

redress that bias by shifting the balance of benefits and, further, to situate the DDA in the broader development program with the IMF/World Bank. From the perspective of the developing countries, the interpretation was to redress their grievances with the Uruguay Round (e.g., limited trade gains for the poor countries and some losses due to TRIPs; the West had not lived up to technical assistance commitments). Some views were harsher: for the developing countries, it was all about special and differential treatment (S&DT) measures and defending eroding preference positions.⁷ However, in the view of several observers, the heavy emphasis on development is now a major complicating factor in identifying the way ahead on the Doha Round.

Accordingly, some find grounds for optimism in the collapse at Cancún in the sense that this has set up a necessary cleansing of an overloaded agenda. A pared-down agenda that might emerge from the hiatus the WTO process subsequently entered might well prove to be more feasible. The past failures from over-reaching (labour at Seattle, the Singapore issues at Cancún) show that this is a risk for the WTO.

A complementary view from a sharply different perspective held that it is not so problematic that the process is not moving forward because the system is overextended as it is—especially the dispute settlement mechanism that is reaching deep into the economic, political and social institutions of sovereign states. For the US audience, especially conservatives concerned about sovereignty, there is a red flag in the parallel drawn recently in the press between the US bowing to the WTO decision on steel and *Marbury vs. Madison*, the 1803 decision that established the Supreme Court as the final arbiter of the US Constitution, able to force Congress and the executive branch to comply with its rulings.⁸ Thus we are caught up, according to this view, on

⁷ But whether S&D is pro-development was questioned: S&D frees poor countries (unconstructively in this view) from adopting reforms that the West has already adopted and thinks would be good for the developing countries.

⁸ Note: the reference is to David E. Sanger, "Bush decision puts steel in WTO's backbone", *New York Times*, December 5, 2003.