

Presentation

WTO Symposium
ISSUES CONFRONTING THE WORLD'S TRADING SYSTEM

Work Session V – The WTO and Civil Society
6th and 7th July 2001

I would like to thank the WTO for the opportunity of addressing and participating in this Symposium and in this work session.

My name is John Bunzl and I am the founder of the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (I.S.P.O. – or ‘ISPO’ for short). ISPO’s principal objective is to bring about a sustainable global economy by promoting economic, environmental and social co-operation amongst all nations. Such co-operation would restore a greater measure of genuine democratic control to the people of each nation but within a global and democratic framework; a synthesis of global unity and national diversity. It hopes to achieve this through a range of measures which are, together, known as the Simultaneous Policy. Amongst other things, the measures of the Simultaneous Policy will likely include the re-regulation of capital markets and transnational corporations; the restoration to democratic control of the creation of money; the imposition of global taxes on markets, corporations and resources and the redistribution of the revenue generated to fund sustainable development in the poorest countries on a debt-free basis. These and other such measures are to be defined through a process of collaboration with all organisations concerned with sustainable development.

The Simultaneous Policy is being adopted gradually by people around the world as I speak. But only when support is sufficient to persuade governments in all, or virtually all, countries to adopt it, will it be implemented by all nations simultaneously.

And why should it be necessary for all nations to implement these measures simultaneously? Quite simply, because in today’s world where capital and corporations are internationally mobile, implementation unilaterally – or by a single group of nations – would invite capital and corporate flight, inflation, unemployment for any nation or group of nations seeking to do so. But if all nations act simultaneously, no such adverse effects could arise. It is therefore on this basis that global co-operation can occur in a secure and responsible way.

Without such a basis, we remain – I’m afraid – irrevocably locked in the current paradigm of global competition in which all nations of the world are forced to compete with one another for capital and jobs to the benefit of market speculators and transnational corporations who play one country off against another. But this is a vicious circle which serves only to benefit the few to the detriment of the vast majority of society and the environment; a vicious circle which ultimately no one can win and all must lose. For even the rich and powerful who benefit in the short term have children who need clean air to breath and fresh water to drink; they too will come to realise

that a wholesale transition from global competition to global co-operation is vital if spaceship Earth, all of its passengers and their off-spring are to expect a civilised and sustainable future.

We should be clear that the current tacit acceptance of today's paradigm of global competition as 'natural', 'irreversible' or 'inevitable' can never lead to policies which are beneficial to society or the environment. For this mind-set inevitably leads to the false notion that 'becoming more competitive' is somehow synonymous with poverty reduction; that somehow competition can make us all richer; or as the institutions who uphold the Washington Consensus like to put it: "Short-term pain for long-term gain." But as many amongst the NGO community have recognised, Structural Adjustment Programs have shown - and the Comprehensive Development Framework or PRSPs will also doubtless show - that such a mind-set is inherently flawed. For in case after case, there has proved to be minimal if any long-term gain.

Indeed it should be obvious to all but the most blind that competition cannot produce only winners. For today's unfettered competition is also producing losers – millions and millions of them in rich and poor countries alike. Indeed, competition is not about social justice, economic or environmental security – indeed not; competition, my friends, is about *winning*! That is why nothing less than a total rejection of the competition paradigm will be required by all the multi-lateral institutions and their member nations if the universal human need for social justice, economic and environmental security is ever to be met.

Albert Einstein said: "No problem can be solved with the same thinking that created it". That is why, ladies and gentlemen, any engagement by Civil Society with any multi-lateral institution whose policies are predicated on a continuation of the existing competition paradigm can never provide lasting answers to current global problems. It is also why any Civil Society Organisation accepting that flawed paradigm – tacitly or otherwise – risks finding itself subverted and co-opted to the prevailing competition mind-set which serves only to perpetuate and exacerbate the current sorry state of affairs - even when it thinks it is helping to solve it.

The Simultaneous Policy, by contrast, offers a boldly different means by which politicians, voters, and civil society activists can work together to reverse the self-destructive economic policies pursued by those multi-lateral institutions and their member countries who uphold the Washington Consensus – a process for change that has already aroused interest among economists, ecologists, journalists, NGOs - and even some politicians. I therefore hope there might be time to debate such radical new propositions. But if not, I cordially invite you to find out more about the Simultaneous Policy. My colleagues and I working on this project in many countries around the world will be pleased to welcome your enquiries and your active collaboration.

Thank you.

John Bunzl

Director and Founder
International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (ISPO)
P.O. Box 26547, London SE3 7YT, UK.

www.simpol.org

info@simpol.org

Fax: +44 (0)20-8460 2035