

WORLD TRADE

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Of course, developing countries also have a responsibility to help themselves.

As a group they have taken important steps -- often unsung and unrequited -- to liberalize trade in the last fifteen years. But some of them could do still more to seize export opportunities. For example, they could improve efficiency and competitiveness by reducing barriers to imports -- particularly from other developing countries.

But trade liberalization is no panacea for developing countries. For many of them, it involves considerable adjustment and social costs. There is a need for synergy and proper sequencing -- between the capacities of the developing countries, the level of obligations they are to take on, the cost of implementation, and the adequacy of financial and technical resources available to them. Developing countries need aid for trade, and such aid must not come at the expense of aid for development.

Indeed, trade liberalization must be carefully managed as part of comprehensive development strategies that encompass health, education, the empowerment of women, the rule of law and much else besides. Developing countries need help in building the institutions and infrastructure, acquiring the technology and skills, and putting in place the legal regimes, that will enable them to make the journey. The least developed countries in particular often need genuinely special and differential treatment -- not simply more time to comply with new rules.

Trade is the most visible manifestation of globalization. It has proved its ability to deliver jobs and wealth for some. Yet there is widespread unease, and even distrust, about the new economic and technological spaces we inhabit. So many people have yet to benefit, and in the developing world there has been great dislocation without a safety net.

You, the world's trade ministers, must show those people that you have heard their cries for fairness. You must give them confidence that, from now on, your negotiations and decisions will really meet their needs and reflect their aspirations.

You have an awesome responsibility, and a great opportunity. Your decisions can make the difference between poverty and prosperity, and even between life and death, for millions upon millions of people.

Here in Cancun, I implore you to say: "no!" to trade policies that aggravate poverty, and "no!" to trade practices that undermine aid.

And I urge you to say "ye