

PRESS RELEASE

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WTO Deal risks making the global economic crises worse

As the 7th Ministerial Meeting of the WTO takes place in Geneva the WTO is facing major opposition globally

The meeting of world leaders in Geneva for the 7th WTO Ministerial Conference comes to a close today. Comhlámh, the Irish Association for Returned Development Workers has expressed its concern that with no serious change in approach, the agenda pursued by the WTO could exacerbate the global financial crisis and push more people worldwide into poverty. The concerns expressed by Comhlámh are echoed by civil society groups and global justice campaigners from around the world.

While no deal is expected to emerge from the meeting in Geneva it is likely crucial world players will issue a statement calling for a speedy conclusion of this round of negotiations. However Fleachta Phelan, Campaigns and Policy Officer with Comhlámh cautions that the current deal on the table could have disastrous implications for developing countries. "We believe that the impact and fallout from the global financial crisis necessitates a WTO Turnaround and a complete change in approach."

"We are calling on the WTO to abandon the failed model of free trade and endless liberalisation which has contributed to the global economic and financial chaos in recent years, and embrace a new vision of economic development and trade which is just, environmentally sustainable, stable, and spreads the benefits of international trade more equally", she added.

The current round of talks at the World Trade Organisation, called the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), promised to put the interests of developing countries at the heart of the Round. However developing countries have seen the continued erosion of the development aspect of the proposed agreements, as rich countries push for a deal that suits their interest, rather than one which would address the urgent needs of developing countries.

An Irish Delegation, led by Minister of State for Trade and Commerce Billy Kelleher, and including officials from the Ministries for Trade, Agriculture and Irish Aid, attended the Ministerial to represent Ireland.

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