

Arming the trade policy community with a compelling case for further liberalization is thus a clear analytical priority issue. Over and above what it would mean for ministers, improved analysis would serve to inform more meaningful communications efforts by governments and the pro-trade lobby more generally.

The weakness of the government message has been labelled a "communications deficit." It has been argued that this deficit reflects the primacy of economic variables such as "trade" and "growth" over the ultimate objective of growth and improved well-being.²⁵

This particular weakness in communications is not unrelated to several other unfortunate tendencies in modern economic dialogue, including the primacy given exports over imports in trade policy communications: exports are of course the basis for jobs but, in economic terms, a country exports in order to obtain the foreign earnings to import. Imports are the real objective of trade, yet this point is rarely made in "selling" trade liberalization.²⁶

from a new round are considerable in gross terms, but the case for gains net of adjustment and other costs, including opportunity costs of pursuing alternative policy initiatives (e.g. technology dissemination) has simply not been made. Finally, while it was generally recognized that the key to the new round was a good offer (including market access and technical support) to the developing countries least integrated into the multilateral system, the adequacy of the package was never convincingly demonstrated.

²⁵ This observation is due to my colleague David Lee at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. He emphasizes that it is not enough to assert an indirect (e.g. "trickle down") benefit; rather, the detailed "working through" of the linkages and the handling of trade-offs need to be laid out for the dialogue to be meaningful to today's discussants.

²⁶ This point is developed in a study on the benefits of imports currently being developed by Clea Coronel of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. A second example, which is of tangential relevance here, is the triumph of national accounting language over common sense in everyday discourse. This has resulted in the arid accounting category of "consumption" turned into the idea of people being "consumers." In turn, this has led to the portrayal of all that individuals (or households) do as "consumption," whether it be enjoyment of the fresh air in a natural park (paid for by a ticket at the