

**Civil Society Forum Declaration to  
12<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  
(UNCTAD XII)  
Accra, 19 April 2008**

*Poverty anywhere is a danger to prosperity everywhere  
(Declaration of Philadelphia, Constitution of the International Labour Office 1944)*

**I. CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM**

1. The Civil Society Forum, meeting on the occasion of UNCTAD XII (20-25 April 2008), took place in Accra, Ghana from 17 to 19 April 2008. It convened social movements, pro-development groups, women's groups, trade unions, peasants and agricultural organizations, environmental organizations, faith-based organizations, and fair trade organizations, *inter alia*, (referred to as *We* thereafter) who expressed a variety of perspectives on trade, investment and competition policies, and their impacts on development. Participants of the forum are united in the defence of a number of principles, positions and actions that they wish to present to the member States of the United Nations Trade and Development Conference at its 12<sup>th</sup> session.

**II. STRUCTURE OF THIS STATEMENT**

2. This statement is structured around two parts:
  - (i) Part 1. Global Context
  - (i) Part 2. Inputs on Specific Issues by Sub-themes

<b>PART 1 GLOBAL CONTEXT</b>
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3. The era of Globalization is proving to be an era of persistent and growing inequalities. The current neo-liberal policies are far from neutral. Growth of world trade has been accompanied by dislocation of the poorest societies, including least developing countries (LDCs) and the continued suffering of the most vulnerable groups, particularly hundreds of millions of women.
4. UNCTAD XII is happening at a crunch-time for the global economy and multilateral system. The looming recession, the volatility of food and commodity prices and the credit crunch that are part of the backdrop to UNCTAD XII are all manifestations of the dysfunctional global system.
5. The opposite poles of wealth and poverty reinforce each other with every new manifestation of the flaws of the system. Most notable problems today are firstly the massive losses (now estimated by the IMF at almost US\$1,000 billion) arising from the global financial crisis, and secondly the world crisis of rising food prices and food shortages.
6. We want the governments and the UNCTAD XII to take action now on these two crises. Financial institutions and speculation must be regulated, as well as the global financial system that promotes the unregulated flow of capital, particularly speculative funds and activities. The UNCTAD Secretariat has done great work on finance. If the international community had followed its advice there might not have been such a crisis today. UNCTAD XII must mandate it to expand its work on finance, including how developing countries would be affected by the fallout of the financial crisis, what they can do about it, and how to overhaul the global financial architecture. The objective should be to ensure that finance serves development and not the greed of speculators. The goals of development include decent work, full employment and adequate income, environmental sustainability and gender equality.

7. The food crisis is mainly caused by a mismatch of supply and demand. Another reason is the shift from producing food to bio-fuels, and this trend should be reviewed and reversed. But another reason is that developing countries had been wrongly pressured by the loan conditionalities of the World Bank and IMF to cut government subsidies, support to small farmers, and food import duties. At the same time the high agricultural subsidies continue in rich countries. The local farmers have livelihood problems because surges of cheap and subsidized imports have overwhelmed them.
8. The food crisis makes policy change necessary. Developing countries must be allowed to defend their food security and small farmers, so as to quickly expand food production through sustainable agriculture, and to raise tariffs to prevent import surges. The developed countries must quickly phase out their distorting subsidies, including those distorting subsidies within the so-called Green Box subsidies. Land for biofuels should be reclaimed back to farming. There must be changes to policies at the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), including the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). UNCTAD can play a central role in this reform and to help find the right solutions to the food crisis.
9. A major achievement of UNCTAD XI (eleven) was to recognize the importance of policy space for developing countries. However, policy space for government intervention and regulation has declined further since then. In particular this has been caused by loan conditionalities and existing WTO rules, and substantial increases in bilateral and regional free trade agreements. These agreements lock in developing countries into inappropriate liberalization of imported goods and services and inappropriate intellectual property rights (IPR) policies. The FTAs and EPAs also introduce new rules on liberalizing investment and government procurement, going beyond the WTO commitments, and erode the governments' ability to regulate for development and for the public welfare.
10. This erosion of policy space remains the main issue, especially since this loss of policy space is also a threat to the ability of developing countries to deal with the finance and food crises.
11. Therefore our first and foremost demand is that UNCTAD XII deal even more forcefully with the issue of policy space. UNCTAD – both the Secretariat and the inter-governmental machinery – must get an expanded mandate to empower developing countries with the use of policy tools for development.
12. Under orthodox policy prescriptions the policy space to exercise governmental intervention and regulation by developing countries has decreased. While developed countries ensure they retain sufficient possibilities for national policy intervention, the needed range of policy options is not available to developing countries. Over the last decades, as part of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) as well as WTO and bilateral North-South trade negotiations, the developing countries have given up substantial policy space, resulting in inability to respond adequately to economic instabilities and social emergencies, and creating barriers to long-term development.
13. The increasing number and expanding scope of bilateral and regional North-South agreements that go beyond WTO commitments and ruthlessly promote the North's corporate agenda, constitute a grave danger for democracy, development and social solidarity at local, national and international levels, as most of these North-South FTAs including EPAs drastically erode policy space required for economic and social development. The international rules and conditionalities imposed on developing country governments not only limit their ability to choose and implement appropriate development policies, but also limit their ability to have genuine dialogue with citizens and civil society, since the policy makers believe they are constrained to follow the policies laid down through institutions like the World Bank, IMF, regional banks and the trade agreements.
14. Developing countries face continuous pressures to liberalise their imports, even though many countries have had their local industries and agricultural sectors stifled by cheap imports. In many poor countries, the dumping of Northern subsidized farm exports onto world markets continues to destroy rural livelihoods. Many LDCs, especially in Africa, have seen their local industries closing or losing their share of the local

market due to import liberalization imposed by the World Bank, IMF and regional development banks. The EPAs negotiated with the EU will cause a new wave of economic dislocation in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.

15. At the WTO, the Doha negotiations have so far produced very imbalanced draft proposals. Developed countries can continue their high agricultural subsidies through shifting of the boxes or categories of subsidies because many of the so-called non trade distorting Green Box subsidies have been found in reality to be trade distorting (and to adversely affect quality production and exports of developing countries), but the proposals to improve disciplines to limit these subsidies are very weak and grossly inadequate. Yet while these Northern subsidies continue, the developing countries are pressured to cut their agricultural tariffs further by an average 36% (which is more than the 24% in the Uruguay Round), making them even more vulnerable to import surges and consequent rural dislocation.
16. In the negotiations on industrial goods, the Swiss formula, never used before, will drastically reduce the tariffs of industrial goods in developing countries, damaging or even destroying many local industries. The LDCs do not have to reduce their tariffs through the Doha Round, but most of them may be affected also by deep tariff cuts through other mechanisms including bilateral agreements like the EPAs, and further loan conditionalities. Meanwhile the developed countries not only maintain their agricultural subsidies but plan to protect their important agricultural products from tariff cuts through various mechanisms, and are only prepared to cut their industrial tariffs by lower rates than developing countries under the Swiss formula. Non tariff barriers are increasingly used to block market access of products of developing countries. The Doha deal is turning out to be imbalanced against the developing countries, although it was projected to be a Development Round.
17. Furthermore, developed countries are pushing for liberalization of services through regional and multilateral trade agreements. Strategic sectors such as finance and telecommunications risk coming under domination by foreign firms. The role of the state in providing public services may also be threatened further.
18. Access to social services are also threatened by intellectual property regimes which limit access to medicines and information. In particular, the access of women to health care, information and education is affected, further denying their empowerment, undermining their efforts to participate in political and public activities and ensure their sustainable livelihoods.
19. Despite the dangers of climate change, unsustainable levels and patterns of production and consumption continue to prevail in the industrialized countries thereby accelerating the endangerment of and stress to global natural resources. The North continues to incur an ecological debt to the South, but developing countries still come under pressure to allow exploitation of natural resources by Multinational Enterprises (MNEs).
20. The right to regulate and the inclusiveness in decision-making processes both nationally and internationally are in danger. Social dialogue is weakened by the structural adjustment policies. Social and economic rights, and labour and trade union rights, including freedom of association and non-discrimination are not guaranteed. They are in fact weakened by the globalization of production methods.
21. Although there is a prevalent idea that the main way developing countries can develop is through foreign direct investment (FDI), in reality, FDI in many cases results in more costs and losses. In many countries it exacerbates the outflow of resources, including investment resources, from these countries and the acute imbalance that arises in the global economy. Moreover, Africa, the poorest continent in the world is a net exporter of capital, even while their external (and internal) debt continues to be a burden that crushes development possibilities and aspirations year in year out. Domestic resource mobilization is seriously hampered by imbalanced resource flows, especially capital flight.
22. The benefits of globalization continue to concentrate in the hands of a few. Development promises made by the economic export-led model and by import liberalisation remain unmet in most countries. The benefits of commodity production have been limited for commodity producers, even though prices have recently

increased, due to little domestic value that is added to the commodities and the concentration of control of much of the value chain by MNEs and others.

23. Increasing economic integration of many developing countries in the world economy did not tackle development concerns of their populations. The need for decent and productive employment has not been delivered by the current models of development as unemployment and underemployment remain unacceptably high.
24. Another example is the irony of ‘jobless growth’, accentuated by the dislocation and expulsion of tens of millions from production activities and alternative non-market socio-economic micro-systems that have historically maintained some access to life resources for some of the most vulnerable in developing countries. What has been described as the ‘commodification of the commons’, together with the spread of market-driven commodity chains and attendant property forms over natural resources is imposing unprecedented labour-intensity and precarious ‘flexibilisation’ and ‘casualisation’ on a minority lucky to hold on to steady employment in the formal sector, and having to share resources, as well as compete, with a vast sea of dispossessed human capacity.
25. We reaffirm that employment is the key to poverty eradication but this means putting full and productive employment and Decent Work in agriculture, services and industrialization process as the main goal in policymaking and requires trade policies and financial policies to be coherent with this objective. UNCTAD should integrate in its work the commitment to Decent Work which was been adopted by all UN member states during the 2005 World Summit of the UN General Assembly and reaffirmed in the 2006 UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Ministerial Declaration.
26. As the dominant models do not work for social welfare, there is need to explore alternative diverse and participatory economic systems that are adapted to local and national realities, while also prioritize and protect equity, democracy and diversity, human rights, labour rights, ecology, food security and sustainable production and consumption.

<b>PART 2</b> <b>SPECIFIC ISSUES BY SUB-THEME</b>
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**IV. COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN POLICY MAKING,  
INCLUDING THE CONTRIBUTION OF REGIONAL APPROACHES**  
**(Sub-theme 1)**

27. A major challenge in the discussion on coherence is the different interpretations of coherence. For states in developed countries, the main view of coherence is the harmonization of policies that enable more markets and profits for their companies. For civil society, coherence means policies should have the objective of promoting poverty eradication, social equity, gender equity, and social development, increasing employment and ensuring livelihoods of farmers, and the process of industrialization through sustainable development.
28. The Bretton Woods institutions (BWI) and the most powerful member states within the WTO currently consider coherence to be the harmonization of national policies so that these do not conflict with the prevailing international neo-liberal economic order. On this assumption, structural adjustment programs, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), bilateral and multilateral trade and investment rules, underpinned by the aid regime, all demand that developing countries, LDCs and countries in transition should adapt their economic policies to be in conformity with a corporate-driven model.
29. However for the ordinary citizens of the world, and for civil society organizations, coherence means, as stated in the Sao Paulo Consensus, that the international economic policies must address the needs of all people. To achieve such an objective, *the autonomous, sovereign, and participatory development priorities, must be the entry point and chief determinant of negotiations and obligations involving these countries in institutions of*

*economic governance. Furthermore, developing countries and LDCs governments and democratically elected politicians must be much more strongly represented in decision-making processes of these institutions.*

30. The lack of representation of developing countries in global governance results in top-down development approaches and policies, while maintaining a disconnection between centres of decision-making and recipient countries and their peoples.
31. “Coherence” around the wrong principles and measures, which is now prevailing, has led to the wrong outcomes. Many North-South regional and bi-lateral trade agreements are used to promote the wrong kind of coherence. They make developing countries undertake commitments that go beyond WTO commitments and include issues (such as investment and government procurement) that were rejected at the WTO. They very significantly erode whatever policy space exists in developing countries. They also undermine the prospects of South-South cooperation and regional integration.
32. An additional problem is the use of the so-called “development aspect” of trade agreements such as the EPAs, which is used as a bait by the developed-country party to draw in developing countries into the main aspects of the FTA or EPAs which are detrimental to development.
33. UNCTAD should take note of the above dangers and wrong manifestations of “coherence” and instead strive towards policy coherence that is appropriate, in which all policy advice, measures and agreements are focused and oriented towards the development of developing countries.
34. UNCTAD XII must be based on a radically different form of “coherence” : a reorientation and integration of policies that ensure that the international economic order is adjusted to meet the development needs of the groups most affected by corporate-driven globalization.

## **V. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AND THE NEW REALITIES IN THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE WORLD ECONOMY**

### **(Sub-theme 2)**

35. The debate on the link between trade and development is on-going. The orthodox position is that trade and the dominant trade policy is positive for development. However, a majority of developing countries have suffered from inappropriate import liberalization while gaining little from exports. Their local industries and agriculture were stifled by cheap imports, with loss of farm livelihoods and industrial jobs.
36. The *one-size-fits-all* approach to economic and trade policy-making does not work and results in wrong policies and great cost to many developing countries and their people. Contrary to the prevailing IFI view, the roads to sustainable development are not the same for everyone.
37. The North-South FTAs including EPAs mainly promote the North’s corporate agenda and are a grave danger for developing countries. The UNCTAD Trade and Development Report 2007 was valuable for highlighting the cost and benefits of North-South FTAs. UNCTAD must continue to focus on this.
38. We urge that the wrong policies of the World Bank and IMF and recently of the EPAs and FTAs be immediately rectified. As for the EPAs, the EU should stop putting pressure on ACP countries to conclude them. An alternative to EPAs should be found, with the non-reciprocal principle at the centre of the trade aspect, and which also does not contain the issues of services, IPR, investment and government procurement.
39. African civil society supported by European civil society has been campaigning against the EPA and its framework, while advocating alternative approaches that retain preferences for ACP countries without their having to liberalise their goods imports on a reciprocal basis, and they also want to exclude other issues like services, IPRs, investment, competition and government procurement. It is largely felt that the EPAs were

initialled not as an instrument for delivering development in ACP countries but out of fear that without preserving access to EU market, a some of their trade would be disrupted. There should be a renegotiation of those EPAs that have been initialled, and a review in other countries that have not yet signed the EPAs and allow civil society to assess the full implications so that informed decisions (including opting for alternatives to the EPAs) can be made without pressure.

40. At the WTO, the latest proposals on the Doha negotiations, if adopted, would have a deeply imbalanced outcome, with developed countries continue to maintain high agricultural subsidies while reducing their industrial tariffs at rates lower than developing countries undertaking the “Swiss Formula” cuts. Developing countries would have to undertake deeper tariff cuts in industrial and agricultural goods. Many of the poorer countries, which may not undertake tariff cuts through the Doha negotiations, would have to do so under the EPAs.
41. Global trade rules must recognize the vital role for governments in regulation and thus preserve or expand policy space so that each country can plan and manage its own economic development as well as mitigate the risks associated with the volatilities arising from integration of markets.
42. The use of conditionalities in loans and aid has often resulted in inappropriate trade and investment policies in many developing countries.
43. Commodity dependant developing countries have been facing complex problems ranging from price volatility to cooperate concentration. UNCTAD XII should provide practical solutions such as price stabilising mechanisms and regulating corporate activities. An expanded commodity programme for UNCTAD is needed.
44. Developing countries also face increasing non tariff barriers (NTBs) to their products in developed countries. A major problem is the use of unilateral measures. While safety and technical regulations are needed, they are also prone to be used for protectionist purposes. Moreover, most developing countries lack the capacity to keep up with increasing standards in developed country markets. Developed countries should not make use of unilateral and protectionist measures. Proper international standards should be established while developing countries must be assisted to negotiate these standards and in their implementation. UNCTAD should work on NTBs and assist developing countries in this regard.
45. South-South cooperation offers the potential for partnerships among developing countries that can be mutually beneficial. A few countries have experienced sustained high rates of growth and this has assisted other countries through higher demand for their commodity exports. However it is not certain that this process will be sustained, especially if there is a global recession. It is thus important that concrete measures for South-South cooperation be taken to strengthen and institutionalise this cooperation. Importantly, the General System of Trade Preferences (GSTP) mechanism should be strengthened to provide concrete results. However measures have to be taken to ensure that within South-South agreements, the weaker partners are given special and differential treatment, including sufficient incentives and preferences and are not asked to undertake liberalisation or implement policies that make them vulnerable to negative effects. UNCTAD should also play a role on promoting and assessing South-South cooperation and integration processes.

**VI. ENHANCING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT TO STRENGTHEN PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY,  
TRADE & INVESTMENT; MOBILISING RESOURCES & KNOWLEDGE FOR DEVELOPMENT  
(Sub-theme 3)**

46. Investment and investment flows do not behave in the manner claimed by those that try to justify globalization of finance, trade and production. The share of resources going into new productive investments has declined relative to the share going to financial and speculative ventures. Africa remains a net exporter of capital due to capital flight, even as it is dependent on foreign investment and aid flows.
47. In cases where developing countries have succeeded in having and using investment, the factors for their success include appropriate regulation, strategic direction and a direct if selective role for the state in the economy. In poorer countries there is lack of domestic private investment.
48. There are benefits and costs to foreign investment in developing countries. While the benefits are often projected in exaggerated ways, the costs are often not considered or factored in policy decisions. Developing countries should take a holistic view and make policies on the basis of assessments of costs and benefits, and UNCTAD should help in this process. In this context, what is also important are the terms of the contract between the state and the foreign investors. UNCTAD should help developing countries to improve these terms so as to increase their benefits. Also, the terms for foreign investment must be such that they do not affect the sovereignty of developing countries through limiting their policy space. Any international framework on investment should promote the rights and interests of host developing countries and ensure their policy space to regulate investments for the national and public interest. UNCTAD should also research into successful experiences of developing countries that have negotiated good terms in foreign investment contracts and disseminate these experiences.
49. Of major significance for successful development is the revival of the developmental state or a democratic state that develops and sustains the capacities of decision-makers and institutions to plan and navigate the necessary strategic course, based on an autonomous and endogenous agenda whose content has been determined by, and is an expression of, democratic political consensus for integrated and balanced development.
50. UNCTAD should counter-balance many of the instruments of the World Bank, OECD and donor agencies that lead to reforms of national investment and business laws that are designed to benefit foreign investors but erode or remove people's rights and the policy space of governments and parliamentarians.
51. Investment agreements often put the burden of costs on governments and their population, while leaving multinational enterprises (MNEs) free of any responsibility. In some cases these agreements include dispute settlement systems that allow a MNEs to launch legal cases for compensation against its host government. The new FTAs, including EPAs, include new investment liberalization with many new restrictions preventing governments from regulatory activities. Countries should review their investment policies that prioritize investors' rights above the rights of citizens. Withdrawing from bilateral investment treaties in favour of more balanced ones, is an option, as some developing countries have begun to do.

**VII. UNCTAD's DEVELOPMENT ROLE AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (Sub-theme 4)**

52. We believe UNCTAD has a unique role especially in these uncertain times. Its role as a support to developing countries in development issues and processes must be expanded.
53. UNCTAD was mandated by UNCTAD XI (eleven) to establish a task force on commodities. This has yet to be operationalised, and it should be enabled to do so as soon as possible.

54. UNCTAD's work on Commodities should be expanded to help developing countries to boost food production, to get better value for their commodities and to add value to their raw materials by processing and manufacturing. UNCTAD's expanded commodities work should include finding solutions at the international and national levels and by combining both old and innovative approaches so that the current boom in commodity prices leads to sustainable development and diversification of developing countries. UNCTAD work can focus on assisting developing countries to benefit from the opportunities arising from rising commodity prices as well as to avoid and contain the negative consequences of falling commodity prices when they do fall.
55. UNCTAD should also continue its work on analysing the development implications of North-South FTAs, following up on the Trade and Development Report 2007 which highlighted the imbalances in such agreements. Its work in this area and on bilateral investment agreements should be from the development perspective.
56. UNCTAD should revise its investment policy advice. It should help stop the "race to the bottom" regarding incentives for investments, including tax holidays. It should provide analysis on costs and benefits of foreign investment, and advice on policies to maximize benefits, while minimizing costs. It should also analyze more deeply the development implications of Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITS) and investment chapters and proposals in FTAs.
57. Independent research and alternative policy formulation by the UNCTAD Secretariat are necessary. UNCTAD must continue to develop and provide analysis and support in this respect, and should be given the means to provide analysis and policy advice to developing countries.
58. The UNCTAD Secretariat must be allowed to continue its research in an independent manner, so that it can produce objective research aimed at supporting development goals of developing countries. This will also add to diversity of views among the international agencies.
59. UNCTAD's research work makes an important contribution to knowledge about trade and development issues and historically has contributed to the definition of new trends. It is important that UNCTAD maintains its research independence. We urge member countries to provide UNCTAD with the means to continue its independent research work; we call on the management of UNCTAD to work to improve the dissemination of the organisation's research work and publications.
60. UNCTAD needs to expand its research work to include analysis of trade liberalization proposals and the impact on the quantity and quality of employment.
61. With a rising world population, changing climate conditions and new demands for agriculture products, agriculture's role is swiftly evolving. This is going to be a major challenge for sustainable development in the coming years. UNCTAD will need to help developing countries identify the best policies for sustainable agriculture to deal with these new challenges.
62. UNCTAD should study the policy options for developing countries for industrialisation, keeping in view the changing world conditions, and learning from the experiences of developing and developed countries.
63. The Commissions of UNCTAD perform an important function and should continue, in a more effective way. In addition a new Commission on Globalisation and Development Strategies should be established by UNCTAD XII.
64. UNCTAD should be given an expanded mandate on policy space, the concept and its application.
65. UNCTAD should be asked to expand its work on topical issues that are important to the world, including the food crisis, finance and development, climate change, migration, trade agreements, intellectual property, South-South cooperation. It must give us the development perspective and the way forward on these issues.

66. On climate change, UNCTAD can do work especially on the inter-relation between climate change and trade and development, with the perspective of strengthening developing countries to withstand the negative impact and effects of climate change on development, and also to ensure that proposals on climate change that relate to trade shall not adversely affect developing countries in an imbalanced way and is in line with the “common but differentiated responsibility” -principle.
67. Intellectual Property Rights and especially its implications for development has emerged as a major issue of interest and concern to the public worldwide. CSOs and developing country governments are calling for greater flexibilities for developing countries in the implementation of international obligations such as in the TRIPS agreement or agreements under WIPO. UNCTAD has an important role in highlighting the development dimension in the IPR debate and in assisting developing countries to formulate their IPR measures and legislation in a manner that is development oriented. UNCTAD has undertaken work on IPR, access to technology and development concerns for many years and its work in this area and with this development perspective should be strengthened.
68. An invigorated UNCTAD is necessary and it should not interpret its mandate restrictively. UNCTAD’s technical assistance should not be donor-driven but driven by the needs of recipients including civil society. It should for instance not be limited to implementing existing international frameworks such as WTO rules, but also creatively explore alternatives that are development oriented in a fast changing world.
69. The inter-governmental consensus building role of UNCTAD is important and should be given more emphasis and priority. This can complement the negotiations or discussions taking place in other fora. If taken more seriously, this inter-governmental function can make UNCTAD the venue for a revitalized North-South dialogue on development issues, and on the link between development with trade, finance and other issues.
70. UNCTAD, in collaboration with other United Nations specialized agencies, are examining the impact of the concentration of market power in the hands of a few firms on the international agriculture markets. Similar concentration of power can be found in manufacturing, like electronics and textiles and clothing, where subcontracting puts downward pressure on wages and working conditions for those at the end of the supply chain. Reliance on corporate social responsibility to meet these challenges is insufficient: UNCTAD should be given a mandate to explore how best to address market concentration through laws and policies both at the national and international levels.
71. UNCTAD should also play a monitoring role as regards assessments of MNEs’ role and impact on development. To this end, it could foster discussion between developing country Governments, other UN agencies, business, unions and NGOs.
72. UNCTAD should play a stronger role in ensuring the effective implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs for the decade 2001-2010, including through urging and assisting LDCs and their development partners.
73. The primacy of political sovereignty must be assured. Sovereignty over natural resources, commodities and biodiversity should be guaranteed. Although they are conflicting paradigms, both globalization and development are in essence political and political economy processes; the actual political balance weighing in one or another direction can often be decisive. UNCTAD’s activity in the cause of development and its collaboration with those working for development add up to a more favourable political balance.
74. Since UNCTAD X and the Bangkok Plan of Action, CSOs hope for a stronger role of UNCTAD and the UN in international social, environmental and economic policymaking have been continuously disappointed. UNCTAD’s role has been weakened rather than strengthened in recent years. This trend should be reversed. Although the role of UNCTAD is important, it continues to be deprived of the means to play a pivotal role. This trend questions the credibility of the global governance system. In the current context, with the crisis at

the WTO and BWIs, the need for an alternative forum is even more important. But this will require a joint effort by all members to engage towards designing a sustainable model of globalization.

75. We urge UNCTAD to work with civil society organizations, social movements, gender-based movements, and community-based groups on a permanent basis throughout the world. More participation of CSOs, in particular NGOs and trade unions in expert meetings and commission meetings, including as panellists as well as engagement with civil society in developing countries in technical cooperation activities and research is necessary. The research of CSOs should be recognized and used by UNCTAD. Hearings with civil society should engage the whole range of the UNCTAD Membership. UNCTAD has indeed a global role to play. It can contribute to sustainable political and social peace globally.
76. As already stated during UNCTAD XI, We hope that all member States will provide the necessary support and commitment to make UNCTAD strong enough to contribute to the political shaping of appropriate policies in the areas of sustainable development, social inclusion and gender equality all over the world.

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