

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is holding its third  
**Ministerial Conference on Nov. 29th - Dec. 3rd**

in Seattle, Washington. With over 5000 delegates expected to be in attendance, this will be the  
**largest international trade summit ever held on U.S. soil.**

On the morning of November 30th, activists, farmers, workers, students, teachers, democracy advocates and concerned citizens will converge on the streets of Seattle in a mass action to **SHUT DOWN THE WTO**. On the same day, hundreds of thousands of people around the world will participate in actions demanding an end to the WTO and the corporate takeover of democracy. So far, the alliance includes citizens from Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Colombia, England, Germany, India, Ireland, Nepal, Pakistan, the Netherlands and Tibet.

This is an important moment for Tibet and the human rights movement at large. By creating a system that undermines international human rights, labor rights and environmental standards to provide transnational corporations with a cheap supply of labor and natural resources, the WTO represents a serious threat to the rights of people everywhere. In the case of Tibet, China's entry into the WTO – resulting in a de facto end to the option of using of trade sanctions in support of human rights in China and Tibet—would be a severe blow to the Tibetan peoples' struggle for self-determination. The Seattle WTO Ministerial Conference provides us with an unprecedented opportunity to demand that human rights must come before trade rights.

## WHAT THE WTO WANTS TO DO

# Who & is the WTO? What

The WTO is the high court of international trade. Established in 1995, this powerful new global commerce agency transformed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) into an enforceable global commercial code. The WTO is one of the main mechanisms of corporate globalization, guaranteeing corporate access to foreign markets without requiring that transnational corporations (TNCs) respect countries' domestic priorities or national laws.

Beyond this, the WTO rules and regulations provide transnational corporations and governments with the legal tools to force any of the WTO's 134 member nations to repeal any trade regulation that is deemed a barrier to free trade. According to WTO rules, many regulations that protect human rights, labor rights, health or the environment are considered barriers to "free" trade.

Since its inception, WTO rulings have forced the Guatemalan government to stop warning mothers about the dangers of breast milk substitutes, put an end to sea turtle-safe shrimp fishing laws and forced countries to repeal their bans on asbestos, a known carcinogen.

For case studies of WTO decisions, visit Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch website at [www.tradewatch.org](http://www.tradewatch.org).

# Who & is the WTO? What

Recently, the WTO ruled that Europe can not ban the import of U.S. beef treated with bovine growth hormone. Despite genuine health concerns and a lack of research on the negative effects of hormone treated beef, the European Union's refusal to open its markets to beef that it considers a public health hazard has prompted the WTO to levy \$124 million from the European Union in compensation to the U.S.

It is important to note that the international divestment/selective purchasing campaign used to force an end to apartheid in South Africa would have been challenged in the WTO by governments representing corporations invested in the South African regime. Given the WTO's other rulings, the state and national legislation passed to support the struggle against apartheid would have been ruled illegal.

The WTO represents the legal arm of a global system of enforceable rules where corporations have all the rights, governments have all the obligations, and democracy is left behind in the dust.

For the developing countries perspective, visit the Third World Network's website at [www.twinside.org.sg](http://www.twinside.org.sg).

WHAT THE  
WTO  
SHOULD DO

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

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get involved

# WTO vs. Tibet

One item on the WTO meeting agenda will be consideration of China's admittance into the organization. China's entry in the WTO would signal the end of governments exercising the option of using economic sanctions to influence China's stance on human rights – including in Tibet.

Since its creation, the WTO has never ruled in favor of international or national laws meant to protect human rights, labor rights or the environment. China's entry into the WTO could cripple efforts by citizens and their governments to hold Beijing economically accountable on a number of fronts, including Tibetan self-determination, suppression of the Chinese democracy movement, prison labor, political repression and other human rights abuses.

Because the WTO has authority to enforce the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), an international treaty, it is able to strike down national and state laws that are deemed to be in violation of GATT and free trade. Under GATT, free trade is the ultimate goal—higher than human rights, higher than the environment. Because the WTO has this extraordinary power, China's acceptance into the WTO would also give China the dangerous potential to challenge and overturn state or national trade laws aimed at pressuring China about Tibet.

# CHINA

## in the WTO

To gain entry to the WTO, a country must first establish bilateral trade relations with various member countries of the WTO. For example, over the last few months there have been negotiations between the Clinton Administration and Beijing to facilitate such movement. However, we believe that trade standards should not be the only conditions considered when determining China's eligibility for membership into the WTO. World leaders must push China for compliance with international law, human rights standards and rule of law before approving China's entry into the WTO at the ministerial meetings this November.



Negotiations without preconditions must be in process between His Holiness the Dalai Lama (or His representatives) and the Chinese leadership regarding the resolution of the issue of Tibetan self-determination. These negotiations must be moving forward in good faith with binding commitments from Beijing to see the process through to the end.

China must: (A) ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and (B) demonstrate its commitment to the rule of law by releasing all political prisoners in China and Tibet, including 10 year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima (the 11th Panchen Lama) and stopping the detention and punishment of persons who are peacefully expressing their opinions and beliefs (including pro-democracy advocates, all religious worshippers, labor rights advocates, and Tibetans protesting China's rule in Tibet).

China must allow workers freedom of association, collective bargaining in independent labor unions and establish laws to protect workers' rights—including provisions against child labor, forced labor and discrimination against women and minorities. The Chinese government must also provide full disclosure and transparency of labor conditions (wages, hours, etc.).




## CONTACTS FOR TAKING ACTION

# fixing the WTO?

Many people feel that the system of trade and development promoted through GATT (and its legal arm, the WTO) is fatally flawed. With GATT's expansion, civil society is faced with the challenge of what to do with this international treaty as we work to create more just, transparent and democratic trade models and agreements.

As a first step towards creating a sustainable future, the WTO must address the negative effects of its current trade rules. As the current international body governing trade, the WTO should establish an ad-hoc committee composed of representatives of various environmental protection, labor rights and human rights groups (including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch) to monitor the impact of investment and trade on social, political, labor and environmental health and rights of the people of its member and candidate countries.

This committee would be empowered to do the following:

-  Publish annual reports of their findings.
-  List areas of concern and recommend future actions to address these concerns.
-  Establish guidelines and timetables for appropriate corrective action.

Take  
action

# why direct action?

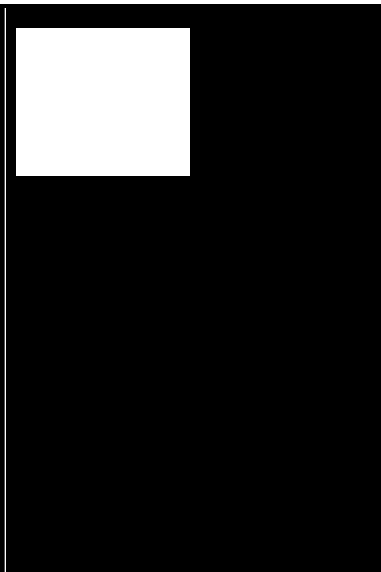
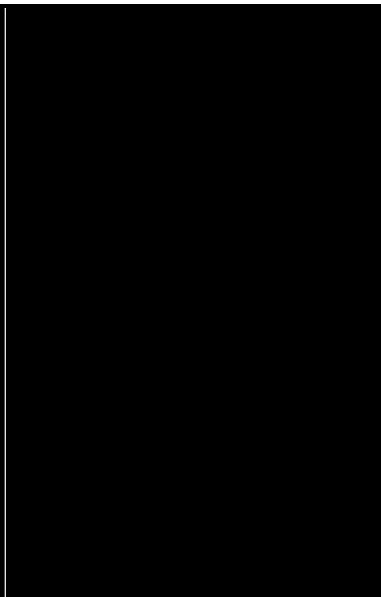
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## **Together we can effect positive change!**

The Mass Action in Seattle on November 30th is intended to prevent the Finance Ministers, CEOs and other bureaucrats from meeting. It will include marches, rallies, nonviolent direct action, peacekeeping and crowd support with specific teams taking responsibility for key areas.

direct action nonviolence code

**ORGANIZATION  
CONTACT  
INFORMATION**



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# Timeline of SEATTLE events

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Nov. 20-28: Direct action/street theater convergence involving large-scale street theater and puppets, benefit concerts, direct action planning and nonviolence training.

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Nov. 29 - Dec. 3: Festival of Resistance  
Nov. 30: Day of Mass Nonviolent Direct Action to Shut Down the WTO.

United Steel Workers and the AFL-CIO labor unions are planning a march in the afternoon of the 30th to demand that labor concerns are addressed by the WTO.

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