

WEDO Primer: Women & Trade **November 1999**

*Decision-making and governance

*Economic equity

*Health and safety

*Indigenous knowledge

A Gender Agenda for the World Trade Organization

The World Trade Organization (WTO) evolved from the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), an agreement between the architects of the Bretton Woods institutions—the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). GATT included a provision for establishing the International Trade Organization (ITO), a UN specialized agency that would regulate global trade. The ultimate goal was free trade with the objective of full employment for all.

For various reasons, the ITO initiative failed. However, over time, the GATT was expanded and given more authority even though in legal terms, it was only a temporary organization. The result has been the creation of an international trading system without constraints and with a far greater authority than was originally intended. Moreover, its objective has changed from trade that would result in full employment, to trade for the sake of trade.

The GATT has expanded trade into all aspects of our lives. This encroachment has occurred incrementally, beginning with rules to reduce tariffs for special categories of products. The GATT followed with rules to eradicate tariffs, then to eradicate non-tariff barriers to trade. These include food safety laws, product standards, the use of tax incentives and investment policy as well as any other domestic laws that affect trade. It then wrote rules to cover trade related investment, trade related intellectual property and health and safety standards for products being traded.

The WTO was established on January 1, 1995 upon the completion of the 1986-1994 Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. It has since become the primary regulator of international trade with 135 member nations and 32 others that are seeking membership. The WTO has executive authority over GATT and several other multilateral agreements. It also has the legislative power to compel member states to strike down national laws and programs it deems "barriers" to free trade.

As the WTO has expanded its authority, its rules and regulations have come into conflict with local and national laws, and intergovernmental agreements. In every case where such conflict has occurred, the WTO has prevailed. Thus, shrimp and tuna can be imported into the United States whether or not they have been caught in nets that protect turtles and other fish, as specified by national regulations; hormone treated beef can be imported into the European Union despite European concerns about the potentially negative effects on human health; and quotas that protect Caribbean banana farmers exporting to the EU have been deemed by the WTO inconsistent with its rules.

A major issue of concern lies in the direction in which trade and finance ministers are steering the WTO. It is a course that is unraveling the gains made over the last decade in other intergovernmental meetings at global and regional levels, including intergovernmental agreements that secure human, worker and women's rights and environmental, health and safety standards, as well as national legislation designed to advance local economic, environmental, social and cultural priorities.

It has been the trend in international environmental and social agreements to introduce new moral ethics and concerns as global norms. But, the WTO is moving in the opposite direction, replacing the still youthful architecture of economic, social and environmental governance with a new construction of trade globalization.

Introduction

Global economic and trade policies are not "gender neutral." Women comprise 70 percent of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor. Worldwide, they bear the brunt of economic and financial transition and crisis caused by market forces and globalization. Yet, women's issues are not considered in trade liberalization policy-making and analysis. The failure of governments and intergovernmental organizations to formulate and evaluate trade policies from a gender perspective has exacerbated women's economic inequity.

Women's work, whether waged or unwaged, recorded or not in national accounting systems, sustains all societies and merits recognition in trade liberalization policies. While there is a clear need for more research on the impact of globalization and free trade on communities, the studies that now exist show free trade and market liberalization only serve to increase women's multiple responsibilities.¹ Furthermore, governments, through the World Trade Organization, are eroding women's right to equitable development as established in various intergovernmental agreements during the last decade. These include ground breaking accords reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, Rio de Janeiro, 1992), World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, Cairo, 1994), World Summit on Social Development (WSSD, Copenhagen, 1995), Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the World Food Summit (Rome, 1996).

The 1992 United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) safeguards the ownership rights of keepers of indigenous knowledge, mainly women. However, the TRIPs agreements of the World Trade Organization entitle transnational corporations to "own" and patent this knowledge and to use it for commercial purposes. The WTO may override international environmental agreements that regulate trade in toxics,² including the Basel convention ban on exporting hazardous wastes from industrialized nations to developing countries and the Montreal protocol on ozone depleting chemicals. The Beijing Declaration reaffirms the equal rights of women and men as stated in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. Adopted by 189 nations, the Beijing Declaration upholds "the involvement of women in economic and social development and the full and equal participation of women and men as agents and beneficiaries of people-centered sustainable development."³ Women's right to economic and social equity was also endorsed at ICPD and WSSD. These perspectives must inform the debate and outcomes of the World Trade Organization's Third Ministerial Meeting in Seattle (November 30-December 3, 1999) and all future discussions of trade issues.

This primer⁴ describes how, in the name of trade, governments, through the WTO, are undermining the gains women have made-gains endorsed by those same governments-in governance, economic equity, health and the environment. It describes the consequences of WTO trade policies on women and their families and proposes gender-responsive approaches for change. WEDO offers this gender perspective to raise awareness and to encourage the formulation of trade policies that are more responsive to women's needs in the ongoing trade negotiations at the WTO.

Male Domination in WTO Arbitration Process:

The Dispute Settlement Body

The DSB, which arbitrates disputes between members, is dominated by men. All seven members appointed to the Appellate Body are men. Of the 159 trade policy experts selected for the roster of dispute panelists, 147 are men and 12 are women.

Source: *Public Citizen Global Trade Watch*, www.tradewatch.org

WEDO's Gender Agenda for the WTO

Mandate inclusion of women and gender in economic decision-making and governance
Strengthen women's capacity to attain economic equity
Protect women's control over their health and safety
Prevent TNC exploitation of women's indigenous knowledge and plant genetic resources

1. Mandate inclusion of women and gender in economic decision-making and governance

Global governance should be democratic, transparent, accountable, equitable and gender sensitive. The WTO does not measure up, nor does it seek to build on existing intergovernmental agreements and commitments. A democratic WTO

would promote a system of global governance based on women's active participation, a voice for civil society and equal rights for member nations.

The WTO is alone among intergovernmental organizations in its failure to recognize a gender dimension to its policies. Throughout the last decade, global economic institutions have been working to incorporate a gender perspective in their procedures and activities. In 1997, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolved to mainstream a gender perspective in its work by "assessing the implications for women and men of any planned actions, including legislation, policies or programs in any area and at all levels." The following year at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting, gender was acknowledged as a cross-cutting theme in the design and implementation of economic policy.

The World Bank is making gender a focal point in its operational, research and policy work in poverty reduction and economic management.⁵ The WTO is also required to work with international standard-setting bodies to develop technical regulations, draw on international trade policy experts as dispute panelists and communicate with intergovernmental organizations, like the UN, where appropriate.

In addition to its lack of a gender perspective, the WTO is almost exclusively a male domain. This is not to say that men cannot have a gender perspective or that all women bring such a perspective to the table. But the degree of male exclusivity makes it far less likely that the WTO will be presented with women's diverse experiences.

Unlike other intergovernmental organizations that have gradually opened their doors to civil society, the WTO does not recognize NGOs as observers or consultants to the General Council or its subsidiary bodies. Consultations, discussions, negotiations and decision-making are closed to non-members.⁶ This unfairly restricts the participation of civil society in WTO meetings, even though it will be affected by the outcomes.

But not all non-government actors find it hard to gain access to WTO processes. TNCs and industry lobby groups are able to influence decisions at WTO meetings as members of government delegations. These actors have a unique entry point to decision-making in the WTO, both because of "old boys" networks and because of shared interests between business and industry lobby groups on one hand, and trade representatives on the other ([see box](#)). The revolving door of economic officers moving from jobs in the private sector to the public sector and back again creates a closed network among some key players in the trade arena.

Neither are all governments equal at the WTO. In principle, all governments are members and have one vote, but wealthy, developed governments can often exert greater influence over decisions. This occurs in "Green Room" negotiations, which are closed bilateral talks between major trading partners. When two major trading partners reach an agreement in a Green Room, they set a tariff for a product or a trade rule that protects their economic or political interests. Under the principle of Most Favored Nation status, which grants equal treatment to all members of the WTO, a trade deal that benefits two major parties results in a tariff level that applies to all other members. This occurs regardless of the effects it may have on the economies of other countries.

The Revolving Door of Corporate: Executive and Official Trade Positions

- Edmund Pratt, former CEO and currently Chairman Emeritus of Pfizer, attended numerous GATT negotiations as the official advisor to the U.S. Trade Representative. He was a leader in the U.S. private sector campaign to include Intellectual Property in the GATT Uruguay Round.
- Peter Sutherland, Director-General of the WTO, is now Co-Chairman of BP Amoco, Chairman and Managing Director of Goldman Sachs International, UK.
- Arthur Dunkel, a former GATT Director-General, is now a registered WTO dispute panelist, a board member of Nestlé and Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce Commission on International Trade and Investment, which is lobbying for an investment agreement in WTO.

Source: Corporate Europe Observer, Issue 4, www.xs4all.nl/~ceo/observer1/index.html

WEDO Says

- Women should be equally represented in WTO decision-making bodies and governments should work for gender balance in their WTO delegations.
- The WTO should conduct a gender assessment of the effects of trade liberalization on women, highlighting harmful policies and building on areas where women have benefited from increased trade.
- Governments should incorporate the views of civil society organizations in the formulation of national trade policies and in all issues and options under discussion at the WTO.

2. Strengthen women's capacity to attain economic equity

Women face customary and legal barriers that limit their access to resources and their ability to participate equally in economic activities and decision-making processes. Government programs such as procurement, training for women entrepreneurs and access to credit help overcome these barriers, but if the government procurement agreement is extended, existing set-asides for women and minorities could be eradicated. Women's livelihoods, already weakened by globalization policies, will worsen if the WTO agreement on agriculture is extended to remove protections.

Women-owned businesses comprise between 20 and 30 percent of the global business population and are fast becoming a global economic force. Governments and bankers have found that women who own their own businesses are more likely than men to repay their loans and to invest profits in their families and communities. In 1999, women-owned businesses in the U.S. employed some 27.5 million people-nearly twice the combined number of employees at the 50 biggest corporations in the world.⁷ As noted in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: "When they gain access to and control over capital, credit and other resources, technology and training, women increase production, marketing and income for sustainable development."⁸

Government programs to increase women's access to credit have been established in many countries, including the U.S., the United Kingdom, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa and Uganda. These programs cover a range of activities from affirmative action on education to credit and training in entrepreneurial and management skills.

The Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), an initiative of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), proposed increasing the rights of international investors and diminishing the rights of local and national governments to impose any conditions on these investors. OECD attempts to introduce the MAI were halted following NGO campaigns and a public outcry worldwide. Efforts are now being made to integrate a modified MAI into the WTO. If these efforts are successful, affirmative action programs and national laws might be threatened,⁹ leaving women worldwide without the "step up" they need to overcome economic inequity.

Even more worrisome for women entrepreneurs is a move to extend the current WTO Government Procurement Agreement. Almost all governments and their agencies buy locally when procuring such goods and services as food or paper supplies for state-run institutions including schools, hospitals or prisons. In most developing countries, government contracts can amount to as much as 30 percent of total GDP and are thus a major factor in local economic life.

For global corporations, the area of government contracts represents a large and untapped market. As far as transnational corporations (TNCs) are concerned, they should be able to bid for, say, a contract to provide food for public schools in Peru or the contract to supply paper to the Department of the Interior in China. But while there are short-term gains when TNCs are awarded government contracts-prices may go down, for example-in the long run, local suppliers will be out of business and the local economy weakened.

At present, many governments and local authorities use procurement practices as a way to promote social and economic development. Many government procurement programs attach additional conditions designed to raise environmental and social standards and women's rights. In the U.S., for example, the federal government allocates five percent of the total value of all prime contracts and subcontracts to women-owned small businesses. In 1997, this allocation was worth US\$5.7 billion. More than half these contracts went to small businesses owned by women of color.¹⁰

From time to time, national governments and local authorities have also used procurement as a channel for communities to achieve other social and environmental ends, not just in their own backyards, but internationally. For example, the U.S. state of Massachusetts passed a law to discourage companies from doing business in Myanmar (formerly Burma) to protest human rights abuses there. The "Burma Law" is based on the same law in the U.S. that allowed various U.S. states to apply sanctions on South Africa, and so played a role in ending apartheid. If government procurement comes under WTO rules, such initiatives could be deemed non-tariff barriers to trade.

The concept of meeting national goals through government procurement set-asides for women is new. Related programs to assist women are in their early stages. National procurement programs have not solved the problem of gender equity, but they have provided valuable and secure business opportunities for both women and minorities. They need to be developed and nurtured—the lessons learned and transferred—not halted in their infancy.

Women in developing countries are the main producers of food within the subsistence economy. Free trade and structural adjustment have already weakened this sector and endangered women's livelihoods. This situation can only worsen if a proposal to extend the WTO agreement on agriculture, by removing protections and subsidies, is adopted.

In principle, the shift to commodity agriculture could be advantageous to women farmers if they are able to respond as entrepreneurs. In practice, there are gender differences that severely restrict women from responding like men to the potential advantages of trade liberalization, including lack of access to credit, technology and land.¹¹ While some large-scale producers have benefited from measures aimed to galvanize the export sector, small producers, of whom women constitute a majority, have not improved their productivity and in many cases have lost some of their former prerogatives.

The WTO agreement on agriculture pressures countries to buy their food from countries where it is most cheaply produced. TNCs win again: most of the world's food is controlled by just a handful of companies. Family farmers and subsistence farmers have seen their livelihoods destroyed or put under threat, as a result, while consumers have not benefited in price or quality. Women displaced from agricultural work have been pushed into low-paying manufacturing work in Export Processing Zones where TNCs are not required to abide by local labor standards, women are paid 20 to 50 percent less than men¹² and jobs are insecure. As the international trading system has engulfed rural economies, women have borne the brunt of the ensuing upheaval.

CASE STUDY: Women Entrepreneurs Benefit From Government Contracts in South Africa

The South African Technology for Women in Business (TWIB) program was launched in 1998 to help protect small enterprises, particularly those owned by women, from the impact of globalization. Access to technology by women in business was identified as central to the creation of opportunities for competitive women-owned businesses. Within two years, a number of South Africa's business development service providers and parastatals have offered special programs and conditions for women entrepreneurs. Telkom, the telecommunications giant, offers small business women assistance on tender procedures. It also exempts women in business from paying the customary performance guarantee, a condition for being awarded a tender. Such programs are at risk if the government procurement agreement is extended. *Source: "The Technology for Women in Business Programmes in South Africa," by Matfobhi Riba in Trade, Sustainable Development and Gender, UNCTAD, 1999*

WEDO Says

- Governments should conduct systematic assessments of the impacts of globalization on women and use these to create more positive trade policies.
- Governments should retain the right to advance local and national, social and economic goals, including programs designed to increase opportunities for women in business. Any extended Procurement Agreement should preserve the right of governments to set standards that protect women, communities, culture and the environment and extend set-asides for women and minorities. If military expenditures are exempted on the grounds of national security, this exemption should also be applied to the environment, the domestic economy and families.

- Governments should oppose monopolization of food production and enact policies to protect women's livelihoods in family and community-based sustainable agriculture.

3. Protect women's control over their health and safety

Women should have control over their health and the health of their families, and they are entitled to consumer protections enshrined in national and international legislation. However, WTO dispute settlement rulings have undermined these efforts. Instead, some governments, through the WTO, propose broadening the scope of these rulings. Such a move would prevent consumers from obtaining product information, reducing women's capacity to care for their own health and the health of their children.

Women's health and the health of their families have been protected in national environmental, health and safety standards and in international agreements that support the Precautionary Principle. This principle states that when there are threats of serious or irreversible damage to the environment or to human health, the lack of scientific certainty on any particular subject should not be used to postpone protection measures. This is explicitly stated in the Earth Summit's Agenda 21, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Beijing Platform for Action.

The WTO Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary Agreement (SPS) requires nations to abide by international food safety standards as approved by Codex Alimentarius, a self-standing body of government-appointed experts outside of the United Nations system. If national health and safety laws and standards are inconsistent within Codex's obscure technical framework, they are presumed to be non-tariff barriers to trade. Moreover, the burden of proof is reversed: it becomes the state's responsibility to prove scientifically that the product in question is unsafe and that the specific regulations are therefore necessary.

Scientists with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warn that genetic engineering could make foods toxic through increased levels of natural toxicants, the appearance of new toxicants and a higher concentration of toxic substances in the environment. Scientists worldwide have called for a moratorium on the commercialization of genetically engineered crops and animal feed. Increasingly, scientific evidence shows that such products could prove hazardous to biodiversity, food safety, human and animal health.¹³ Some of the long-term health effects may include pesticide residues in the body and increased immunity to antibiotics. Proponents of genetic engineering have been unable to prove how the potential benefits outweigh the potential costs to the health of consumers.

Codex, under the SPS Agreement, has not set risk levels for GMOs or hormone additives. Governments are restricted from labeling genetically modified products or those that contain hormone additives. Codex's risk assessment process does not consider the differential impact of various food additives on healthy women, those in poor health or those who are pregnant or lactating. Further, the case of Gerber in Guatemala shows the power of the new trade rules to override national health laws, even when these follow international agreements ([see case study](#)). Without information about the potential health risks from chemicals and GMOs in food, all consumers are being forced to put their health in the hands of international corporations.

It's All in the Genes

THE GMO DEBATE: Genetically engineered foods contain organisms that have been modified and that were not previously a part of the human food supply. These foods are not subject to rigorous pre-market safety testing. In the global debate, some scientists are vehemently against genetic engineering, while others proclaim its benefits. Fundamental questions could be better resolved by fostering public debate. In any case, the application of genetic engineering should be delayed until all fundamental questions are resolved. Corporations, however, have a vested interest in speedy application and are unwilling to wait while there are patents to be obtained and profits to be made.

BEEF HORMONES AND HUMAN HEALTH: When the European Union placed a ban on imports of beef from the U.S., based on the Precautionary Principle, the bloc was relying on a growing body of evidence that natural and synthetic hormones are linked to rising incidence of cancer. The U.S. beef industry lobbied for action from WTO along with the E.U.'s primary biotech lobbyists. Under WTO rules, scientific proof that beef hormones are a direct threat to human health had to be provided, but the beef hormone producers were not required to prove their product is safe for human consumption. Because the E.U. could not prove conclusively that hormone-fed beef was hazardous to human health, the WTO Dispute Panel ruled that the ban was unjustified and should be lifted.

CASE STUDY: Gerber in Guatemala

For four years between 1990 and 1995, the U.S.-based Gerber Products Company launched a campaign to force Guatemala to eliminate an infant health law that banned pictures of healthy babies on labels for baby food and fruit juices for children under two years of age. The Guatemalan law implemented the WHO-UNICEF Infant Formula Marketing Code, which was developed to help protect infants by promoting breast-feeding over artificial breast milk substitutes.

All of Guatemala's domestic and foreign suppliers of infant formula and other breast milk substitutes made the necessary changes to their packaging to comply with the Guatemalan law, except Gerber. Guatemalan infant mortality rates dropped significantly after the law passed, and UNICEF literature now holds up Guatemala as a model of the Code's success.

Upon passing the law, the Guatemala Ministry of Health negotiated with Gerber to seek compliance. Gerber argued that its baby picture was its trademark, which is protected by an international patent. After several years of watching Gerber refuse to abide by its regulations, the government of Guatemala considered a ban on the company's products altogether. It was at this point that Gerber threatened the Guatemalan government with a challenge under the Central American Free Trade Agreement and GATT. Although Gerber cannot personally launch a GATT challenge to the Guatemalan law, it raised the specter of such a challenge to intimidate the Guatemalan government and obtained U.S. government support for its threat.

According to Gerber's letter to the President of Guatemala, the intellectual property provisions of the GATT Uruguay Round would uphold the use of the trademark over the enforcement of Guatemala's domestic health law. By 1995, Gerber's threats of trade sanctions succeeded when the Guatemalan Supreme Court ruled that imported baby food products are exempt from Guatemala's stringent infant health laws.

Source: Public Citizen World Trade Watch, www.publiccitizen.org

WEDO Says

- Amend the SPS Agreement and Codex Alimentarius to ensure that standards and testing reviews include a gender assessment component.
- There should be agreement on standard nutrition and GMO labeling of all food products based on consumer rights and protection. These standards should be developed in a participatory process that includes local citizens, independent scientists and NGOs.
- The WTO and its surrogates are not the appropriate body for setting health, environment and consumer standards. Trade rules should not be used to challenge laws that are designed to promote and protect health and the environment.
- WEDO supports the development of a consumer protection body that is separate and apart from the WTO.

4. Prevent TNC exploitation of women's indigenous knowledge and plant genetic resources

Women have traditionally been the keepers of indigenous genetic resources, such as seeds and medicinal plants. The Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights agreement (TRIPs) includes plant and human genetic resources. TRIPs permits transnational corporations (TNCs) to appropriate, patent and profit from indigenous knowledge and life forms. However, it does not require TNCs to compensate the communities from which they acquired the knowledge.

Women in the developing world are the main custodians and users of indigenous medicinal wisdom. This knowledge represents a huge value to the communities where they live. Indigenous women do not have the resources to make their knowledge more widely available. But for the transnational corporations, such information represents a vast untapped market with untold potential for making profits.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) promotes the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable and equitable use of genetic resources. For example, if the commercialization of indigenous knowledge is achieved without compromising biodiversity, the CBD calls for compensation to the owners.

The TRIPs agreement opened up new terrain for corporations to claim intellectual property rights. Intellectual property can be claimed, and a patent obtained, if the patent-seeker adds anything, however small, to existing knowledge. Patenting prevents original owners of knowledge—most frequently women in developing countries—from benefiting from the commercial use of the patent, or from putting their indigenous knowledge to traditional use once it has been patented by a third party. Moreover, under TRIPs, when knowledge is patented, it effectively creates a period of monopolistic use for the patent holder. During this period the product cannot be developed, sold or priced by anyone else, anywhere in the world. This provision threatens the livelihoods of women indigenous healers and farmers in developing countries, and the many thousands of people in the communities who depend on them.

In India, for example, women farmers have used the Neem plant as a pesticide and fungicide for generations. The Neem plant currently has more than 35 patents on it in the U.S. and Europe, mainly for its pesticide properties. Local communities are already victims of reduced access to this traditional resource due to greatly increased market prices. A West African berry, *Pentadiplandra Brazzeana*, has similarly fallen prey to corporate patents in the U.S. and Europe ([see case study](#)).

The ambiguities in what constitutes "intellectual property" have sparked a major debate amongst governments. Efforts are being made within the WTO to remove the ambiguities and obtain as broad a definition as possible of the term. Some governments are trying to prevent this WTO agreement from eroding environmental and economic gains made in previous intergovernmental forums on the environment.

In situations where TNCs have appropriated indigenous knowledge, local communities cannot themselves present the case to the WTO dispute resolution panels. They must depend on their government to present the case on their behalf. The Indian government is considering taking such action in the case of a U.S.-based pharmaceutical company being granted a patent on a plant-based remedy for diabetes that has been used in India for years and is well documented in a number of texts on medicinal plants.

Even assuming a local community can come up with the resources to influence its government to act, the transnational giants have greater power and resources to pressure the government and to engage in a protracted legal battle, if necessary. One of the most egregious examples of how TNCs operate against the public interest involves the South African government's efforts to combat the AIDS virus that has created a health emergency in the country. The government announced that it would purchase supplies of AIDS drugs, not from the U.S. pharmaceutical company that had patented the drugs, but from generic drug producers in Eastern Europe offering the same product at a fraction of the cost. U.S. pharmaceutical companies successfully lobbied their government to intervene to uphold their rights to set prices as provided under the TRIPs agreement. In the end, the U.S. dropped its threat of litigation.

CASE STUDY: The Brazzein Protein in West African Berries

Brazzein is the name of a protein found in a West African berry that is reported to be 500 times sweeter than sugar. Unlike other non-sugar sweeteners, brazzein is a natural substance and does not lose its sweet taste when heated, making it particularly valuable to the food industry. Researchers at the University of Wisconsin have obtained a patent in the U.S. and Europe for a protein isolated from the berry.

Subsequent work has focused on making transgenic organisms to produce brazzein in the laboratory, thereby eliminating the need for it to be collected or grown commercially in that region. The University of Wisconsin says corporate interest in brazzein is strong: the worldwide market for sweeteners is reportedly US\$100 billion a year. The university researchers are emphatic that brazzein is their invention and there are no plans for sharing benefits with the West African people who discovered and nurtured the plant for their use.

Adapted from GRAIN (1998). "Patenting Our Food System, Patenting Animals, Patenting Health Care Systems, Patenting People." Quoted in Magdalena Kaihuzi, "LDCs In A Globalizing World: A Strategy for Gender-Balanced Sustainable Development," in UNCTAD (1999).

WEDO Says

- Governments should ensure that the protection of indigenous wisdom, traditional innovation, knowledge and practices, is consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Governments should amend the WTO TRIPs agreement to prevent plant and life forms from being appropriated and commercialized by TNCs at the expense of indigenous communities and global biodiversity.

End Notes

1. Informal Working Group on Women and Trade, Statement During the WTO Second Ministerial Meeting (Geneva, 1998).
2. Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund study, "Trading Away Public Health," cited in Danielle Knight, WTO Seen As Threat To Public Health, Terra Viva, Inter-Press Service Daily Journal, November 5, 1999.
3. Articles 8 and 16 of the Beijing Declaration, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.
4. This primer is a sequel to Who Makes the Rules? Decision-Making & Structure of the New World Trade Organization, No. 3 of WEDO's six-part series on gender, environment and international economic issues, produced in 1995.
5. See www.worldbank.org/gender
6. WEDO Primer #3, Who Makes the Rules? Decision-Making & Structure of the New World Trade Organization, 1995.
7. Data derived from the National Foundation for Women Business Owners www.nfwbo.org; and Fortune Magazine Global 500 list, August 2, 1999.
8. United Nations Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995, Document A/CONF.177/20, p.71.
9. This argument was made by Marceline White in her testimonial on behalf of Women's Edge to the U.S. Congressional Briefing on Women and the WTO, June 1999. Viewable at: [www.womensedge.org/ programs/WTOltr1.html](http://www.womensedge.org/programs/WTOltr1.html)
10. Women's Edge, "Will the WTO's Procurement Agreement work for Women?" At: www.womensedge.org/Programs/wto_wobs.html
11. Patricia Bifani-Richard, 1999, "Notes on Trade, Sustainable Development, and Gender," in UNCTAD, 1999. 12. Women's Edge, "Statistics on Women and Trade" At: www.womensedge.org/Programs/stattrade.html
13. The Institute for Science in Society (ISIS), 1999: World Scientists' Statement Calling for a Moratorium on GM Crops and Ban on Patents. At: www.i-sis.dircon.co.uk

Websites on the WTO

1. World Trade Organization: www.wto.org
2. European Commission: europa.eu.int
3. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy: www.iatp.org/
4. International Coalition for Development Action: www.icda.be
5. Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch: www.tradewatch.org
6. International Forum on Globalization: www.ifg.org
7. Third World Network: www.twinside.org.sg
8. 50 Years is Enough: www.50years.org

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