

Study Guide for the Australian Collaboration Fact and Issue Sheet

INTERNATIONAL TRADE JUSTICE

FOR REVIEW

1. Which five countries are currently the leading exemplars of trade-led development?
- 2a. Is a more open international trading system always of benefit to developing countries?
- 2b. If not, then what are the main impediments faced by developing nations in gaining access to the potential benefits of trade?
3. Are there any potential risks associated with the policy of rapid reductions in tariffs (taxes on imports) in developing countries, and, if so, what are they?
4. What is the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and what are its two main functions?
5. Name one significant feature common to all WTO agreements.
6. When and where was the current round of WTO negotiations launched, and what was one of its main intentions?
7. Name five significant outcomes of the current round of WTO negotiations.
8. Based on your answers to the above question, would you agree that the negotiations have not yet been successful in fulfilling their stated aim?
9. What is the “Cairns Group” and what is one of its current ambitions?
10. Name two things that Australia has done, or is doing to promote trade justice.
11. Is the proposed scheme to allow temporary entry for Pacific workers into Australia currently condoned by the World Bank and other development economists?
12. Has such a scheme already been trialled elsewhere in the world, and, if so, where and for how long?
13. Name at least two things that Australia could do to promote further the goal of international trade justice.
14. In what ways can the public, corporations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) work to promote international trade justice?

FOR DISCUSSION

For each of the statements below, work in pairs or as a class to decide whether you agree or disagree, and to explain why:

1. “It is only fair that poorer countries should not be disadvantaged in their trade negotiations with richer and more powerful countries.”
2. “Trade liberalisation is a unanimous good, and should be pursued as aggressively as possible, even if it is likely to cause suffering and hardship in the short term. In the long run, everyone will benefit with greater wealth.”
3. “It is wrong for the citizens of wealthy countries to benefit at the expense of people in poorer countries—for example, by consuming products that are sourced from countries where the workers are exploited (through low wages or poor working conditions) or where child or forced labour is used.”
4. “In the event that a Pacific worker scheme is introduced in Australia, it will be important to ensure that the foreign workers are treated fairly by Australian employers and not used simply as a source of cheap labour.”
5. “In a globalised world, the problems of poverty and under-development belong to everyone, because the effects of these problems, such as crime, disease and environmental destruction, are no longer contained by national borders. Developed countries thus simply cannot afford to behave irresponsibly in their dealings with the developing world.”

FOR RESEARCH

1. Use the internet and/or any of the works on the list provided under Useful Sources to investigate further the work of the WTO and the controversies that surround the question of international trade. On what basis has the WTO been criticised in the past and what are the counter arguments to these criticisms?
2. Use the internet and/or any of the works on the list provided under Useful Sources to investigate further the Canadian foreign workers scheme. How does this scheme, and the status of foreign workers in Canada in general, compare with that of foreign workers in countries such as the US, the UK and the European countries?
3. Use the internet and/or any of the works on the list provided under Useful Sources to investigate further the issue of fair trade and corporate social responsibility. What kinds of products and which corporations have been targeted by those campaigning for fair trade and why? Have these campaigns been successful? Can you identify corporations that have been pledging to behave in ways that are socially and environmentally responsible, and, if so, how have they been demonstrating this commitment?