

**Statement of the
Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)
on the WTO Review**

We appreciate that the Philippines is part of the international community's re-examination of the globalization process and WTO. WTO agreements, discussions toward agreements, and their implementation – are part of the problem. We welcome these discussions on the run-up to the 4th Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Qatar on 9-13 November 2001.

We together with the ICFTU again ask the Philippine government a re-examination of the globalization process, the role of the WTO, the implications on the Philippines, and the importance of basic rights, including workers' rights. A meaningful evaluation of WTO should analyze the implications of WTO on the daily lives of people, whether the conditions of work and life of people have improved or deteriorated.

Experts would say evidence is still inconclusive, but the evidence is around for all to see.

Globalization has not delivered. Worse, negative effects have been more pervasive than once projected, and positive effects have been concentrated in developed countries and in the developed groups in the developing countries. The haves continuing to increase what they have, the have-nots continuing to make do with the little that they have.

Implications on workers, formal labor, informal sector, women, youth, children have been devastating. Delivery of government services has been deteriorating.

On the more important issue of job generation, WTO has not helped. In the Philippines, WTO has been associated more with layoffs, retrenchments, and downsizing – than with job creation. TUCP believes employment needs to be the center of economic policymaking – and the WTO, and the Philippine government, should concentrate on this xx. The urgency of quick and decisive action on employment is imperative given the difficult and delicate socio-economic and political situation worldwide.

The Philippine GATT/WTO safety nets fund should be re-directed and re-focused on productive community-based job creation.

There is also a need to speed up an agreement on the free movement of labor – to facilitate productive migration, to prevent government and private sector abuses against overseas workers, and to ease pressure on domestic unemployment.

We note that intense competition for investments among countries is undermining respect for labor standards. Investors of all nationalities, in their search for the lowest cost and the highest profits, are taking advantage and exploiting workers and busting unions all over.

We reiterate our call for the WTO and governments to speed up the inclusion of fair rules and core labor rights, as defined by the ILO, in the world trading system. We call on IFIs (international financial institutions) for greater voice and meaningful labor participation and guarantees for labor standards in their grants, loans, programs, and projects.

WTO and governments' sense of priorities are indecently clear: agreements on intellectual property rights have taken precedence over workers' rights. All said, we all have a responsibility to make globalization, and WTO, and governments, and IFIs, work for all people. Development is not for advantaged groups alone; development should be for everybody.