

Moreover, the lessons learned from Seattle concerning the WTO (including its organization, capacities, procedures and interfaces with member governments, other international organizations, civil society and the general public) constitute important inputs to consideration of the various aspects of institutional and policy coherence in the world of trade. However, even if the Ministerial had not failed, the issues facing the international trade policy community would still be essentially the same – whether in the full glare of the public spotlight as currently or papered over through "constructive ambiguity" in the drafting of the communiqué and decision documents.

The exegesis of the causes of the failure ("whodunit") focusses on catalysts and accidental factors – the difficulties and delays from logistics; the long absence of executive leadership in the WTO during the preparatory process, which contributed to a poor starting point; the organized opposition from a broad swath of civil society organizations (CSOs); the disastrous atmospherics emerging from the media coverage; the absence of visible support from the business community (not to mention from CSOs whose concerns with development might have been thought to translate into support for new negotiations that were shaping up as a "development round"); the "bureaucratic" nature of the agenda, which may have explained the lack of interest of the business community;¹ and the many complications for the United States as host (which included the timing of the meeting vis-à-vis the domestic electoral cycle, the absence of fast-track authority, and so forth). In this context, the more fundamental difficulties proved

¹ The "bureaucratic" label is not meant to impugn the importance of the issues to the longer-term health of the trade system. Rather, it is meant to contrast the slow, institution-building nature of these issues, and the long gestation periods for development and implementation of solutions, with the rapid pace of change in the modern business environment, which does not allow corporations to wait for the working out of issues in the fullness of time and thus leads them to find other ways to achieve their ends – as indeed is attested by the rapid expansion of trade and investment notwithstanding the turmoil in the rule-making area.