Introduction

With the benefit of now a half-decade's worth of perspective, it is clear that the Doha Development Agenda was pre-destined to delay and quite possibly to modest results.

Trade agreements have commercial objectives; but the Doha Round was launched in good measure as an international political response to 9/11. At the launch date of what became known as the Doha Development Agenda in November 2001, the commitments of the Uruguay Round had not been fully implemented, let alone absorbed. The technical groundwork for a new Round had not been laid; movement on the built-in agenda mandated in the agreement that concluded the Uruguay Round had been negligible. And the major looming challenges for world trade were to absorb the impact of the then imminent accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) of China and the expiry of the textiles and clothing agreement.

Contextually, the Doha Round was launched at a point in time when the so-called Washington Consensus on economic policy was unraveling in the wake of a stunning series of emerging market crises that had begun with the Mexican financial crisis in 1994. Governance issues were literally exploding with anti-globalization protests at one international venue after another.

And two of the key issues in the Round were to be development and agriculture; as one indicator of the difficulties posed by these issues, the need to address them in the multilateral trade system was first noted in a report to Members of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) back in 1958 by a panel of leading experts chaired by Gottfried Haberler. Four rounds have been completed since then; while some disciplines were adopted as part of the Uruguay Round outcome, agriculture and development remain major issues.

Complicating matters was the fact that some developing countries had come to feel that they had been, in the words of one observer at the Roundtable, "ambushed" in the Uruguay Round and were seeking a rebalancing of the results of that Round (which would of course not be in the interests of con-