



**Friends of
the Earth**

**World Trade
Organisation
Ministerial Meeting,
Cancun, 2003**

Action guide

Part I

June 2003

Introduction

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) holds its fifth ministerial meeting from 10th - 14th September 2003, in Cancun, Mexico.

Friends of the Earth believes the WTO is undemocratic, unaccountable and lacks transparency. As overseer of the process to “free” global trade, the WTO makes it easier for large companies to compete in every country by getting rid of barriers to trade. Such barriers often include member countries’ national laws protecting the environment and human rights.

Big business has ushered in a system whereby the world’s primary trade institution exists to protect and promote its interests above any other concern, and almost always rules in its favour in disputes, through its highly powerful and influential corporate lobby groups. The international trade system is rigged by and for big business in their own favour. Our politicians have either allowed this to happen or have actually helped the process along, and it’s time for us to reclaim our democratic right to have our views represented by our representatives.

Symptoms of such a skewed system include:

- a proposed investment agreement that the European Union (EU) wants to see on the negotiating table at Cancun - the key beneficiaries would be transnational (or multinational) corporations (TNCs or MNCs), many of whom are headquartered in the EU;
- the recent complaint the US brought to the WTO’s trade dispute courts against the EU’s policy on genetically modified (GM) food – a policy which is preventing big US bio-technology companies from expanding their markets into Europe. The US calls the policy illegal under WTO rules and demands that the EU should be forced to drop it;
- attempts to get voluntary, non-binding so-called “corporate social responsibility” accepted by the WTO (where there is greater potential to keep guidelines weak and ineffectual), rather than advocating binding corporate accountability laws at a forum like the United Nations.

We are already working hard on our strategy to prevent a new set of rights for big business through an investment agreement as well as to keep US GMOs out of our food. Now we need your help to build the public pressure on politicians who have the power to do this to back up the groundwork we have already laid. In this way your efforts will make a real difference in what we are able to achieve.

Then Friends of the Earth International (www.foei.org) will be at the Cancun WTO meeting itself carrying those demands forward and calling for rights for people and rules for big business. We will demand that the WTO is not an appropriate venue to create either a new investment agreement or wider corporate accountability rules. Binding regulation to control large corporations is desperately needed to protect people and the environment, but they cannot be established properly in an organisation only interested in pursuing economic growth at all costs.

Friends of the Earth can supply you with information on corporate globalisation, the WTO and its agreements, global trade, and the need for corporate accountability – just look at our website at www.foe.co.uk, call 0808 800 1111, or email info@foe.co.uk. The purpose of this guide is to help you, in the run up to the WTO meeting, get ready to act!

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priorities, priorities

Actions in the guide are ordered in terms of priority – if you have time for just one action, please do the first one and write to Tony Blair. All actions can be taken online at www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/global_trade/press_for_change/ and the template letters are available via email from janeh@foe.co.uk. Your actions will always have more effect if they are written using your words as opposed to using our templates, so if you have time please construct your own letters from the information provided.

future actions & info

We have a Bon voyage photo opportunity planned for late August to wave off the UK government delegation to Cancun – we'll be in touch with you later with the details in Part II of this action guide. We will also be providing you with a briefing that busts the myths around the proposed investment agreement.

you know it makes sense

If you have an email account, please email janeh@foe.co.uk with your address. We can then add your name to those joining in the actions we have planned during the WTO ministerial and beyond. Helping us to work via email keeps our costs down (a single mailing costs us around £1500 in postage alone), keeps paper use down, is faster and helps us use our time better, so if you can *please* do let us add you to our list.

keeping informed

To keep up to date with the latest developments check the news pages of Friends of the Earth's global trade web pages at www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/global_trade/news/ and the new Friends of the Earth website for local groups and grass root campaigners at community.foe.co.uk

what's the action? *Demand Corporate Accountability from Tony Blair*

Quick action – add your address, signature & the date to the letter addressed to Tony Blair at the back of this guide, and post it to him at the address below.

Longer action – using your own words write a letter to Tony Blair, and copy it to your MP and local paper to increase the pressure on Blair to listen, saying:

- there should be no investment agreement in the WTO
- corporate social responsibility is insufficient, there needs to be corporate accountability regulation but the WTO is not the place to establish it
- he should support the CORE Bill in the UK

email via www.pocketpm.co.uk

fax 020 7925 0918 (or if you are a constituent then 01429 880950)

post 10 Downing Street, London SW1A 2AA

what's the background info?

An investment agreement by any other name...

Governments led by the EU, and particularly the UK, want to agree rules in the WTO that would benefit international investors - mainly TNCs - by giving them more rights and restricting the actions host countries can take to regulate them. The investment agreement is very similar to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) defeated some years ago. It would firmly prioritise the desires of big business over the rights of people, and it would result in a gross failure to address the growing environmental damage, poverty and social exclusion around the world.

Furthermore a host of developing countries repeatedly oppose such an agreement on a variety of grounds. China, India, Cuba, Zimbabwe, Pakistan and Kenya (far more than 50% of the world's population) have submitted a formal argument for their opposition, which includes the critical need for genuine corporate accountability. The EU presses on regardless.

Friends of the Earth believes all governments must have the flexibility to prioritise truly sustainable development, the environment and social welfare above the rights of big business. Far more than awarding TNCs more rights, big corporations and their investments desperately need regulating to ensure the environmental and social abuses they currently cause, with apparent impunity, do not continue.

Responsibility vs accountability

These same TNCs insist, against decades of evidence, that they the best way to ensure the protection of the environment and human rights is to allow them to do so voluntarily. In recent years pressure on big business to clean up its act has resulted in many adopting the language of "corporate social responsibility" (or CSR) to reflect this attempt to evade real accountability. One only has to look as far as the Bhopal disaster to see how effective voluntary self-regulation is.

The rights that companies *already* have need to be balanced with the rights of communities to live in a clean, healthy and safe environment now and in the future. In the UK Friends of the Earth, as part of the Corporate Accountability (CORE) Coalition UK, is using the Corporate Responsibility Bill to call for more transparency in companies'

economic, environmental and social impacts reporting, as well as to make Directors of British companies directly accountable to individuals affected by their businesses. This will help begin to correct the current heavy bias of the system in favour of TNCs and to ensure that big business fulfils its responsibilities to society.

However the nature and scope of modern big business means that domestic legislation is not enough. Global business needs global accountability. The WTO is not an appropriate venue to establish such corporate accountability. It is undemocratic, unaccountable, lacks transparency and seeks to dismantle members' national laws protecting people and planet if they are seen to get in the way of the pursuit of profit by big business. A binding agreement for corporate accountability can only be effective through some other forum, like the UN.

what specific resources are available?

Friends of the Earth briefing on the WTO investment agreement entitled *Open wide, this won't hurt a bit...*

www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/open_wide_this_wont_hurt_a_bit.pdf

Friends of the Earth briefings on corporate accountability – see the resource summary page at the back of this guide.

what's the action? *Where's Blair? – the Pocket Prime Minister*

Quick action – make a contribution to our 'Where's Blair?' photo gallery, either for the 'where he is now' or 'where he should be' section, by popping the pocket prime minister in your own or someone else's pocket (or wherever you see fit), taking a photo and emailing or posting it in to us.

Longer action - take photos of friends, family, colleagues, your football team, tai chi class instructor, hairdresser, post deliverer, local politicians and celebs with a pocket PM to send in to us. Be creative!

We will collect all contributions together and present them to Mr Blair in a photo album before the WTO ministerial.

email via pocketpm@foe.co.uk

post Pocket PM, Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood St, London N1 7JQ

web www.pocketpm.co.uk for ideas...

what's the background info?

The UK government, like the US government, is so heavily influenced by corporate interests that big business has more say in the development of government trade policy than its citizens do. This is a clear erosion of democracy, aggravated by the unaccountable position big business enjoys, which has led to the development of international trade policy that puts profit before people and the environment.

Many international trade agreements and institutions have their origins in the big business lobbying of governments. Examples include the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which the European Commission openly claims "...is not just something that exists between governments. It is first and *foremost* an instrument for the benefit of business."

Friends of the Earth wants to bring Blair back to planet Earth and wake up to the reality of what acting solely in the interests of big business is doing to our land and people. We will be compiling a 'Where's Blair?' photo gallery on our website that will be divided into two sections; where Tony should be, namely in the pockets of his electorate, and where Tony can actually be found, primarily in the pockets of Chief Executives of big companies. You can contribute photos to either section. We will also be presenting Tony Blair with a photo album of all your pictures just before the Cancun WTO ministerial so the last thing in his mind as he briefs his delegates about the UK's negotiating position will be that he must represent the interests of the people of the UK, not just its big companies.

what specific resources are available?

Corporate Europe Observatory's website has information on the key corporate lobbyist groups and their history of initiating and influencing trade policy at www.xs4all.nl/~ceo/

Friends of the Earth will shortly be publishing a series of exposes on what UK plc gets up to in Latin America.

To get more copies of the pocket PM:

email webdata@foe.co.uk

tel 020 7490 1555

post Supporter Services Unit, 56-58 Alma Street, Luton LU1 2PH

web www.pocketpm.co.uk

Action THREE

what's the action? Lobby your MP on corporate accountability

Quick action – add your address, signature & the date to the letter addressed to the House of Commons at the back of this guide, and post it to your MP at the address below.

Longer action – using your own words, write a letter to your MP that:

- calls for fairer trade rules that allow countries to regulate trade on the basis of environmental, health, and human rights standards. You can cite the US complaint to the WTO over EU GM regulations as an example of the kind of thing you think must be allowed (see below for more details on the US/EU GM trade war);
- requests your MP to show her/his support for the CORE Bill in the UK by signing early day motion (EDM) number 113 if they have not already done so;
- demands that in accordance with WTO rules stating there must be “explicit consensus” before negotiations on investment can be held, and in light of the continuing opposition of India and others to such an agreement, no negotiations on investment can begin.

In person action – lobby your MP in person on the above as part of the Trade Justice Movement’s Scale Up for Trade Justice actions between noon on Friday 27 June and noon on Saturday 28 June. Ask your MP if you can take their photo with the pocket PM and send it to us for our photo album.

email via www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/global_trade/press_for_change/trade_justice/

fax via www.faxyourmp.com

post House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA or your constituency office

what's the background info?

The Trade Justice Movement is having a ‘24hours for trade justice’ local lobby marathon between noon on Friday 27 June and noon on Saturday 28 June. The aim is for all 659 MPs to be lobbied in their local constituencies at some point over the 24 hour period. This is the first time this will ever have been done, so be part of it so you can say you were there!

At the end of the 24 hours of lobbying, at midday on Saturday 28 June, there will be a symbolic action at events and gatherings planned all over the UK. Campaigners will stand together in silence holding up sets of scales, symbolising the call for trade justice.

what specific resources are available?

There is a lot of useful information on finding out who your MP is, how to prepare to meet them, and tips on how to get what you want from a meeting with them in the Trade Justice Movement’s action guide available at www.tjm.org.uk/scaleup/TJMBooklet.pdf or by calling 020 7404 0530.

You’ll need to co-ordinate your visit to your MP with others in your constituency participating in the 24hours for trade justice by checking www.tjm.org.uk/scaleup/actionexchange/index.shtml for messages from people in your area. You can also look there to find out where symbolic actions are happening in your

area at midday on Saturday 28 June.

You can check to see whether your MP has signed up to EDM 113 by either looking at the list at the back of this guide or by going to edm.ais.co.uk/weblink/html/motion.html/ref=113 for a more up to date list. Also at the back of this guide is a copy of the text of the EDM to take with you to give to your MP.

Action FOUR

what's the action? Say NO! to US GM

Quick action – add your address, signature & the date to the letter addressed to the American Ambassador at the back of this guide, and post it to the address below.

Longer action – using your own words, write a letter to the American Ambassador saying:

- that countries, in this case the EU, have the right to refuse imports that contravene their environmental, health or ethical standards.

email via www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/global_trade/press_for_change/email_us_embassy/

fax 020 7847 2975

post The American Embassy, 24 Grosvenor Square, London W1A 1AE

what's the background info?

On 13 May 2003, the US government filed a complaint with the WTO regarding the current EU moratorium on the commercial development of GM foods claiming it is an "illegal" trade barrier under WTO rules.

This trade dispute is yet another example of the way in which big business is able to rig the trade system to achieve its own ends. It is clear that the US administration had pressure exerted on it to challenge this barrier to trading in GM food in Europe by some of the richest and most powerful lobbyists in US politics, including big US-based biotechnology TNCs like Monsanto, who wish to extend their consumer base right across Europe.

At the same time, this trade dispute also demonstrates how the WTO exists to promote corporate profit making interests above any environmental, health or social concerns. The EU, when formulating its GM trade policy, has applied a key environmental principle, the precautionary principle, in the face of the unknown long-term effects of growing and eating GM products. The precautionary principle says when an activity raises threats of harm to human health, or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. However, WTO rules are fundamentally opposed to this approach since it directly contravenes what is in the perceived interests of big business e.g. allowing TNCs to operate anywhere, anyhow, anytime regardless of the impact on people or planet.

what specific resources are available?

Friends of the Earth has written a briefing called *GM trade war looms* about the WTO's Dispute Resolution Mechanism, which decides who wins and who loses in international trade wars. The briefing at www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/wto_disputes_res_mech.pdf exposes how the mechanism works, and explores what may happen following the US complaint against the EU over GM food.

Friends of the Earth briefing entitled *Genetically modified crops and food*
www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/real_food/resource/campaigners.html

Resource summary

corporate accountability

The Corporate Responsibility Coalition website

www.corporate-responsibility.org/

Friends of the Earth briefing entitled *Towards binding corporate accountability*

www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/corporate_accountability.pdf

Friends of the Earth briefing entitled *Global rights for people, global rules for big business*

www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/global_rights_people.pdf

Friends of the Earth briefing entitled *Challenging corporations: Introduction to Friends of the Earth's corporates campaign*

www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/corp_alert_intro_lgs.pdf

Friends of the Earth briefing entitled *Undemocratic, ineffective & inherently weak – the voluntary approach*

www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/voluntary_approach.pdf

gm

Friends of the Earth briefing entitled *GM trade war looms*

www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/wto_disputes_res_mech.pdf

Friends of the Earth briefing entitled *Genetically modified crops and food*

www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/gm_crops_food.pdf

investment

Friends of the Earth briefing on investment entitled *Open wide, this won't hurt a bit...*

www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/open_wide_this_wont_hurt_a_bit.pdf

Seattle to Brussels Network report entitled *Investment and competition negotiations in the WTO – what's wrong with it and what are the alternatives?*

www.s2bnetwork.org/S2B-InvestmentWTO-Brochurefinal.pdf

world trade & the WTO

Friends of the Earth Europe briefing entitled *What's wrong with the WTO*

www.foeeurope.org/publications/trade_eng.pdf

Friends of the Earth briefing entitled *What's wrong with world trade*

www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/world_trade.html

Friends of the Earth report entitled *The world trade system – how it works and what's wrong with it*

www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/qatar_how_it_works.pdf

Friends of the Earth report entitled *The world trade system – winners and losers*

www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/qatar_winners_losers.pdf

Friends of the Earth International's *Citizen's guide to trade, environment & sustainability*

www.foei.org/trade/activistguide/

Tony Blair
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Dear Tony Blair,

I am writing to you about the position of the UK Government at the World Trade Organisation Ministerial Meeting in Cancun, Mexico and the need for a binding corporate accountability law in the UK.

I strongly believe that there should be no expansion of the WTO agenda in Cancun to include new issues such as investment. Governments should have the right to regulate companies for social and environmental reasons, and poor countries should be able to develop their own economies by giving special treatment to their domestic industries - something that has been done in the past by all successful economies. If the WTO's free trade principle is applied to areas like investment, competition policy and government purchasing, it will undermine essential government powers to treat companies differently on the basis of nationality or social and environmental performance.

Transnational corporations and their investments desperately need regulating to ensure human rights and the environment are protected. However legally binding regulation should not be established in an organisation which is undemocratic, unaccountable, and only interested in pursuing economic growth ie. corporate accountability regulation needs to be established outside of the WTO.

Again and again, voluntary mechanisms to promote corporate responsibility have proven to have no affect on the socially and environmentally destructive activities of large corporations – only binding regulation is going to ensure compliance to standards. Therefore I would like to see you demonstrate a commitment to binding corporate responsibility through formal support of the Corporate Social Responsibility Bill.

If made law, the Bill would require companies to report on the social, environmental and economic impact; to consult local communities on major decisions and projects; and to be liable for the social, financial and environmental impacts of their operations, so making them accountable for the impacts they have.

Some companies are already operating to high environmental and social standards and I think these standards need to be required across the board. This would mean a truly level-playing field for all business that supports peoples' rights and the environment, and would benefit those small companies in the UK who currently are undercut by businesses operating to lower standards elsewhere. It would also ensure the best protection for the environment and for local communities.

I am also deeply concerned about the anti-democratic nature of much of the WTO's work. Two examples are the way an investment agreement is being pursued against the wishes of many large developing countries and the now formal attempts of the US to insist that

their GMOs be included in our diets when we clearly do not want them. I am further disturbed at the UK government's support for both the investment agreement and GMOs despite the overwhelming democratic opposition to both. The fact that there are huge, wealthy big business lobby concerns behind both of these issues only increases the worry about the reasons for such positions by your government.

I respectfully urge you to review your government's positions on these and other related areas and ensure throughout that the official UK position in the EU and elsewhere represents the wishes of the people of the UK and not solely the interests of big business. Trade must change to work for the benefit of people and their environment. I believe you have a key role to play in ensuring that it does.

Yours sincerely,

EDM 113 - Corporate Social Responsibility

This House believes companies can play an active and beneficial role if their freedom to operate is balanced with corresponding obligations to society; welcomes the broad support for the "Corporate Responsibility Bill" introduced in the last session of Parliament; welcomes also the agreement at the World Summit on Sustainable Development "to actively promote corporate responsibility and accountability"; and therefore urges the Government to enshrine in new Company Law policies that require companies and directors to manage their environmental and social impacts, and consult with and report to their stakeholders on these impacts.

MPs who support EDM 113 - Corporate Social Responsibility

Allan/Richard	Davey/Valerie	Jones/Nigel	Rapson/Syd
Allen/Graham	Davidson/Ian	Joyce/Eric	Reid/Alan
Amess/David	Davies/Geraint	Keetch/Paul	Rendel/David
Anderson/Janet	Davis/Terry	Khabra/Piara S	Robertson/Angus
Atherton/Candy	Dean/Janet	King/Andy	Robertson/John
Austin/John	Dhanda/Parmjit	Kirkwood/Archy	Robinson/Geoffrey
Baird/Vera	Dismore/Andrew	Knight/Jim	Robinson/Iris
Baker/Norman	Dobbin/Jim	Kumar/Ashok	Rooney/Terry
Banks/Tony	Dobson/Frank	Lamb/Norman	Ross/Ernie
Barnes/Harry	Donohoe/Brian H	Lawrence/Jackie	Ruddock/Joan
Barrett/John	Doran/Frank	Lazarowicz/Mark	Russell/Christine
Barron/Kevin	Doughty/Sue	Lepper/David	Salter/Martin
Battle/John	Drew/David	Lewis/Terry	Sanders/Adrian
Bayley/Hugh	Drown/Julia	Lloyd/Tony	Savage/Malcolm
Beggs/Roy	Eagle/Angela	Llwyd/Elfyn	Sawford/Phil
Beith/AJ	Edwards/Huw	Lucas/Ian	Sedgemore/Brian
Bennett/Andrew F	Ellman/Louise	Luke/Iain	Shaw/Jonathan
Benton/Joe	Ennis/Jeff	Lyons/John	Sheerman/Barry
Berry/Roger	Etherington/Bill	Macdonald/Calum	Sheridan/Jim
Best/Harold	Ewing/Annabelle	MacDougall/John	Shiple/Debra
Blackman/Liz	Farrelly/Paul	Mahon/Alice	Simon/Sion
Borrow/David	Field/Frank	Mann/John	Simpson/Alan
Bottomley/Peter	Fisher/Mark	Marris/Rob	Singh/Marsha
Bradley/Keith	Flynn/Paul	Marsden/Gordon	Skinner/Dennis
Brake/Tom	Follett/Barbara	Marsden/Paul	Smith/John P
Breed/Colin	Foster/Don	Marshall/Jim	Smith/Llew
Brennan/Kevin	Francis/Hywel	Mates/Michael	Stevenson/George
Brooke/Annette	Galloway/George	McCafferty/Chris	Stewart/David
Bruce/Malcolm	Gapes/Mike	McDonnell/John	Stinchcombe/Paul
Buck/Karen	George/Andrew	McFall/John	Strang/Gavin
Burden/Richard	Gibson/Ian	McKechin/Ann	Stunell/Andrew
Burgon/Colin	Gidley/Sandra	McNamara/Kevin	Taylor/David
Burnett/John	Green/Matthew	McWalter/Tony	Taylor/Matthew
Burstow/Paul	Griffiths/Jane	McWilliam/John	Taylor/Richard
Cable/Vincent	Griffiths/Win	Meale/Alan	Thomas/Simon
Calton/Patsy	Grogan/John	Mercer/Patrick	Tipping/Paddy
Campbell/Anne	Hall/Patrick	Mitchell/Austin	Tonge/Jenny
Campbell/Menzies	Hancock/Mike	Moffatt/Laura	Truswell/Paul
Carmichael/Alistair	Harris/Evan	Mole/Chris	Turner/Dennis
Casale/Roger	Harris/Tom	Moore/Michael	Turner/Desmond
Caton/Martin	Harvey/Nick	Morgan/Julie	Tyler/Paul
Challen/Colin	Havard/Dai	Mullin/Chris	Tynan/Bill
Chaytor/David	Heath/David	Munn/Meg	Vis/Rudi
Chidgey/David	Hendrick/Mark	Murphy/Denis	Walley/Joan
Clapham/Michael	Hepburn/Stephen	Naysmith/Doug	Walter/Robert
Clark/Helen	Hermon/Sylvia	O'Hara/Edward	Wareing/Robert N
Clwyd/Ann	Heyes/David	O'Neill/Martin	Webb/Steve
Cohen/Harry	Hoey/Kate	Oaten/Mark	White/Brian
Coleman/Iain	Holmes/Paul	O'ner/Bill	Whitehead/Alan
Colman/Tony	Hopkins/Kelvin	Organ/Diana	Williams/Betty
Connarty/Michael	Hoyle/Lindsay	Osborne/Sandra	Williams/Hywel
Cook/Frank	Hughes/Simon	Owen/Albert	Williams/Roger
Corbyn/Jeremy	Humble/Joan	Palmer/Nick	Willis/Phil
Cotter/Brian	Hurst/Alan	Perham/Linda	Wishart/Pete
Cousins/Jim	Iddon/Brian	Pike/Peter L	Wood/Mike
Cox/Tom	Illsley/Eric	Pollard/Kerry	Worthington/Tony
Cranston/Ross	Irranca-Davies/Huw	Pope/Greg	Wray/Jimmy
Crausby/David	Jackson/Glenda	Pound/Stephen	Wright/David
Cryer/Ann	Jackson/Helen	Prentice/Gordon	Wright/Tony
Cunningham/Jack	Jackson/Robert	Price/Adam	Wyatt/Derek
Cunningham/Jim	Jones/Kevan	Prosser/Gwyn	Younger-Ross
Cunningham/Tony	Jones/Lynne	Pugh/John	/Richard
Dalyell/Tam	Jones/Martyn	Quin/Joyce	

House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

I am writing to ask for your help in bringing about fundamental change of the unjust rules and institutions that currently govern international trade so that trade is made to work for all.

Please will you write to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Patricia Hewitt, to call on them to:

- ensure that at the World Trade Organisation's Ministerial Meeting in Mexico in September there is no expansion of the WTO agenda to include new issues such as investment;
- regulate big business and their investments to ensure people and the environment come before profits and to demonstrate commitment to doing this through formal support of the Corporate Social Responsibility Bill;
- stop forcing poor countries to open their markets and champion their right to manage their own economies;
- stop rich countries promoting the interests of big business through trade interventions that harm the poor and the environment;
- ensure trade policy is made in a fair, transparent and democratic way.

It is important that governments should be able to regulate companies for social and environmental reasons and that poor countries should be able to develop their own economies by giving special treatment to their domestic industries, something that has been done by all successful economies. If the WTO's free trade principle is applied to areas like investment, competition policy and government purchasing, it will undermine these essential government powers to treat companies differently on the basis of nationality or social and environmental performance. Also, any attempts to negotiate new issues at the WTO will disadvantage developing country governments, which already struggling with a vast agenda.

If you were one of the 288 MPs who signed Early Day Motion 1457 on trade justice following last year's mass lobby of Parliament, please could you tell me what actions you have taken since then to help make trade rules fairer.

Finally, I would ask you to sign up to Early Day Motion 113 in support of the Corporate Social Responsibility Bill.

I look forward to hearing how you will take my concerns forward.

Yours sincerely,

The American Embassy
24 Grosvenor Square
London
W1A 1AE

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my deep regret that the United States government has asked the World Trade Organisation to conduct formal consultations over European approval regulations for genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

The people of Europe have repeatedly said that we do not wish to eat foods derived from or containing GMOs. Europe is in the process of developing important legislation that will allow consumers formally to express that choice, something the US Government has not made available to US citizens. By challenging this right to choose through the WTO your government is sending a strong message to European citizens that the US does not respect either our democracy or our freedoms.

I respectfully urge that you express my dismay to your government and seek the withdrawal of this WTO complaint.

Yours sincerely,