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WTO Talks Break Down - Opportunity for a New Approach **Badly Needed Reform Must Put Peoples' Interests First**

Minneapolis/Geneva - Today's collapse of world trade talks in Geneva provides an important opportunity for WTO members to inject some fresh thinking into the international trading system that better reflects the interests of working people around the world, said the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP).

Carin Smaller, Director of IATP's Geneva Office, commented on today's events:

"It is time to confront the limitations of the current model and turn toward devising multilateral trade rules focused on improving people's livelihoods, increasing employment and providing the space for poor countries to develop their economies."

"The direction of the WTO and the current negotiations were so unpopular that members decided to suspend the Doha talks indefinitely. WTO members are confronting a hard reality. The contradictions between the promised benefits at the global level and the empirical evidence on the ground are harder and harder to explain. People around the world are aware of how the liberalization of trade and finance is affecting their daily lives and are refusing to accept the current approach."

"The current WTO system has been devastating for small scale farmers all over the developing world and hasn't worked for family farmers in the U.S. either. There is a fairly broad consensus that we have a system that is cracking at its seams. A series of studies over the last year by institutions such as the World Bank, different UN agencies and researchers from the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace concluded that rich countries will reap far more benefits than poor countries from a Doha Round, and the projected benefits for the poorest countries are steadily shrinking.

"WTO members can no longer pretend that this new evidence does not exist. We know a lot more than we did 10 years ago when the WTO began. People will no longer accept an outcome that will continue to devastate rural communities and undermine access to decent working conditions."

In a series of short papers, IATP has reported on how the Doha negotiations continually undercut rules that could help farmers and rural communities around the world. IATP's series is available at www.tradeobservatory.org:

- * Why is Doha Failing?
- * On the Right Path to Development, African Countries Pave the Way.
- * U.S. Boxed into a Corner at the WTO
- * Moment of Truth: Reconciling the WTO's Trade Paradigm with Development Goals

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works globally to promote resilient family farms, communities and ecosystems through research and education, science and technology, and advocacy. www.iatp.org.