

argued—the slogan used to be “trade not aid”, but with the increasingly complex rules that are emerging and that necessitate additional trade-related technical assistance (TRTA), it is becoming “trade *and* aid.” At the same time, developing country trade representatives in Geneva are not those with development authority, nor are they necessarily well plugged into their countries’ development agendas. By the same token, some at the workshop questioned how seriously the diplomatic process emerging in Geneva in imitation of UNCTAD was to be taken? Nonetheless, others observed, poverty reduction is now, for better or worse, in the WTO.

More deeply, some feared that the Round is set up for failure, if it cannot deliver on the very difficult objective of development. Development is not very well understood, with views about appropriate approaches differing considerably. Practitioners have found it necessary to approach development issues on a case-by-case basis, tailoring programs to individual circumstances and adjusting the conditions tied to assistance from one agreement to the next as things are found to work or not to work. As was pointed out, this is not exactly an approach suitable for an organization trying to set multilateral rules.

And more deeply still, some thought that the development theme serves to further muddy understanding of the purpose of the Round. There is after all no consensus on how to interpret development objectives in terms of trade negotiations. For one thing, trade deals involve a reciprocal exchange of benefits; but development does not—who is on the other side of the deal? And while it might not come as a surprise that developing countries want to change the system—they did not, after all, get what was promised in the Uruguay Round—what does this mean for the direction of change? Insofar as the discussion about making the trade system more development-friendly is ultimately about implementation of Uruguay Round commitments and/or introduction of Special and Differential measures, it is not necessarily about liberalization—and in the view of some not even pro-development. In the latter view, the contribution of trade to development boils down to the traditional agenda (merchandise trade, especially agriculture and textiles)