

Lessons from India's experience in the WTO: How should India prepare for the post-Doha WTO?

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Current MTN Strategies

- Don't reinvent the wheel: Improve procedures and management of agenda setting, decision making and participation in global trade
 - Democratic, unlike the BW twins: the consensus-based negotiation structure cannot be improved upon, but can every country participate equally?
 - More transparency in green room meetings & decisions where actual decisions are taken – helps build consensus as fewer bystanders now
 - Enhance capacity-building, implementation ability and reduce net adjustment costs
 - Negotiate regulations and NTMs openly

Current MTN Strategies, contd...

- WTO Negotiation Principles
 - Non-discrimination – being eroded by FTAs' web of discriminatory preferences?
 - Reciprocity – time to dump? [How to balance gains with concessions, and tackle UR unfinished agenda]
 - Biennial Ministerial Conferences – too onerous? [Sutherland Report – Negotiation advances are naturally sporadic, and function of fatigue and political impetus]
 - Single undertaking – is it a limitation?
 - Greater use of Plurilateral form – as in GATS negotiations of DDR [variable geometry & critical-mass decision-making: offers opt-out option and creates goodwill]

India in the WTO

- India's stance before Doha (and pre-UR)
 - Opposing launch of the Round
 - Resistance to open up industrial products, esp where India was expected to open up
 - Using scarce negotiating capital on Implementation Issues and S&D treatment
- Most of the needed action/reform for further gains from trade and liberalisation are domestic
 - But a democratic rules based global trading system helps (DSM a big gain from UR)
 - Also restricts backsliding by industrialised countries as seen in the recent resurgence of protectionism

India in a post-Doha WTO

- Look beyond reciprocity – in South Asia & LDCs, so why not in WTO?
 - How to negotiate reciprocity and who leads?
 - Negotiate issues separately and consecutively, 'incremental' rather than a 'grand bargain'
 - Legitimacy for claiming leadership – lead from the front (DCs still largely passive when making commitments)
 - Multilateralise the unilateral liberalisation – like the industrialised countries did in GATT era
 - In return get to set agenda which is development friendly – fools paradise?
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