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3 October 2013

WTO PUBLIC FORUM: 1-3 OCTOBER 2013

Day 3: Public Forum looks at Bali issues

Workshop 10: [The right to food through food security stocks: a development-oriented outcome at Bali?](#)

The workshop debated the compatibility between the negotiations on agriculture in the WTO and the right to food in the Human Rights Council and what immediate changes should be made to comply with human rights.

The moderator, Ms Deborah James of "Our World Is Not for Sale Network", said agriculture is a key pillar of the Doha Round reduction in distorting subsidies which was the basis for developing countries agreeing to launch the new round. However, the European Union and the United States continue to subsidize agriculture. She said the human right to food and food security has been raised in other international contexts. The question is "How can we make trade rules work for the poorest among us which are surely those who don't have enough food to eat?"

Mr Jayant Dasgupta, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the WTO, said that non-trade concerns such as food security and developing countries are an integral part of the agricultural reform project in the Agriculture Agreement as set out in the preamble. However, the only actual provision is Annex 2 (Green Box). Provisions are designed for what the situation in Europe was at the time of the conclusion of the Agreement and do not work in other situations. He said developing countries need public stock programmes to provide domestic food aid (Green Box and always allowed), to store up food for use during emergencies, and to prevent food price volatility. Income support programmes are not feasible for developing countries. A price guarantee is the option in the developing country context. Only 16 developing countries have Amber Box (out of 100 developing country members) entitlement; others have the 10 per cent product specific *de minimis* entitlement. He suggested the following solutions: revise the external reference price to a more updated figure (like paragraph 7 of the Green Box) or use a deflator when comparing the administered price to the external reference price.

Mr Jacques Berthalot, Agricultural Policies Analyst, Solidarité, said it would be absurd to put in the Amber Box the gap between administered prices and the reference prices because an administered price alone cannot support the domestic price without all of the other mechanisms, such as import protection, export subsidies, production quotas, land set asides and domestic and foreign food aid. This "fake" price support allows the European Union and the United States to shift the subsidies from amber to blue to green without actually changing subsidy levels. These fake supports now represent high proportions (90 per cent) of developed country AMS. He also suggested adjusting the AMS to take inflation into account or to even use the average OECD inflation rate, where wheat AMS for India would be \$11.8/ton or only \$206 million against the AMS limit. He said US food aid amounted to \$107 billion while that of India \$9.4 billion. There are 80 million US beneficiaries while India has 475 million, or 6.3 times larger per beneficiary than in the United States. As most US food aid is in "SNAP" which individuals buy in any shop and not through a public procurement, why should developing countries have to account for the difference in the acquisition price and the reference price and not the United States? He said all domestic food aid for all members should be in the Green Box.