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### **CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF DOHA ROUND**

**Abstract:** WTO is known to be the one of the significant multilateral trade institutions. It had various rounds aimed to the reduction of tariffs and barriers. The last and still lasting round is Doha Round. Aim of the Doha Development Round is to promote development in the non- developed part of the world, by engaging them to free trade. This essay tries to analyze Doha Development Round, by answering questions such as, why was it initiated, who is benefiting from it, what are the causes of stalemate and what is the future of Doha.

**Key words:** multilateral trade, Doha round, world trade organization.

#### **Introduction**

With the active interaction of countries worldwide, there is a need for an international organisation that would control cooperation on the basis of rules and norm strengthened. The World Trade Organization (WTO), which shares the basic principles of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), was established as a result of the Uruguay Round. This provided an opportunity to all members, despite their level of economy or type of political regime, to be involved in multilateral trade negotiations.

It is argued that as a result of trade integration and greater openness, many economies started to grow, prosper and become wealthier. Moreover, it is widely believed that without the multilateral trade negotiations, there would not be the possibility for poor countries or less-developed economies to cooperate with industrialised countries in bilateral trade agreements.

Therefore, Doha Round was launched with the aim of promoting and accelerating development in undeveloped parts of the world. The core objective of this organization is to provide favorable conditions for developing countries to open their economies and to benefit from the low tariff barriers of wider markets. One well-known and impressive fact is that if Africa's global trade share were to increase by 1%, it would bring more income every year, than it is presently receiving in aid. For this reason, developed countries are highly supportive of the Doha Development Agenda. This is because, from their perspective, if developing countries take advantage of these circumstances, the resulting trade would cause growth in the economy, which would alleviate poverty and contribute to development (Hohman, 2008, 89). Development is more likely to occur more quickly in open economies than in closed ones.

However, it would be incorrect to think that integration to a multilateral trade system is the sole cause of development. Together with an open economy, there should be management of reforms and competent governance. Therefore, implementation of the Doha Development Agenda is crucial for developing countries, where most states suffer from a lack of democracy and adequate institutions (Hohman, 2008, 89).

Trade negotiations never provide a guarantee of a 100% gain. There might be losses as well as victories. Due to the intersection of various domestic and multilateral determinants, which are intensified by the influence of different audiences, negotiations have become long and challenging processes (Hohmann, 2008, 17).

The main objective of this essay is to analyse the Doha Round of the WTO. In order to provide a comprehensive analysis, it was decided to evaluate why Doha was initiated, why it is desirable to promote and establish its development in developing countries, and what are the benefits for the countries that adopt it. This essay will also examine why completing negotiations requires such a long duration of time and will explore reasons for why developing countries resist the Doha Round.

To address these questions, this essay first provides background information about the WTO and the importance of trade. Next, it explains the failure of the Uruguay Round and reasons for the establishment of the Doha Round. Subsequently, it examines how development and peace are interrelated, and how developing countries benefit from it. In the fourth part, the importance of Doha Development Agenda for developing countries will be argued. Next, this essay will describe possible reasons for the Doha stalemate. Finally, some predictions will be made about the potential future of the Doha Round.

#### WTO and multilateral trade negotiations

Multilateral trade has become a core component of national and global economic governance. The global trade regime, which is also called the World Trade Organization (WTO), has very significant importance as a global public good, by which the welfare of many economies might be affected. A majority of nations, starting with the leading trading nations, are members of this international trading system.

The main objective of the WTO is to arrange trading rules between the countries. Various agreements and decisions are known to be the base for the WTO, which also legally bind and obligate all member countries to common rule. All members should accept a set of requirements, known as 'single undertaking'. The foundation of contemporary trade is organised by the WTO system. One of the main objectives of this organisation is to eliminate unpredictability in the trading regime, by establishing a rule-based system (Das, 2001, 5).

Even though the WTO was created on the basis of GATT, it has a broader political and legal foundation. While GATT was just an agreement, the

WTO is an organisation with an integral dispute- settlement process (Das, 2001, 7).

In the past, GATT, and now members of the WTO, have been using multilateral trade negotiations as a mechanism for reciprocally exchanging obligations to market access.

Multilateral trade negotiations are used as a tool to lower and liberalise tariffs and trade barriers, which have high welfare costs. With each round, MTN has been successful in lowering tariffs on manufactured goods. When it was first established, tariff rates were approximately 38%, and prior to its termination in 1994, tariff rates had dropped to only 4%. However, agricultural products' tariff rates continued to be high (Das, 2005, 3).

It can be argued that with MTNs, developing countries gained more opportunities to engage in a multilateral trading system. They would not have been able to do that in bilateral negotiations as a result of poor economic and political potential (Das, 2005, 3).

It is widely known that with trade promotion, domestic firms gain access to a world market of goods, knowledge and services. Prices fall and the quality of consumer goods rises when trade expands (Das, 2005, 7).

A number of developing countries have improved their economies as a result of the liberalisation of domestic markets under the aegis of the WTO, which also facilitated trade expansion. A successful example of an economy that has been gaining from the liberalisation of the trade policy system and from globalisation is China (Chen and Ravallion, 2004, 17).

However, Rodriguez and Rodrik (Rodrik, 2001) have challenged the orthodox view about trade by stating that the belief in growth and development, which is promoted by trade, is a huge delusion. However, there are a lot of benefits from trade expansion that are noticeable, even to the untrained eye (Das, 2005, 7)

From Uruguay to Doha

The Doha Round was the first round after the WTO was created. Even if some viewed this round as a mere post-Seattle spin, members of the WTO decided that the development dimension would be the main focus of this round (Lamy, 2003). Industrial countries used the Doha Round as evidence that they have been contributing to the creation of a balanced model of globalisation (Watkins, 2003, 4). According to the Doha Ministerial Declaration, the benefits of trade are to be divided equally across the members of the WTO (WTO, 2001).

In order to analyse the launch of the Doha Round and the reasons for its initiation, the failures and achievements of the Uruguay Round must first be reviewed.

Initially, there had been many expectations from the fulfillment of the suggestions of the Uruguay Round. According to one estimate, real income in developing countries was expected to increase to between \$55 billion and \$90

billion at 1992 prices and exchange rate, or between 1.2% and 2.0% of real income, as a result of reductions of tariffs in the merchandise trade area. However, not only have estimates not been met, but it has been discovered that almost 70% of the benefits from the Uruguay Round went to the developed countries. The remaining benefits were gained by developing economies that are oriented to massive exportation (UNDP, 1997).

Moreover, the recommendations of the Uruguay Round were not projected into the post-Uruguay period. The Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) might represent a typical example of not meeting the expectations that were intended to increase the welfare gains (Das, 2005, 14).

The lack of transparency in the conduction of negotiations and its negative outcomes annoyed the developing countries. As a result of the Uruguay negotiations' recommendations, Sub-Saharan African economies worsened (World Bank, 2002).

According to Stiglitz and Charlton, the interests of industrialised countries' governments were reflected in large measure in the Uruguay Round agenda. Compromises on the market accession were mostly made in the areas of interest of developed economies. Marginal benefits were gained in important areas for developing countries, such as agriculture, textiles and apparels. Therefore, the inequality that existed in multilateral trade before the Uruguay Round became even worse (Stiglitz and Charlton, 2004, 3).

In a study conducted by the World Bank, it was stated that there appeared to be uneven, unfavourable conditions for developing countries, where developing countries sacrificed more than industrial countries (Finger and Nogues, 2002).

As a consequence of all of this negativity, which resulted from the Uruguay Round, countries decided to launch a new round in which meeting of the needs of developing countries would be central in the negotiations.

Economists and analysts of trade agree that liberalised markets for trade in manufactured goods, services and agriculture may support development and have a useful influence on poor parts of the world (Das, 2005, 5).

Why was Doha initiated and how can developed countries benefit from it?

It can be seen from history that rising inequality negatively affects political stability. Even if human beings might be able to live with inequality, its widening or growth breeds feelings such as irritation and displeasure that are unfavourable for the stability of political systems and processes (Buckley, 2003, 5).

The advantages of trade liberalisation are proclaimed by economists and Western diplomats from Davos to Doha. They state that you will benefit if you accept the liberalisation of trade. Their core argument is that as a result of true liberalisation, development would be promoted. GNP, personal income

and living standards would also be increased. Moreover, in addition to the peaceful relations between and within countries that are promoted by trade liberalisation, active growth and poverty reduction was experienced in countries that significantly integrated with the world economy. Technical and managerial expertise are brought by foreign investment. Trade liberalisation also positively influences the quality of goods, the use of resources, and also creates and advocates competition (Buckley, 2003, 9).

However, not all members would benefit from trade liberalisation, unless the involved parties control their behaviour and position.

Both developing and industrial countries are willing to gain profits from trade liberalisation, rather than to suffer losses. However, the cultural, economic and political development of some developing countries has suffered from the entrance of trade liberalisation to the global trading system. Whether a country will benefit or risk anything mostly depends on the decisions made by the government of that country. The vulnerability of domestic institutions, uncertainty of opportunities, and disproportional format of the world economy constrains the development and economic growth of developing countries (Buckley, 2003, 12).

The Doha Round had an enthusiastic plan in presenting the development of poor countries as a core objective (Bhagwati and Meyer, 2002, 24). The following is a list of reasons why developing countries' entrance to the global trade system should be supported. Firstly, the World Bank study asserts that economic growth and trade are interdependent with each other. As mentioned previously, most of the world's poor people are living in developing countries, and poverty might be reduced with their integration in trade. The UN asserted in its Millenium Declaration that 'We resolve... to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike -- which is conducive to development and to elimination of poverty. Success in meeting these objectives depends on good governance within each country. It also depends on good governance at the international level and on transparency in the financial, monetary and trading systems' (UN Millenium Declaration, 2000). Secondly, many studies have reported that democracy and development are correlated. Lipset states that, as a result of national income improvement, the equality in consumption, growth of the middle class, health care access, and decreases in illiteracy levels do occur. These improvements do not depend on whether the society is Islamic or atheist, Marxist or market-oriented, African, Asian, or European; Lipset argues that growth in a country's economy is a prerequisite of a political democracy. A country has a better chance to establish a democracy if the nation is doing well financially (Lipset, Seong and Torres, 1993, 166).

There are supporters of the view that democracy is created by development. According to Diamond, if a country and its people are doing well, there is a more significant possibility that they will achieve a democratic regime in their country (Diamond, 1992, 468).

It can be seen that trade liberalisation not only improves the economy of a country, but also makes the political situation more stable. Democracy, which might occur as a result of development, would bring peace to the region and the world overall.

The close association between democracy and peace is confirmed by both international organisations and related literature. The Charter of the Organization of American States points out that 'peace, development and stability in the region is conditioned by the representative democracy' (Buckley, 2003, 25).

It is argued that one of the ways to achieve peace is to spread democracy. Therefore, an active role in spreading democracy should be assumed by the international community. There is less possibility of a country being engaged in war if this country has a democratic regime. Conversely, authoritarian regimes might present a risk to world peace. Along with adversities and losses at the domestic level, the security of neighbouring countries has suffered from refugee immigration (Loescher, 1992, 26).

Another reason for promoting development in the developing world and launching the DDA is the costs of the war. An active war incurs not only military costs, but economic, environmental and other costs, as well. However, to date, these types of costs of wars have not been studied thoroughly. Despite the difficulties in the estimation of economic and other costs in comparison with military costs, their presence is evident (Buckley, 2003, 28). For example: As a result of oil fires that were occurring during the Gulf War, the atmosphere was poisoned from Eastern Europe to India, which caused the destruction of crops by acid rain (Blakley, 1999, 109). Entire regions, or at least neighbouring countries, might be affected by the costs of conflicts. Therefore, the democratisation and development of developing countries requires special assistance. This might be done by providing aid programs or economic programs that are focused on a development agenda, such as the Doha Round (Buckley, 2003, 30).

However, it should not be forgotten that power of knowledge plays a crucial role in this world. Since most theoretical knowledge is produced in the West, they might organise it in their favour. For example, trade agreements might be designed in a way that it would meet interests of the West rather than that of others (Buckley, 2003, 21).

Why does the DDA matter for developing countries?

As it matters for the developed world because of the implementation of peace and security, Doha also matters significantly for developing countries, especially to the least developed ones.

Firstly, along with addressing interactions between North and South, the Doha Round stimulates trade between South and South. It is known that 40% of exports are represented by trade within developing countries, which also has 62% of tariff payments to each other. By agreeing in the Doha Round,

poorer countries would gain the opportunity to access the market of emerging ones.

Secondly, the DDA improves and expands trade between North and South.

Thirdly, with the help of the Doha Round, developing and developed countries are attempting to negotiate on the sectors that are challenging and crucial for developing countries, such as cotton, sugar and bananas.

Finally, the DDA provides an opportunity for developing countries to build a capacity to trade, which means the ability to develop and build their infrastructure. In order to benefit from their market access, developing countries should learn how to develop their means and build an infrastructure. It is impossible to benefit from market access merely by having open markets. Therefore, as a final action of the Doha Round, the European Union (EU) has suggested creating the *Aid for Trade Package for Developing Countries*.

Why has it taken so long?

According to the observations of Razeen Sally, during the Doha Round, low-income economies were afraid of being involved in agreements that they would not be able to implement, as occurred during the Uruguay Round. This explains the defensive attitude by small and medium-sized economies (Sally, 2003).

This is not the only reason why the Doha Round has experienced stalemate.

There are many problems that are regularly cited. Firstly, many aspects have changed from the first establishment of the Doha Round, over a decade ago. As Aaditya Mattoo and Arvind Subramanian note, ‘when the Doha Round . . . was launched, in 2001, the price of oil was \$25 a barrel, a ton of rice cost \$170, China’s current account surplus was two percent of the country’s GDP, US financial institutions were at the vanguard of globalization, and the term “sovereign wealth fund” could have been mistakenly thought to refer to the retirement kitty of an aging monarch’ (Scott and Wilkinson, 2010, 141).

Secondly, according to the developing countries, the main reason for the Doha stalemate is the resistance of the US and EU to settle upon a substantial deal in the agricultural sector, in response to the concessions that are asked to be made from developing countries in the Non-Agricultural Market Access sector (Khor, 2012, 6).

It is argued that, even if the agricultural sector is not the only area that determines the development of developing countries, industrial economies still should change their practices. After extensive negotiations, the EU and US agreed to cut subsidies to agriculture. However, developing countries complained that these agreed levels of cuts would not have a significant impact (Hohmann, 2008, 13).

In turn, developed countries (mostly dominated by business lobbies and the US administration) argued that the unwillingness of developing countries,

especially emerging powers, to provide suitable offers is the most common reason cited for the delay (Ismail, 2012, 31).

Thus, it might be suggested that at the heart of the stalemate of the Doha Round lays the conflict between the majority of developing countries and the minority of developed ones. An interesting point is that emerging powers that represent developing countries have already emerged, and currently they are not only available to resist, but ready to set the changes and influence the outcome of the negotiations (Cammack, 2012).

The concept of the developmental round entails that most of the developing economies have rights to avoid cutting their tariffs or to choose not to arrange new market access. Developed countries are opposed to the idea that large emerging economies, which are gaining from global trade, should make no concessions. From the perspective of the developed world, large emerging countries, such as China, Brazil and India, are not compared with countries like Burkina Faso or Benin. Therefore, emerging economies should also contribute to the trading regime by proportionally cutting their tariffs. While the growing economies of the developing world are beginning to pull away from the poorer parts of this world, they continue to call upon the solidarity of the developing world. Negotiators and the public from the developed world are not willing to sign an agreement in which the contribution of booming economies is increasingly small.

However, this does not mean that emerging economies should provide a full reciprocity. But the contemporary position of large export powerhouses, which gained their growth by actively engaging in the open trade system, pushes them to contribute to a reasonable extent. It is argued that the Doha Round will be resolved only when the political question of increasing the accountability (and responsibility) of growing economies is settled (Hohmann, 2008, 14).

Another important point is that besides the conflicts between the developing and developed world, there are more complex conflicts between emerging powers and the rest of the developing countries. The fact that most of the benefits of negotiations are going to the growing countries strengthens the lack of shared social purpose (Muzaka and Bishop, 2015, 386).

In addition, the lack of transparency and the historical method of deciding agreements in small groups, and then presenting the plan to the rest of the participants, is another reason why Doha has not yet been finished. As mentioned previously, developing countries like Brazil, China and India who were participants of these smaller groups were not representing a wider membership, but individual states (Muzaka and Bishop, 2015, 404).

Why do developing countries resist?

It is evident that in the Doha Development Agenda, more resistance originates from the developing world. This results from the fact that developing countries perceive themselves to be losers from the Uruguay Round and do not

want to repeat the same mistakes. However, many economic analyses show that the net benefits to the developing world from the Uruguay Round were fairly significant (Stiglitz and Charlton, 2004, 56). Despite the fact that, according to the estimates, developing countries' net benefits were positive, there remained regions that were worse off. The 48 least-developed countries were worse off by \$600 million, and sub-Saharan Africa was worse off by \$1.2 billion (UNDP, 1997). Therefore, it appears that for the developing countries, any new round would likely have the same effect as the Uruguay Round (Gallagher, 2008, 74).

Moreover, the reasons for the resistance of developing countries may partly lay in the strikingly small amount of benefits they derive from the cuts in agricultural tariffs and subsidies by developed countries, while policy space losses under the Doha Round are cumulatively large (Gallagher, 2008, 78). Accepting the deal would be too politically difficult for developing countries. Gains would not have been high, not that losses in NAMA (Gallagher, 2008, 80).

#### The future of Doha

Over the last few years, results and a possible conclusion of the Doha Development Round have become a central topic of various analyses. Scholars are attempting to predict whether the Doha Round would end positively or negatively, and who is going to gain the most benefits from it.

A special mention of African countries is necessary during the discussion of trade and development. It is believed that as a result of the benefits from the DDA, more resources would be generated for Africa and other poor economies. The benefits would be more than from other development assistance programs. Moreover, foreign investment flows would be enhanced by the liberalisation and greater openness of trade borders. In the various analyses of the DDA, it has been shown that particularly African countries would gain from the outcome and application of a *Trade Facilitation Agreement*. As a result of the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda, efficiency might be increased, greater competitive impetus might be stimulated, and new ideas with benefits in productivity would be introduced (Hohmann, 2008, 34).

In contrast to the significant benefits from the conclusion of the DDA, the African continent and low-income economies are suffering great damages. Encouraging performance has been seen in Sub-Saharan Africa over the past years. Reports prepared by the OECD and the African Development Bank show that Africa as a whole has experienced significant GDP growth.

The reality is that Africa and other low-income economies are not a part of the trade system of the global economy. Without the implementation of the Doha Development Agenda, it would be difficult to negotiate with developed countries in a bilateral regime and achieve the successful results of recent years. In the elimination of trade barriers and in the stimulation of

development, multilateral trade negotiations and the Doha Round are the best options for Africa and low-income countries (Hohmann, 2008, 36).

After analysing all points, it can be seen that collapse of Doha Round, despite the uncertainty of the outcome, is extremely unlikely. By taking into account historical situations, what is at stake should be understood by all members. The system is experiencing the shock from the deadlock of negotiations, even though members had received warnings for months from Director General Lamy about the costs of failure and about what was at stake (Hohmann, 2008, 23).

The important aspect that should be considered during the prediction of the future of the DDA is the distinguishability between the future of the Doha Round and the WTO itself. While there is a significant interdependence between both, the pillar of the multilateral trading system, the WTO, should not be perceived to be in jeopardy. Without any doubt, strength would be gained by organisation and a multilateral trading system in the case of the positive conclusion of the DDA. But an unsuccessful outcome of the Doha negotiations would not create fatal consequences for a multilateral trading system and organisation.

It is argued that organisation is the anchor of the architecture of international negotiations. Since we are living in a globalised world, countries are interdependent on each other. Accordingly, if there were not any organisations that control international cooperation, the creation of a new one would be necessary. Several observers have noted that although the validity of the WTO would be influenced by the failure of the DDA, it would nevertheless remain and prosper.

Another important function of the WTO is to improve transparency and to distinguish the policies and practices of a country's trade, by monitoring with the Trade Policy Review Mechanism. Therefore, there should not be any doubts about the future of the WTO (Hohmann, 2008, 35).

#### Conclusion

The World Trade Organization was established in 1995, as a result of the Uruguay Round. However, the background of the World Trade Organization expands to the five decades of the history of this institution. This institutional history that includes learning and evolution has brought the multilateral trading regime to its present state.

The end of World War Two gave birth to various international organisations and systems. However, not all of them could achieve the success that the multilateral trade system had reached. Starting with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and continuing with the WTO, the multilateral trade system could reduce tariffs and barriers to international trade. The main objective of the regime is to provide more open markets and freer trade. It can be seen from the number of member countries that demand for the regime is high. GATT had 23 contracting parties, while today, the members of

the WTO exceed 150 countries.

It is widely believed that trade liberalisation, which has a multilateral basis, makes it easier for countries to reduce risks that might originate from unilateral market opening. Moreover, scholars argue that freer trade alleviates poverty and helps economies to grow. Taking this view into consideration, the Doha Development Round was launched. It was aimed at promoting and activating development in the developing world.

The aim of this essay has been to evaluate the Doha Development Round by firstly evaluating the reasons for the initiation of Doha, such as dissatisfaction with the results of the Uruguay Round. Moreover, the argument that freer trade and open markets cause economic growth, a rise in education level, and poverty alleviation have caused scholars to think that trade liberalisation is the key for development. However, this essay argues that, combined with free trade, accurate governmental policy is also important in the development process. It is also mentioned that economic growth and development might cause democracy and peace, as well as reducing the costs associated with war. Secondly, this evaluation analysed the benefits of Doha for both developing countries, such as the stimulation of South -- South trade, the expansion of trade between North and South, and the opportunity for developing countries to develop and to build their infrastructure. Subsequently, this essay also considered the reasons for the Doha stalemate and explained why developing countries resisted Doha. Finally, taking all points into consideration, it can be concluded that the collapse of the Doha Development Round is extremely unlikely. Some people believe that the failure of Doha might bring the failure of the WTO itself. However, this essay argues that despite the losses from this failure for both the developing and developed worlds, such a failure would not harm the WTO and would not affect its future.

There are many positive and negative predictions about the future of the Doha Round; however, its actual future cannot be predicted with certainty.

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### **ДОХА САУДА АЙНАЛЫМЫ (СЫНИ ТАЛДАУ)**

**Андатпа:** Дүниежүзілік сауда ұйымы дүниежүзіне белгілі көпжақты сауда мекемесі болып табылады. Қазіргі таңда тарифтер мен кедергілерді қысқарту үшін көзделген әртүрлі айналымдары өткізілуде. Соңғы және жалғасып келе жатқан айналым-Доха сауда айналымы. Доха сауда айналымының мақсаты - әлемнің дамымаған елдерінің еркін сауда жасауларына жәрдемдесу. Бұл эссе, Доха айналымы не себепті басталған, кім пайда табады, тығырықтан шығудың жолдары қандай және Доха сауда айналымының келешегі қандай деген сұрақтарға жауап бере отырып талдау жүргізеді.

**Кілт сөздер:** көпжақты мәміле, Доха сауда айналымы, дүниежүзілік сауда ұйымы.

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### **КРИТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ ДОХА РАУНД**

**Аннотация:** ВТО, как известно, является одним из существенных многосторонних торговых учреждений. В ВТО проводятся различные раунды, которые нацелены к сокращению тарифов и барьеров. Последний и все еще длящийся раунд – Доха-раунд. Цель развития Доха-раунда состоит в том, чтобы содействовать развитию в неразвитых частях мира, привлекая их к свободной торговле. Это эссе анализирует развитие Доха - раунд, отвечая на такие вопросы, как и почему был начат Доха - раунд, кто извлекает выгоду из этого, что является причинами безвыходного положения и какое будущее Дохи.

**Ключевые слова:** многосторонняя сделка, Доха-раунд, всемирная торговая организация.