

at Cancún was seen as boiling down to—variously—inadequate preparation (despite active ministerial engagement prior to the conference), a failure of leadership by the Chair and/or the major players, significant gaps in the level of ambition of the different players, and the inability of both traditional and emerging alliances to broker consensus.

Yet, while the divisions and dynamics that led to the failure at Cancún were neither entirely unprecedented nor unanticipated,<sup>5</sup> the apparent severity of the frictions that brought the conference to an untimely and untidy close left trade policy practitioners and observers shaken and even dismayed.

It was against this backdrop, with prospects for a successful Round seemingly at a new low—and the direction of next steps highly uncertain, even as efforts were being mounted to restart the negotiations—that the Ottawa roundtable discussion took place.

### **Prospects for the Doha Development Agenda Post-Cancún: Thematic Summary of a Roundtable Discussion**

#### *The WTO post-Cancún: hiatus in negotiations revisited*

History repeats, it was noted: we have yet another hiatus in a multilateral negotiation. Taking a longer-term historical perspective, there are two views of the Round: (a) fundamental shifts have transformed the negotiations; (b) we're in a normal cycle.

In support of the first view, it was noted that:

- The dynamics have changed with a shift in the power structure from the EU-US to include the BRICs<sup>6</sup>.
- Coalitions/alliances have been rearranged; the Quad and the Cairns Group are "as good as dead" in one view, while new groups are forming. The key geopolitical development was the organization by Brazil and others of a bloc of developing

---

<sup>5</sup> These dynamics were anticipated in, for example, Razeen Sally, *Whither the World Trading System? Trade Policy Reform, the WTO, and Prospects for the New Round*, Institute for Global Dialogue Occasional Paper No. 26, January 2003. Available at <http://www.timbro.se/pdf/whither.pdf>—accessed 08 September 2004.

<sup>6</sup> An acronym for the emerging markets of Brazil, Russia, India and China, although in this case Russia does not play, not yet being a WTO Member.