions on a more regular and permanent basis. It would reduce the number of negotiators in the room and would make it easier to reach agreement. But I wonder if the time is ripe. The EU has a single

negotiator - the Commission - but it also has a single market without internal borders and a common external policy. It has clear decision-making procedures, based on law. But in this respect the EU is unique. No other group of countries has advanced that far towards unity. And it took the EU many, many years to reach that stage. It is unrealistic to assume that countries will pool their negotiating powers without achieving a much greater degree of integration first. The slow pace of ASEAN integration shows just how difficult this is.

For the same reasons, decision-making on the basis of majority voting, like in the EU, is still a bridge too far for the WTO.

Perhaps we should aim for more modest reforms. For instance, by creating more clarity about the respective roles of the director-general of the WTO, the chairman of the General Council and the Minister of the host country in the preparation and conduct of ministerial conferences. Perhaps, in this way we can prevent situations like in Cancún, where the draft ministerial declaration submitted to the Conference by the chairman of the General Council with the full support of the Director-General, was rejected as a basis for negotiations.

Once again, I would like to hear your opinion on this matter.

Even modest institutional reforms will be difficult to achieve as long as there is a lack of trust. And even if they could be achieved, they would not yield a result without such trust and without the political will to come to an agreement.

Therefore, I believe that intensified inter-continental dialogue and confidence-building measures are the key to reviving the round. They will be our most pressing tasks for the immediate future.

As I said at the beginning, today's conference is exactly what is needed. Let's dialogue!

Thank you for your attention.

E.P.S.