

PETITION

To the Honourable the President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled: the petition of the undersigned draws the attention of the Senate to the following matters concerning the World Trade Organisation.

The Uruguay Round Agreements and the establishment of the World Trade Organisation in 1995 were proclaimed as a means of enhancing the creation of global prosperity, promoting the well-being of all member states and encouraging sustainable development.

These claims have not been met. Instead, the Uruguay Round Agreements have opened markets for the benefit of transnational corporations often at the expense of national development, cultural diversity, the rights of workers, farmers, indigenous people, women, children and the environment.

Further, the rules and structures of the WTO are undemocratic compared with other international institutions. The United Nations has public debates, majority voting, and non-government observers. The WTO has no public debate, no majority voting and no non government participation apart from business. Agreements are drafted by the governments of the wealthiest countries.

The 1999 Seattle meeting of the WTO collapsed not only because of demonstrations outside the meeting but because developing country governments which were excluded from the drafting process refused negotiations on a new agenda in which they had no voice.

We the undersigned oppose further negotiations now being proposed for 2001, especially those which would bring new areas under the WTO regime, such as investment, forestry, government procurement, competition policy and public services such as health and education.

Your petitioners ask the Senate to support:

- 1) A moratorium on any negotiations which expand the scope and power of the WTO
- 2) A comprehensive and open review of existing WTO agreements and structures by member governments. Such a review should address the WTO's impact on marginalised communities, development, democracy, environment, health, and human rights and should be conducted with civil society's full participation.
- 3) A Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia's relationship with the WTO similar to the recent inquiry on the UN by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

NAME (print)

ADDRESS (print)

SIGNATURE

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Please return to AFTINET c/- PIAC Level 1, 46-48 York St, Sydney 2000, by 31 August 2000.