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CREATING KNOWLEDGE TO END POVERTY

THE INAUGURAL BWPI GLOBAL POVERTY SUMMIT

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In 2000 the members of the United Nations capitalised on an unprecedented global consensus on the need to tackle poverty, and agreed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A year later the World Trade Organisation (WTO) launched the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), promising to correct asymmetries in previous trade negotiations and help promote growth and development for the poorest.

Yet, since then little has emerged to celebrate. Progress towards achieving the MDGs has been, at best, uneven. Considerable effort is now required to improve general rates of achievement. Likewise, the Doha negotiations are stalled and currently promise to yield little that contributes meaningfully to the alleviation of poverty and the promotion of economic development.

Mindful of the need for urgent action, BWPI brought together more than 50 of the world's leading poverty and trade experts to discuss how progress could be made on the MDGs and in the DDA. They gathered in Johannesburg between 16 and 19 January 2011 for the inaugural BWPI Global Poverty Summit. The consensus reached produced two statements on the way ahead: the Johannesburg statements on the Millennium Development Goals and the Doha Development Agenda. We summarise the key findings of each below.

The MDGs

Experience since 2000 has shown the value of the MDGs. A review of performance since the goals were agreed suggests two immediate priorities: (i) reducing maternal mortality; and (ii) calling on governments, in rich and poor countries, and international institutions to take responsibility for failures.

The world now needs to start a new process of consultation, leading to the formulation of a new set of goals to be adopted in 2015. These would build on the MDGs, modify the goals chosen, and reflect new global concerns. These deliberations need to ensure participation

from the poorest and most excluded, as well as civil society and governments. But it must be the United Nations that agrees on the chosen goals and initiates the deliberations.

The DDA

The history of trade negotiations strongly suggests that the conclusion of a trade round for the sake of urgency alone is not acceptable. The DDA should not be concluded on the grounds of what has so far been achieved. WTO Members must remain faithful to the DDA's original mandate, and redouble their efforts to place development at the heart of the negotiations. The task of enhancing the contribution of trade to the development of the poorest and most vulnerable will not halt with the conclusion of the round.

Agreement in the following areas is essential to ensure an equitable outcome of the negotiations:

- an 'early harvest' for the Least Developed Countries, including duty free and quota free access into all industrial country markets;

- increasing technical capacity building in developing countries and a package of aid designed to promote trade;
- creating space for developing countries to pursue industrial policies;
- securing meaningful market openings, including tackling non-tariff barriers;
- conducting the negotiations on the basis of a fair and equitable exchange of concessions;
- reforming the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspect of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) and the agricultural domestic support systems in operation in the developed countries;
- agreeing adequate safeguards to address issues of rural development, food security and livelihood concerns in developing countries.



The Doha Development Agenda taskforce.

Key policy points

- The UN must begin a consultation process to formulate a new set of Global Development Goals in time for 2015.
- The DDA must be concluded in a timely manner, respecting the original negotiating mandate, and deliver meaningful outcomes in the areas of greatest importance to developing countries.

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Resources

The Johannesburg Statement on the Millennium Development Goals is available online at: <http://media.povertydialogue.org/2011/01/Statement-on-the-Millennium-Development-Goals-final1.pdf>

The Johannesburg Statement on the Doha Development Agenda is available online at: <http://media.povertydialogue.org/2011/01/Statement-on-the-Doha-Development-Agenda-final.pdf>

More information on the Summit is available online through the web portal: www.povertydialogue.org

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