

## Richmond Journal of Global Law & Business

---

Volume 12 | Issue 1

Article 5

---

2012

# Beyond Labor Rights: Which Core Human Rights Must Regional Trade Agreements Protect?

Stephen Joseph Powell  
*University of Florida Levin College of Law*

Trisha Low  
*Deutsche Bank*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/global>

 Part of the [Comparative and Foreign Law Commons](#), and the [International Trade Law Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Stephen J. Powell & Trisha Low, *Beyond Labor Rights: Which Core Human Rights Must Regional Trade Agreements Protect?*, 12 Rich. J. Global L. & Bus. 91 (2012).  
Available at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/global/vol12/iss1/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Richmond Journal of Global Law & Business by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu](mailto:scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu).

# BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS: WHICH CORE HUMAN RIGHTS MUST REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS PROTECT?

*Stephen Joseph Powell and Trisha Low<sup>1</sup>*

## CONTENTS

I. ABSTRACT .....	93	R
II. INTRODUCTION .....	94	R
A. <i>Role of Regional Trade Agreements</i> .....	94	R
B. <i>The ILO Model</i> .....	96	R
C. <i>The Present Study</i> .....	97	R
III. TRADE AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE .....	98	R
A. <i>Introduction</i> .....	98	R
B. <i>Emerging Human Right to Democratic Governance</i> .....	99	R
C. <i>Democratic Governance in International Conventions</i> .....	100	R
D. <i>Linkage Between Trade and Democratic Governance</i> .....	101	R
E. <i>Core Rights of Democracy</i> .....	103	R
1. Full Participation in the Political Process .....	104	R
2. Rule of Law .....	106	R
F. <i>Concerns of Sovereignty</i> .....	107	R
G. <i>Conclusion</i> .....	108	R
IV. TRADE AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS .....	109	R
A. <i>Introduction</i> .....	109	R
B. <i>The Link Between Gender and Trade</i> .....	110	R
C. <i>The Role of Regional Trade Agreements in Promoting Women’s Rights</i> .....	112	R
D. <i>Core Principles With Respect to Women and Trade</i> .....	113	R
1. Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in the Workplace .....	114	R
E. <i>Equality of Investments in Physical Capital</i> .....	117	R
1. Equality in Access to Financing .....	118	R
2. Access to Technology .....	119	R

<sup>1</sup> Professor Powell teaches courses at the intersection of international trade law and international human rights law at the University of Florida’s Levin College of Law, and directs the College’s International Trade Law Program. Before joining the College, Powell was Chief Counsel for the Import Administration in the U.S. Department of Commerce for seventeen years. After graduating from the University of Florida’s Levin College of Law in 2006, Ms. Low specialized in complex financial transactions in London and now serves as Assistant Vice President for Deutsche Bank. The authors gratefully acknowledge the research assistance of UF Law students Miles Belknap, Ryan Kitcat, Apryl Scott, and Liridona Sinani.



92 RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS [Vol. 12:1

F.	<i>Right of Participation</i> .....	120	R
G.	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	121	R
V.	TRADE AND HEALTH .....	121	R
A.	<i>Introduction</i> .....	121	R
B.	<i>Relationship Between Trade and Health</i> .....	122	R
C.	<i>Right to Essential Medicines</i> .....	122	R
D.	<i>Food Safety</i> .....	128	R
E.	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	135	R
VI.	TRADE AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS .....	135	R
A.	<i>Introduction</i> .....	135	R
B.	<i>Link Between Trade and Indigenous Rights</i> .....	138	R
C.	<i>The Role of RTAs in Indigenous Rights</i> .....	139	R
D.	<i>Core Principles for Indigenous Peoples</i> .....	140	R
1.	Right to Own Land and Resources .....	140	R
2.	Protection of Traditional Knowledge .....	144	R
3.	Access to Education .....	148	R
4.	Participation in Decision-Making .....	150	R
E.	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	151	R
VII.	TRADE AND WORKER RIGHTS .....	151	R
A.	<i>Introduction</i> .....	151	R
B.	<i>Link Between Trade and Labor</i> .....	153	R
C.	<i>Core Labor Principles under the ILO</i> .....	154	R
1.	Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining .....	154	R
2.	Elimination of All Forms of Compulsory or Forced Labor .....	156	R
3.	Abolition of Child Labor .....	157	R
4.	Elimination of Employment and Occupational Discrimination .....	158	R
D.	<i>Additional Labor Rights</i> .....	160	R
1.	Right to Minimum Wages .....	161	R
2.	Right to Acceptable Working Conditions .....	163	R
3.	Physical Risks .....	167	R
4.	Chemical and Biological Risks .....	168	R
E.	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	170	R
VIII.	TRADE AND A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT .....	171	R
A.	<i>Introduction</i> .....	171	R
B.	<i>International Conventions Addressing a Healthy Environment</i> .....	173	R
C.	<i>Link Between Trade and a Healthy Environment</i> .....	175	R
D.	<i>Core Rights with Respect to a Healthy Environment</i> .....	176	R
1.	Right to Safe Food and Water .....	176	R
2.	Right to Participate in Decision-Making .....	178	R
3.	Right to Sustainable Development .....	179	R
4.	Right to Application of Polluter Pays Principle .....	181	R
5.	Right to Application of Precautionary Principle .....	183	R
E.	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	187	R
IX.	OVERALL CONCLUSION .....	187	R



2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

93

## I. ABSTRACT

As World Trade Organization (“WTO”) Members relentlessly pursue new regional trade agreements to achieve even faster economic growth than the extraordinary numbers posted by global trade rules, the smaller number of parties and their greater cultural affinity have led negotiators to address the intersection of trade and human rights to an extent unparalleled in the culturally disparate and near-unmanageable, 150-plus member WTO itself. These new provisions have used trade’s huge power to improve worker rights, secure environmental protections, and make initial inroads toward defending indigenous populations from trade’s adverse effects. Employing the perspectives both of trade negotiators and students of this halting progress toward the integration of trade and human rights, we have concluded that the single greatest barrier to engaging in regional trade agreements (“RTAs”) openly and unequivocally to reduce global poverty through human rights implementation is the near-impenetrable complexity of human rights norms.

Captured within dozens of United Nations human rights treaties and a growing *corpus* of customary international norms, human rights law embraces literally hundreds of specific entitlements, each by U.N. guarantee designated as indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated. This foreboding array of obligations, each ostensibly of equal rank, whose legal intricacies are sometimes beyond the experience and training of trade ministries, explains the reluctance of trade negotiators to undertake the responsibility for further integration of trade rules with human rights, and does so more credibly than the oft-cited reason that trade rules succeed only when they single-mindedly pursue economic growth.

The breakthrough in worker rights may be attributed directly to the International Labor Organization’s (“ILO’s”) endorsement, at WTO urging, of four core human rights standards inarguably tied to international trade. The ILO’s Work Declaration chooses those core standards for workers that are inarguably and inextricably linked to trade without downplaying the importance of the hundreds of worker protections identified in dozens of other ILO conventions. This choice has freed trade negotiators to concentrate on incorporating these core worker rights in regional trade agreements, a manageable task that has met with great success.

Encouraged by the ILO precedent, we identify those core standards in each of six categories of human rights that are so closely linked to trade and so fundamental in importance that their exclusion from RTAs cannot reasonably be argued. We justify in some detail our selection of those core aspects of the human rights of women, indigenous cultures, health, the environment, and democratic governance that stand at the same level of importance to trade as do the four core

labor standards identified by the ILO. With respect to the core labor standards, we explain in greater detail the specific obligations placed on states for implementation of worker rights in RTAs.

By identifying a limited and manageable body of fundamental human rights standards in those human rights fields most closely affected by trade, we believe that trade negotiators may more successfully use RTAs to accomplish the symbiosis of trade and human rights that is inherent in their basic objectives. This symbiosis can accomplish the goal of increased economic growth together with increased standards of well-being of civil society.

We begin our study with the most difficult case to make: that there are core standards in the emerging right to democracy that must be included in RTAs regardless of the form of governance of the parties. We next take up the human rights of women most often implicated by trade liberalization and proceed, in turn, to treat the core human rights of health, of indigenous populations, and of workers. We conclude by identifying core standards of the emerging human right to a healthy environment.

## II. INTRODUCTION

### A. *Role of Regional Trade Agreements*

The relentless process of trade liberalization, that is, the expansion of markets for the export of goods and services, forcefully pursues the reduction of government-imposed border barriers to lessen the costs of transnational commerce.<sup>2</sup> WTO Members have achieved such reductions in no small part by using RTAs.<sup>3</sup> The use of RTAs is widely debated, including whether their proliferation marks a turning point for the WTO's utility,<sup>4</sup> but their explosive numbers— Members

<sup>2</sup> BERTA HERNÁNDEZ-TRUYOL & STEPHEN JOSEPH POWELL, *JUST TRADE: A NEW COVENANT LINKING TRADE AND HUMAN RIGHTS* 30 (2009)[hereinafter *JUST TRADE*].

<sup>3</sup> Antoni Estevadeordal & Kati Suominen, *Bridging Regional Trade Agreements in the Americas* viii, *Special Report on Integration and Trade* (Inter-Amer. Dev. Bank 2009), available at <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=2252290>.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Joseph Powell & Trisha Low, *Is the WTO Quietly Fading Away? The New Regionalism and Global Trade Rules*, 9 *GEO. J. L. & PUB. POL'Y* 261, 282 (2011). Because of RTAs, over half of the world's goods cross borders without the discipline of the GATT's venerable pillar against discrimination, the Most-favored Nation Clause. Antoni Estevadeordal & Kati Suominen, *supra* note 3. As dolefully put in the Sutherland Report on the occasion of the WTO's 10th anniversary, "nearly five decades after the founding of the GATT, MFN is no longer the rule; it is almost an exception." *THE FUTURE OF THE WTO: ADDRESSING INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM* (WTO 2004), [http://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/10anniv\\_e/future\\_wto\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/10anniv_e/future_wto_e.htm).

2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

95

have reported over 500 to the WTO as of January 2012—<sup>5</sup>evidence the belief of Members that RTAs can increase economic growth beyond the limits achievable through global trade rules alone.

RTAs can be tools both in achieving multilateral economic growth and in reducing global poverty. Because each country faces specific barriers and challenges, trade liberalization affects each country differently. With fewer negotiating partners and usually close cultural connections, RTAs often are able to address issues that are beyond the reach of a larger international organization, such as the WTO, with its 150+ Members of starkly differing economic, political, and religious propensities.

In recognition of this greater meeting of cultural minds, RTAs have begun to address the intersection of trade with human rights, particularly in the area of worker rights and environmental protection, with the occasional foray into protecting indigenous populations from trade's adverse effects. In negotiating these agreements, policy makers must understand the linkages between trade and human rights with respect to gender, health, indigenous rights, workers, the environment, and democratic governance. Mastering the effects of these intersections has been a daunting task, given the study required to master international human rights law. As stated in the foundation work on these intersections:

The consensus documents that make up this blueprint [for human rights in the 21st century) address issues ranging from environment to education; from universality of rights to respect for cultural traditions; from population growth to economic growth and sustainable development; from gender equity and equality to the empowerment of women; from the role of the family to the role of government; from health to migration; from equity among generations to the placing of people at the center of development; from the recognition that social development is both a national and international concern to the recognition of the need to integrate economic, cultural, and social policies to achieve desired ends; and from employment to affordable housing so that the health, education, and welfare goals of individuals, families, governments, and the global community can be met.<sup>6</sup>

It is often stated that trade officials shun integration of the human rights regime because trade liberalization requires unremit-

<sup>5</sup> *Regional Trade Agreements Gateway*, WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION, [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/region\\_e/region\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/region_e/region_e.htm) (last visited Jan. 22, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> JUST TRADE, *supra* note 2, at 50.

ting pursuit of wealth maximization through the benefits of comparative advantage.<sup>7</sup> Our conclusion, after considerable study,<sup>8</sup> is that international human rights law to date has failed to present trade officials with a workable body of rights that fit the singular confines of the trade regime.

With a smaller body of human rights with which to work, and in the knowledge that each of these rights has a close and undeniable linkage to trade, trade negotiators may more easily identify areas where trade liberalization can advance broader domestic goals and where RTAs potentially undermine other public policy priorities. Our present study aims to stimulate this understanding.

### B. *The ILO Model*

Many trade agreements touch upon human rights issues. In almost all cases, however, the language is aspirational and does not set out specific mechanisms for implementing compliance with these rights, including penalties for non-compliance. Although the examples discussed in this paper demonstrate a global concern for human rights issues with respect to trade, they also demonstrate the difficulty in transforming deontological human rights concepts into concrete, RTA-friendly, solutions. Based on our experience, a major hindrance to this transformation has been the plethora of specific human rights protected by U.N. treaties.

As but one example, the right to health encompasses access to essential medications, availability of medical care, safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, and assurances of rest and leisure from work. It protects health-related education and information, adequate nutrition and housing, safe food, healthy working conditions, and wholesome environmental conditions. The right to health also ensures freedom from non-consensual medical treatments, special consideration for child and reproductive health, participation in health-related decision-making at the national and community level, and gender

---

<sup>7</sup> See DAVID HUNTER, JAMES SALZMAN & DURWOOD ZAELEKE, *INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY* 1198 (4th ed. 2011).

<sup>8</sup> See Stephen J. Powell & Paola A. Chavarro, *Toward a Vibrant Peruvian Middle Class: Effects of the Peru-United States Free Trade Agreement on Labor Rights, Biodiversity, and Indigenous Populations*, 20 FLA. J. INT'L L. 93 (2008), Stephen J. Powell, *Regional Economic Arrangements and the Rule of Law in the Americas: The Human Rights Face of Trade Agreements*, 17 FLA. J. INT'L L. 59, 61-2 (2005)[hereinafter Powell, *Regional Economic Arrangements*], and Stephen J. Powell, *The Place of Human Rights Law in World Trade Organization Rules*, 16 FLA. J. INT'L L. 219, 224 (2004).

equality.<sup>9</sup> Faced with this bewildering arsenal of health rights, none of which is singled out as more important than any other, trade negotiators may be forgiven their hesitation to attempt to contribute through RTAs to a healthier civil society.

Following the Ministerial Conference in Singapore in 1996, the WTO issued a declaration recognizing that, while trade liberalization has created more and better paying jobs in many countries and has created opportunities for growth and development, not all of the effects on civil society have been positive.<sup>10</sup> Liberalized trade's challenges include balancing the problems trade creates for realization of human rights against the acknowledged economic benefits of trade.

The Singapore Declaration went on to affirm the WTO's commitment to core labor standards, which it found fell under the U.N.'s International Labor Organization (ILO) jurisdiction. Taking up the challenge, two years later, the ILO adopted the Declaration of Rights and Principles at Work by consensus,<sup>11</sup> setting out the four core standards that have the most insistent linkage to international trade. As the ILO notes, the Declaration "recognizes that economic growth alone is not enough to ensure equity, social progress and to eradicate poverty."<sup>12</sup>

### C. *The Present Study*

We propose to identify in this study the core standards in each of six categories of human rights that are so closely linked to trade and so fundamental in importance that their exclusion from RTAs cannot reasonably be argued. In the sections that follow, we identify and justify our selection in some detail of those core aspects of the human rights of women, indigenous cultures, health, the environment, and democratic governance that stand at the same level of importance to trade as do the four core labor standards identified by the ILO. With respect to the ILO Work Declaration's core labor standards, which have generally been accepted as necessary for inclusion in RTAs,<sup>13</sup> we

<sup>9</sup> World Health Organization [WHO], *The Right to Health*, at 2-3, Fact Sheet No. 31 (June 2008), available at <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Factsheet31.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> World Trade Organization [WTO], Ministerial Declaration of 13 Dec. 1996, WT/MIN(96)/DEC (1996), available at [http://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/minist\\_e/min96\\_e/wtodec\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min96_e/wtodec_e.htm) [hereinafter Singapore Declaration].

<sup>11</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 86th Sess., 37 I.L.M. 1233, 1235 (1998), available at <http://www.ilo.org/declaration/thedeclaration/lang-en/index.htm> [hereinafter ILO Work Declaration].

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Trade Promotion Agreement, U.S.-Peru, Apr. 12, 2006, art. 17.2, available at <http://www.ustr.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/agreements/fta/peru/asset->



98 RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS [Vol. 12:1

explain in greater detail the specific obligations placed on states for implementation of the worker rights in RTAs.

### III. TRADE AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

#### A. Introduction

Trade permits countries to interact economically regardless of their form of governance. For example, the communist People's Republic of China and the democratic European Union are two of the biggest trading partners in the world,<sup>14</sup> despite destabilizing differences in their views on political participation in governance by civil society and adherence to other human rights.<sup>15</sup> Nearly 160 states participate harmoniously as Members of the WTO without regard to their authoritarian, commonwealth, communist, democratic, monarchic, or republican forms of governance.<sup>16</sup>

Debate continues as to whether democracy is the form of government best suited to promote liberalized trade. Whatever the evidence ultimately demonstrates in this respect, a close linkage between democratic governance and economic rights is widely accepted.<sup>17</sup> As the great Indian economist Amartya Sen famously observed, no country with freedom of the press and open elections has ever been afflicted with famine.<sup>18</sup> Given this close connection, and in light of the emerging human right to democratic governance, the core standards of democratic governance that we identify here must be included in RTAs, regardless of the form of government of the contracting parties. In this

---

upload-file73-9496.pdf; Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement, Aug. 5, 2004, art. 16.1, *available at* [http://www.ustr.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/agreements/cafta/asset\\_upload\\_file320\\_3936.pdf](http://www.ustr.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/agreements/cafta/asset_upload_file320_3936.pdf); Comunidad Andina (Andean Pact or CAN), Dec. 545, Andean Labor Migration Instrument, ch. 5, Jun. 25, 2003, *available at* <http://www.comunidadandina.org/ingles/normativa/D545e.htm>; and Declaración Socio-laboral del Mercosur, Dec. 19, 1998, arts. 1-10, *available at* [http://www.mercosur.int/msweb/Documentos/Publicados/Declaraciones%20Conjuntas/003671668\\_CMC\\_10-12-1998\\_DECL-DPR\\_S-N\\_IN\\_SocioLaboral.pdf](http://www.mercosur.int/msweb/Documentos/Publicados/Declaraciones%20Conjuntas/003671668_CMC_10-12-1998_DECL-DPR_S-N_IN_SocioLaboral.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> *China*, EUROPEAN COMMISSION, <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/bilateral-relations/countries/china/> (last visited Jan. 2, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Duncan Freeman & Gustaaf Geeraerts, *Europe, China, and Expectations for Human Rights*, 4 CHINESE J. INT'L POLITICS 179, 181 (2011), *available at* <http://cjpj.oxfordjournals.org/content/4/2/179.full.pdfhtml>.

<sup>16</sup> *Members and Observers, Understanding the WTO: The Organization*, WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION, [http://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/whatis\\_e/tif\\_e/org6\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/org6_e.htm) (last visited Jan. 2, 2013); *The World Factbook – Appendix B*, U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2128.html> (last visited Jan. 2, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> JUST TRADE, *supra* note 2, at 250.

<sup>18</sup> Amartya Sen, *Freedom and Needs: An Argument for the Primacy of Political Rights*, THE NEW REPUBLIC, Jan. 10, 1994, at 34-35.

paper, we make the boldest proposal of the entire paper, that the core democratic standards we identify here must be included in RTAs regardless of the form of governance of the parties.

### B. *Emerging Human Right to Democratic Governance*

Traditional international law was indifferent to a sovereign state's form of governance. As recently as 1986, the International Court of Justice, in rejecting the U.S. argument for a right of intervention, observed that adherence by Nicaragua to a "particular ideology or political system," even, as suggested by the U.S. Congress, a totalitarian communist dictatorship, "does not constitute a violation of customary international law."<sup>19</sup> However, legal scholars have argued that these principles are not absolute.

In fact, since the fall of the Soviet Union and other communist states from 1989 to 1991, one may observe that international law's indifference to a state's internal form of government has swung toward a concept of popular sovereignty based on the will of civil society.<sup>20</sup> The demise of these anti-democratic forces found in 1991 some 110 nations professing adherence to open and universal elections with multiple parties and secret ballots.<sup>21</sup> One of the leading American international law scholars, former N.Y.U. Law Professor Thomas M. Franck,<sup>22</sup> observed in an influential 1992 article that "democratic entitlement . . . [is being transformed] from moral prescription to international legal obligation."

This newly emerging "law"—which requires democracy to validate governance—is not merely the law of a particular state that, like the United States under its Constitution, has imposed such a precondition on national governance. It is also becoming a requirement of international law, applicable to all and implemented through global standards, with the help of regional and international organizations.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. U.S.) (Merits) (June 27, 1986), ICJ Reports 14, at 108, 133, available at [www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/70/9505.pdf](http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/70/9505.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Gregory H. Fox, *The Right to Political Participation in International Law*, in *DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW* 49 (2000).

<sup>21</sup> Thomas M. Franck, *The Emerging Right to Democratic Governance*, 86 AMER. J. INT'L L. 46, 47 (1992). Even China, by far the largest non-democratic WTO Member, has signed the ICCPR and recently announced progress toward ratification of the treaty, albeit without emphasis on the right of citizens to decide their government. See Frank Ching, *China Government Announces Plans to Ratify 1998 ICCPR Treaty*, THE CHINA POST ONLINE, Jul. 20, 2011, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/commentary/the-china-post/frank-ching/2011/07/20/310434/China-govt.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> Dennis Hevesi, *Thomas Franck, Who Advised Countries on Law, Dies at 77*, N. Y. TIMES, May 29, 2009, at A12 (quoting Professor David Kennedy).

<sup>23</sup> Franck, *supra* note 21, at 47.

100 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

The crumbling of non-democratic governments in North Africa in 2011's "Arab Spring" has accelerated the establishment of the emerging human right to democracy.<sup>24</sup>

### C. *Democratic Governance in International Conventions*

The foundation for our claim that democracy is an emerging human right is laid by a number of human rights documents. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration guarantees everyone the right to participate in the government of his country and the right to equal access to public service. Consistent with emerging international law in this respect, it ratifies the will of the people as the basis of a government's authority to govern.<sup>25</sup> Article 25 of the Civil Covenant grants every person the right to participate in her own governance, either personally or through representatives that she freely chooses.<sup>26</sup> General Comment 25 to the Civil & Political Covenant, adopted in 1996 by the Human Rights Committee formed under that Covenant, greatly strengthens the push for democratic governance by rejecting any condition of eligibility to vote or stand for office and by demanding that voters be free to support or oppose the government without undue influence.<sup>27</sup>

As noted by the U.N.'s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "democracy is one of the universal core values and principles of the United Nations."<sup>28</sup> The Charter of the OAS is so

<sup>24</sup> Michèle Olivier, *Impact of the Arab Spring: Is Democracy Emerging as a Human Right in Africa?*, CONSULTANCY AFRICA INTELLIGENCE (Oct.3, 2011), [http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=866:impact-of-the-arab-spring-is-democracy-emerging-as-a-human-right-in-africa&catid=91:rights-in-focus&Itemid=296](http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=866:impact-of-the-arab-spring-is-democracy-emerging-as-a-human-right-in-africa&catid=91:rights-in-focus&Itemid=296).

<sup>25</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, G.A. Res. 217(III)A, U.N. Doc. A/RES/217(III) (Dec. 10, 1948) [hereinafter Universal Declaration].

<sup>26</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, New York, Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171. As of Mar. 28, 2012, 176 parties have acceded to the ICCPR. See *Databases*, U.N. TREATY COLLECTION, [http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-4&chapter=4&lang=en&clang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-4&chapter=4&lang=en&clang=en).

<sup>27</sup> General Comment No. 25: The Right to Participate in Public Affairs, Voting Rights and the Right of Equal Access to Public Service (Art. 25), CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.7 (July 12, 1996); Same Varayudej, *A Right to Democracy in International Law: Its Implications for Asia*, 12 ANN. SURV. INT'L & COMP. L. 1, 8-9 (2006).

<sup>28</sup> *Rule of Law—Democracy and Human Rights*, OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/rule\\_of\\_law/democracy.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/rule_of_law/democracy.htm). The High Commissioner for Human Rights is the principal human rights official of the United Nations. See *Who We Are*, OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Faces/WhoWeAre.aspx> (last visited Jan. 22, 2013).

strongly committed to democracy that a democratically constituted government is a condition of continued membership.<sup>29</sup>

#### D. *Linkage Between Trade and Democratic Governance*

We noted earlier Amartya Sen's observed connection between the elements of democracy and freedom from famine, a strong economic underpinning of the emerging right to democratic governance.<sup>30</sup> Harold Koh, Yale law school professor and former dean, and former U.S. assistant secretary of state believes that "democracy and genuine respect for human rights remain the best paths for sustainable economic growth."<sup>31</sup> Koh explains

"In genuine democracies, rights to a fair trial and to personal security are enhanced. Elected leaders gain legitimacy through the democratic process, allowing them to build popular support, even for economic and political reforms that may entail temporary hardships for their people."<sup>32</sup>

Two recent studies by Princeton political scientist Helen Milner, one co-authored with World Bank senior economist, Keiko Kubota, the second with Penn State political scientist, Bumba Mukherjee, offer compelling evidence that democratic governance promotes liberalized trade. These political scientists conclude that the wave of trade liberalization<sup>33</sup> over the past 20 years<sup>34</sup> is best explained by changes toward democratic governance, as opposed to other explanations such as economic crises or outside influences.

Earlier studies had suggested that the type of government bore little relation to trade liberalization tendencies. Boston University's Strom Thacker presents the more traditional point of view:

---

<sup>29</sup> New Article 9, Protocol of Amendments to the Charter of the OAS, *done* Dec. 14, 1992, *entered into force*, Sept. 25, 1997, 1-E Rev. OEA Documentos Oficiales OEA/Ser.A/2 Add. 3 (SEPF). Common Articles 1 of the ICCPR and the ICESCR guarantee the right of self-determination, which underlies the concept of a government representative of its people and, at least in the West, the concept of democracy. Jure Vidmar, *The Right of Self-Determination and Multiparty Democracy: Two Sides of the Same Coin?*, 10 HUM. RTS. L. REV. 239, 240-41 (2010).

<sup>30</sup> Amartya Sen, *Freedom and Needs: An Argument for the Primacy of Political Rights*, THE NEW REPUBLIC, Jan. 10, 1994, at 34-35.

<sup>31</sup> Harold H. Koh, *The Right to Democracy*, U.S. Dept. of State, WASHINGTON FILE, EPF112, May 15, 2000, *available at* <http://usinfo.org/wf-archive/2000/000515/epf112.htm> (last visited Mar. 7, 2012).

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*

<sup>33</sup> The term, "emerging market countries" is preferred over the more common "developing countries" because it is both more accurate and less debasing.

<sup>34</sup> Helen V. Milner & Keiko Kubota, *Why the Move to Free Trade? Democracy and Trade Policy in the Developing Countries*, 59 INT'L ORG. 107, 110-11 (2005).

102 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

“The nature of more fundamental political institutions, such as party systems, the bureaucracy, and organizations of interest group representation, along with external factors, may be more important in determining economic policy than regime type per se.”<sup>35</sup>

The 2005 Milner and Kubota study, on the other hand, found empirically that democratization has played a critical role in fostering trade liberalization relative to other explanations, which suggests that it was the spread of liberal trade ideas among government officials in emerging market countries that led to a decline in trade barriers.<sup>36</sup>

These studies theorized that the results are consistent with the changes in the electorate achieved by democratic governance. As the size of the electorate grows under democracy’s principles of allowing the people to choose their governments, the country’s leaders must adopt trade policies that better promote the welfare of the consumers at large, or “selectorate.”<sup>37</sup> This implies more liberal trade policies for the country.

Expansion of the ruling class, in this argument, from a small group of powerful military, industrial, and religious officials also broadens the range of imports and exports that brings economic benefit to the selectorate. Protectionist trade measures will no longer provide a sufficiently broad base of political support.

These results have been repeated in numerous studies,<sup>38</sup> including a more detailed follow-up analysis by Milner and Mukherjee published in 2007. The later paper expands on the original research by focusing on the way democracy-related trade liberalization affects different segments of the population. The study corroborates the earlier paper’s conclusion that democratization produces “substantially positive” trade liberalizing effects, but notes that these effects will be con-

<sup>35</sup> Strom Thacker, *Does Democracy Promote Economic Openness?*, Boston Univ. Dept. of Int’l Rels. 4 (unpublished manuscript 2007).

<sup>36</sup> Milner & Kubota, *supra* note 34, at 115.

<sup>37</sup> The term was coined by N.Y.U. political scientist Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and his co-authors to describe those members of the total citizenry responsible for choosing the leadership. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., *An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace*, 93 *AMER. POLIT. SCI. REV.* 791, 793 (1999). See also Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., *Testing the Selectorate: Explanation of the Democratic Peace*, available at [http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/bdm/dem\\_peace\\_bdm.pdf](http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/bdm/dem_peace_bdm.pdf). In a democracy, one expects the selectorate to include essentially all voting age members of the population; in more autocratic regimes, only landowners, military commanders, business magnates, and other wealthy members of civil society have significant influence on the choice of leaders.

<sup>38</sup> Helen V. Milner & Bumba Mukherjee, *Democratization and Economic Globalization*, 12 *ANN. REV. POLIT. SCI.* 163, 166-67 (2009) [hereinafter *Democratization and Economic Globalization*].

centrated in skill-intensive segments of the economy. Tariffs on low skilled goods will actually tend to increase. They theorize that this is because trade liberalization brings greater benefits to skilled workers, with the result that poorer low-skilled or unskilled workers will hold more protectionist views.<sup>39</sup> These studies isolate the wave of democratization over the past two decades as a distinct causal factor in promoting liberalized trade.<sup>40</sup>

It is important to note that this explanation emphasizes the loss of the incentive to use protectionism strategically rather than the notion that liberalization itself is used strategically. In that sense, democracy-related trade liberalization is compatible with continued disparities in the concentrations of the benefits of trade, and the articles do not necessarily indicate that trade liberalization will actually tend to support further democratization. In fact, the 2009 Milner and Mukherjee analysis posits, primarily from a review of the literature, a cautionary tale that, because trade liberalization will bring greater benefits to higher skilled workers, the income inequality engendered by trade may actually work against further democratization.<sup>41</sup> In our view, these results suggest trade agreements that reduce this income inequality will more likely promote democratic governance. That is, trade agreements which seek to strengthen democratic practices will need to take care that the policies selected also are compatible with the strengthening of non-ruling classes in society.

### *E. Core Rights of Democracy*

We are firm in our belief in the existence of a human right to democracy, and of the positive impact of democracy on economic growth. We acknowledge, however, that not all nations involved in trade have yet reached a democratic stage of governance and, even more critically, that not all of civil society has benefited equally from

---

<sup>39</sup> Helen V. Milner & Bumba Mukherjee, *Democratization and Trade Liberalization*, Sept. 25, 2007, at 5, available at [http://www.princeton.edu/~pcglobal/conferences/globdem/papers/milner\\_mukherjee.pdf](http://www.princeton.edu/~pcglobal/conferences/globdem/papers/milner_mukherjee.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> It is less clear that liberalized trade promotes democracy in the first instance. One scholar concludes that trade promotes the formation of a sizeable and educated middle class that takes an interest in public affairs and is greatly less willing to enable an authoritarian regime. Daniel Griswold, *Trade, Democracy, and Peace: The Virtuous Cycle*, available at <http://www.cato.org/publications/speeches/trade-democracy-peace-virtuous-cycle> (last visited Apr. 16, 2012). While we find this argument convincing, we do not believe proving that trade promotes democracy is necessary, given the existence of the emerging right to democracy and the evidence that democracy promotes liberalized trade, toward demonstrating the need to include democratic principles in RTAs.

<sup>41</sup> *Democratization and Economic Globalization*, *supra* note 38, at 163, 170.

104 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

the economic welfare engendered by trade.<sup>42</sup> In these circumstances, what aspects of democratic governance must be included in RTAs regardless of the form of government of the contracting states?

We find that two aspects of the human right to democracy, the right to participate in the political process and the rule of law, are so fundamental, so universally accepted, and so closely linked to trade that, like the core labor standards adopted by the ILO in 1998, credible argument cannot be mounted against their inclusion in trade agreements.

### 1. *Full Participation in the Political Process*

As John Rawls pronounced in *A Theory of Justice*, “all citizens are to have an equal right to take part in, and to determine the outcome of, the constitutional process that establishes the laws with which they are to comply.”<sup>43</sup>

We should state at the outset that we do not delimit the core right to participate in the political process by the mere holding of elections, even “free” and “open” ones. A right to vote, taken alone, bears little relation to democratic governance, as confirmed by elections ranging from the non-democratic regimes “freely and fairly” elected in wartime Nazi Germany to those in modern Venezuela and Iran.<sup>44</sup> Article 21(3) of the Universal Declaration provides that “the will of the people . . . shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”<sup>45</sup> However, there is no agreed definition of which elections are “genuine,” and the putative freedom of elections is more often honored in the breach than in the observance.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> See *JUST TRADE*, *supra* note 2, at 257-58.

<sup>43</sup> JOHN RAWLS, *A THEORY OF JUSTICE* 194 (1999); see Joshua Cohen, *Is there a Human Right to Democracy*, *THE EGALITARIAN CONSCIENCE: ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF G. A. COHEN* 226, 228 (2006). In the interest of full disclosure, neither Rawls nor Cohen accepts for reasons not relevant here that democratic governance is properly labeled a “human right.”

<sup>44</sup> *JUST TRADE*, *supra* note 2, at 255.

<sup>45</sup> Universal Declaration, *supra* note 25, art. 21(3). Article 25(b) of the ICCPR is to similar effect. See 999 U.N.T.S. 171.

<sup>46</sup> *Freedom in the World*, Freedom House’s widely-used report, for example, counts 117 electoral democracies in 2011 (countries that at least *de jure* conduct open elections), but only 87 countries that are considered “free” in the sense of a wider range of democratic governance factors such as ability to stand as candidates, access to information about elections, strength of opposition parties, and breadth of the suffrage right. *Freedom in the World 2012*, FREEDOM HOUSE, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2012> (last visited Jan. 11, 2013).

Therefore, political participation must go beyond the holding of popular elections. Our core democratic rights aim to make elections “a proxy for the ability of persons to empower themselves by creating or having a voice in the environment in which they live so they can fulfill their personhood.”<sup>47</sup>

*a) Unrestrained Right to Vote and Stand for Office*

As a critical starting point, cultural, ethnic, religious, and other minority groups should have full rights to participate in the electoral process, both as part of the “selectorate” and as candidates for office.<sup>48</sup>

While freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, or origin is an elemental human right,<sup>49</sup> our emphasis here relates to the groups whose livelihoods have been marginalized the most from the economy by trade. The rabid increase in income inequality between rich and poor brought about through trade’s economic favoritism<sup>50</sup> justifies including steps in RTAs to level the playing field for those members of civil society who are at the greatest disadvantage in having an effect on the political process.

*b) Freedom from Outside Influences and Corruption*

From a trade standpoint, it is equally important whether the “people’s political choices [are] free from domination by the military, foreign powers, totalitarian parties, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group” and, concomitantly, whether the government is “free from pervasive corruption.”<sup>51</sup> Either type of undue influence on elections and other selection processes undercuts the power of a citizen’s individual vote, and thus, the level of democratic governance in the country. Because democratic governance promotes trade, RTAs sensibly should ensure that all members of civil

<sup>47</sup> JUST TRADE, *supra* note 2, at 255.

<sup>48</sup> Freedom House, *supra* note 46.

<sup>49</sup> Common Article 2 of the ICCPR and the ICESCR. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, New York, Dec. 16, 1966, 999 UNTS 171 and 1057 UNTS 407 / [1980] ATS 23 / 6 ILM 368 (1967); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, New York, Dec. 16, 1966, 993 UNTS 3/ [1976] ATS 5/ 6 ILM 360 (1967).

<sup>50</sup> Kenneth G. Dau-Schmidt, *The Changing Face of Collective Representation: The Future of Collective Bargaining*, 82 CHI.-KENT L. REV. 903, 920 (2007). Dau-Schmidt explains that international trade increases the wealth of the high-skilled workers whose production is the principal currency of trade while decreasing demand, and thus payments, to lower-skilled—and usually already poor—workers whose production is not favored by trade. *Id.* at 920-21.

<sup>51</sup> Freedom House, *supra* note 46.



106 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

society have meaningful powers in sustaining the governmental process.

## 2. *Rule of Law*

Promotion of the rule of law through trade agreements has long underpinned the expansion of export markets, for the simple reason that rules-based governance creates “business-friendly environments . . . that will best ensure the success” of transnational economic endeavors.<sup>52</sup> The particular elements of the rule of law that we find to be most closely linked to trade in promoting democratic governance are government transparency and accountability and an independent judiciary.

### a) *Government Transparency*

Rights to participate in the political governance of a nation have little meaning in the absence of an informed electorate. RTAs must confirm and strengthen existing processes that safeguard open and transparent governments, which successfully educate civil society about their activities, policies, and decisions.<sup>53</sup> We have written elsewhere that government transparency and accountability contribute strongly to bringing the economic benefits of trade to civil society as a whole, as well as to creating stable and predictable markets most favored by trade.<sup>54</sup>

Transparent governments are those that publish, that is, provide open notice of, laws and regulations and the reasons under consideration for their promulgation or revision.<sup>55</sup> Publication also requires notice of government actions in an official, regularly-issued, and widely-available journal, such as Brazil’s *Diário Oficial da União*.

### b) *Government Accountability*

Having taken account of participation in the political process by civil society and having made the public aware of its action through publication, government accountability ensures against the undermining of these laws and actions through the “corralling of discretion.”<sup>56</sup> Two means are paramount toward this end.

First, governments must maintain records of their actions. Under the transparency provisions, this documentation of the premises for government decisions would be made available to the electorate as protection against hidden deals that belie the government’s

---

<sup>52</sup> Powell, *Regional Economic Arrangements*, *supra* note 8, at 59, 65-66.

<sup>53</sup> Freedom House, *supra* note 46.

<sup>54</sup> Powell, *Regional Economic Arrangements*, *supra* note 8, at 73, 76.

<sup>55</sup> *Id.* at 76.

<sup>56</sup> *Id.* at 81-82.

2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

107

official justification for its actions. These records also would be available in the event of a challenge by a member of civil society to the legality or reasonableness of a government decision.<sup>57</sup>

Second, government decisions must be reviewable under reasonable terms and conditions through a mechanism for oversight of administrative actions. Such a review holds government officials at least to a minimum of accountability and, secondarily, deters corruption.<sup>58</sup>

c) *Independent Judiciary*

Joseph Raz, Columbia University law professor and philosopher, wrote the foundational work on the elements of the rule of law. In delineating the eight principles that characterize a society that is applying the rule of law, he emphasized, in addition to the transparency and accountability guidelines discussed above, that the independence of the judiciary must be guaranteed.<sup>59</sup>

The ability of the government to pervert the political participation of civil society by misapplication of laws governing voting, candidacy for office, and information dissemination requires that the people have access to a judicial review system that is not beholden to the government whose allegedly anti-democratic action is at issue. An independent judiciary is an absolute necessity of democratic governance.

The connection with international trade is equally plain. Unless transnational business actors have access to an independent review process, the democratically enacted laws governing business are continually in jeopardy. Just as RTAs have been responsible for creation of dispute settlement systems whose administration is independent of the contracting parties to the agreement,<sup>60</sup> so also must RTAs that seek to promote democratic governance address the independence of the review system for the political participation laws of the Parties.

F. *Concerns of Sovereignty*

As we have noted, "RTAs cannot of course directly inject rules-based governance into a country. Only national governments can ensure the success of the rule of law in their countries."<sup>61</sup> If trade agreement language is intended to guarantee core democratic rights, it

<sup>57</sup> *Id.* at 85.

<sup>58</sup> *Id.* at 82.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph Raz, *The Rule of Law and Its Virtue*, in *THE AUTHORITY OF LAW: ESSAYS ON LAW AND MORALITY* 210, 216-17 (1979).

<sup>60</sup> Stephen J. Powell, *Expanding the NAFTA Chapter 19 Dispute Settlement System: A Way to Declaw Trade Remedy Laws in a Free Trade Area of the Americas?*, 16 *L. & BUS. REV. AMERS.* 217, 219 (2010).

<sup>61</sup> Powell, *Regional Economic Arrangements*, *supra* note 8, at 70.

108 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

must be crafted to foster the development of democratic capacity that already is underway. As noted by the Council for a Community of Democracies, “democracy is about people developing popular self-government for themselves.”<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, we have chosen these core rights of democratic governance based not only on their importance to the maintenance of democracy in the territory of the Parties, but also because they infringe the least on the sovereignty of state parties that have not achieved full democratic governance. Nevertheless, we believe that democratic governance is an emerging human right and must be respected in every country.

### G. Conclusion

Trade policy, governance structures, and political freedoms are in some respects complementary and in other respects in tension. RTAs must emphasize and ensure political freedoms because prosperous, open markets and democratic societies are strongly correlated. There is a growing consensus that a human right to democratic governance is emerging. The weight of the evidence supports the view that the incidents of democratic governance promote economic growth through trade. Thus, even for those countries that do not benefit fully from democratic governance, RTAs properly include protections of the core rights to democratic governance.

It is essential to confront the possible tensions that can emerge when trade obligations are used to confirm and secure democratic rights, but these tensions do not represent insurmountable challenges. The core democratic rights of full participation in the political process and the rule of law find support in the constitutions and other domestic laws of most nations substantially involved in trade.<sup>63</sup>

We would be remiss in failing to return to the “cautionary tale” mentioned earlier,<sup>64</sup> regarding recent studies supporting a strong correlation between democratic governance and trade liberalization. Because the income inequality between rich and poor worsened by trade may actually work against further democratization,<sup>65</sup> policies selected to confirm and strengthen the core rights to democratic governance

---

<sup>62</sup> A DIPLOMAT’S HANDBOOK FOR DEMOCRACY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT 11 (Council for a Community of Democracies 2010), available at <http://www.diplomatshandbook.org/>.

<sup>63</sup> Franck, *supra* note 21, at 47.; see Juan Carlos Botero, Joel Martinez, Alejandro Ponce & Christine S. Pratt, *The Rule of Law Index 2011, Pt. II: The Rule of Law Around the World 19 & passim* (The World Justice Project 2011), available at <http://www.worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/index-2011>.

<sup>64</sup> See Democratization and Economic Globalization, *supra* note 38, at 163, 170.

<sup>65</sup> *Id.*

2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

109

through RTAs must also advance the economic positions of the low-earning members of civil society so that the inculcated democratic principles will have the effect of promoting further trade liberalization.

## IV. TRADE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

A. *Introduction*

Trade officials claim that trade rules are gender neutral because they do not use masculine and feminine pronouns. In fact, trade liberalization affects men and women differently<sup>66</sup> because women have unequal access to ownership and control of productive resources and an unequal influence on decision-making. Women are also more likely to suffer the negative impacts of trade liberalization<sup>67</sup> because they are more vulnerable to adversity based in discrimination and inequality in employment, wages, and access to capital.<sup>68</sup> Gender inequalities prevent women from enjoying the benefits created by the expansion of trade.<sup>69</sup>

Common Article 2 of the Universal Declaration<sup>70</sup> and both of the Civil and Economic Covenants prohibit discrimination based on gender. A special U.N. Convention adopted in 1979 is expressly dedicated to eliminating such discrimination. Discrimination is defined broadly in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women . . . of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, [or] civil . . . field.”<sup>71</sup>

By addressing gender-related barriers to the economic activities of a country's work force, policies promoting gender equity can cre-

<sup>66</sup> Heather Gibb, *Gender, Trade and the WTO, Speaking Notes for the WTO Public Symposium*, THE NORTH SOUTH INSTITUTE CANADA 1 (June 16, 2003), <http://www.cid.harvard.edu/cidtrade/Papers/gibb.pdf> [hereinafter Gibb, *Gender and Trade*].

<sup>67</sup> Anh-Nga Tran-Nguyen & Americo Beviglia Zampetti, *Trade and Gender Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries* x, UNCTAD (2004), [http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/edm20042\\_en.pdf](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/edm20042_en.pdf) (last visited Jan. 23, 2013).

<sup>68</sup> Gibb, *Gender and Trade*, *supra* note 66, at 1.

<sup>69</sup> See generally, *Because I am a Girl: The State of the World's Girls 2010 - Digital and Urban Frontiers*, PLAN, <http://plan-international.org/girls/resources/digital-and-urban-frontiers-2010.php> (last visited Jan. 23, 2013).

<sup>70</sup> Universal Declaration, *supra* note 25, at art. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm> (last visited Jan. 13, 2013) [hereinafter CEDAW].

110 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

ate gains in productivity. Such policies can increase female productive capital and the total level of productive capital in society.<sup>72</sup>

Gender equality is critical to the well-being of global civil society. In its statement on the occasion of International Women's Day 2012, the UN estimated that agricultural yields would rise by 20 percent to 30 percent if rural women had access to productive resources, lifting 150 million people out of hunger.<sup>73</sup> This powerful evidence demonstrates the importance of gender equity in the quest for sustainable development.

### B. *The Link Between Gender and Trade*

A number of factors demonstrate that gender is closely related to international trade. Women receive 10 percent of the world's income even though they perform two-thirds of the world's work.<sup>74</sup> In addition, women own only 1 percent of the means of production such as farms, factories, and machines.<sup>75</sup> Further studies show that about 70 percent of the world's poor are women,<sup>76</sup> and women make up 70 percent of the informal economies of most countries, constituting 40 percent of the world's total economically active population.<sup>77</sup> Because of the prominent role of women in the economy, without protections, gender inequalities cause great harm to the global economy.

Investing in women is critical because women can benefit through greater empowerment and autonomy, improving their social and economic status, thereby shifting the power in their relationships with men, and improving their well-being, negotiating power, and their status in general.<sup>78</sup> Eliminating discrimination against women

<sup>72</sup> *Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work: A Strategy for Action*, World Bank 5 (Jan. 2002), <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/strategypaper.pdf> [hereinafter *Integrating Gender Report*].

<sup>73</sup> U.N. International Women's Day, *Empower Rural Women, End Hunger and Poverty*, UNITED NATIONS (Mar. 8, 2012), <http://www.un.org/en/events/womensday/>.

<sup>74</sup> U.N. Dev. Fund for Women (UNIFEM), *World Poverty Day 2007: Investing in Women-Solving the Poverty Puzzle, Facts & Figures*, UNITED NATIONS, available at [http://www.womenfightpoverty.org/docs/WorldPovertyDay2007\\_FactsAndFigures.pdf](http://www.womenfightpoverty.org/docs/WorldPovertyDay2007_FactsAndFigures.pdf) (referencing the informal slogan of the Decade of Women) (last visited Jan. 23, 2012) [hereinafter UNIFEM].

<sup>75</sup> *Id.*

<sup>76</sup> *Gender, Climate Change and Human Security: Lessons from Bangladesh, Ghana and Senegal* at 1 (May 2008), available at [http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/WEDO\\_Gender\\_CC\\_Human\\_Security](http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/WEDO_Gender_CC_Human_Security) (last visited Jan. 23, 2012).

<sup>77</sup> Megan Berry, *A Woman's Worth: Accounting For Women In The Global Market*, 37 DEN. J. INT'L L. & POL'Y 465, 470 (2009).

<sup>78</sup> Zo Randriamaro, *Gender and Trade: Overview Report*, BRIDGE 16 (2005), available at <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/CEP-Trade-OR.pdf>.

will result in women reinvesting their income into their families.<sup>79</sup> As family income grows, women are able to allocate resources toward putting food on the family's table, of course, but also into the education of both their girl and boy children, thereby creating the potential for more and better prepared women in the workforce.<sup>80</sup> In short, empowering women contributes strongly to a nation's economic growth.

Practically speaking, trade affects individuals through fluctuations in prices, which affect the availability of goods, and through changes in output, which affect what people produce, how, and under what conditions.<sup>81</sup> Throughout the world, women continue to exist in relationships and roles that make them subordinate to men, thus limiting their capacity to benefit from the greater opportunities presented by trade.<sup>82</sup>

Although trade liberalization has increased the availability of opportunities for women, they are generally in low-skilled and low-paying jobs or sectors.<sup>83</sup> Trade liberalization usually results in an increase in labor-intensive exports from emerging market countries, such as textiles or assembly of manufactured goods. As shown by employment in Mexico's maquiladoras, employers prefer women for these jobs because of their greater reliability and attention to detail.<sup>84</sup> For example, in 2000, approximately 35 percent of the manufacturing work force in Latin America consisted of women and 41 percent in Asia, where 80 percent of the workforce in the export industries of Southeast-Asia were women.<sup>85</sup> Trade liberalization can extend products and increase production opportunities, create new activities to employ a labor surplus, and increase productivity and wage levels.<sup>86</sup> Women can capitalize on these opportunities, with some help from the international community.

We often hear about trade's "creative destruction," and that inefficient and outdated industries give way to newer, more efficient businesses. Buried telephone cables have given way to cellular towers for mobile phones, and tea and coffee industries are feeling competi-

<sup>79</sup> Jennifer Powers & Barbara Magnoni, *A Business to Call Her Own: Identifying, Analyzing and Overcoming Constraints to Women's Small Businesses in Latin America and the Caribbean* at 3 (Apr. 2010), available at <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=35327678>.

<sup>80</sup> Randriamaro, *supra* note 78, at 8.

<sup>81</sup> *Id.*

<sup>82</sup> *Id.* at 9.

<sup>83</sup> Tran-Nguyen & Zampetti, *supra* note 67, at 3.

<sup>84</sup> Gurushri Swamy, *The Impact of International Trade on Gender Equality*, 86 PREM NOTES (May 2004), available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/11271/302000premnote86.pdf?sequence=1>.

<sup>85</sup> Randriamaro, *supra* note 78, at 16.

<sup>86</sup> Tran-Nguyen & Zampetti, *supra* note 67, at 17.

112 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

tion from vitamin and flavored water producers. Because women own very few of the productive resources and are usually the least educated in a country, they have fewer opportunities to take advantage of these changes.

These disturbing facts do not, of course, prove that trade *causes* the gender inequities that exist in the first place. Indeed, domestic cultures are the reason for the subservient, disadvantaged positions in the workplace and otherwise in the economic life of the society in which women find themselves. These cultural stereotypes are reflected in legal restrictions, religious traditions, and customs or beliefs of the society, such as the marianista/machismo roles women and men still play in parts of many Latin American nations.

However, even assuming that domestic cultural stereotypes primarily underpin the inequities that position women to suffer more severely from trade liberalization, unless trade takes account of these stereotypes, its effects will be outsized. We are told that trade's economic tide raises all ships; this is not, however, the case with respect to the disadvantaged members of society who live on the margins.<sup>87</sup>

Gender discrimination causes a severe distortion of economic growth patterns. For example, unless redirected to production rewarded by trade, even micro-credit programs can result in women performing "pink collar" jobs, basically extensions of their household and reproductive duties.<sup>88</sup> For these reasons, trade must share the blame in perpetuating these inequities and play a role in ameliorating them.

The most potent antidote to the cultural stereotypes we describe is education. Women in particular need greater access to the educational skills that will help eliminate wage and job inequalities by making women less dependent on male family members and more qualified for male-dominated work. RTAs, while ill-equipped to directly oppose cultural stereotypes, certainly may properly address work-related training and educational opportunities on a gendered basis as a model for closing the gender gap associated with trade.

### *C. The Role of Regional Trade Agreements in Promoting Women's Rights*

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) observed that trade, as the most important form of globalization, can have significant implications for gender equality.<sup>89</sup> At the individual level, RTAs affect prices, employment, and production

---

<sup>87</sup> JUST TRADE, *supra* note 2, at 3.

<sup>88</sup> Tracy Bachrach Ehlers, *Women and the False Promise of Microenterprise*, 12 *GENDER & SOCIETY* 424, 426 (1998).

<sup>89</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD), Sao Paulo, Brazil, June 13-18, 2004, *Report of UNCTAD on its Eleventh Session*, UN Doc. TD/

strategies,<sup>90</sup> which differently affect the various societal groups within a country.

Individuals are more likely to gain if they have access to export markets, credit, transportation, land, technology, and other infrastructure, and are more likely to lose if they are dependent on uncompetitive sectors or cannot access new markets or sectors.<sup>91</sup> Because of the intersection between trade and gender inequality, some multilateral trade promotion organizations have attempted to integrate these issues into their trade agreements.

At the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, members of the UN identified specific problems in the context of women's rights and trade, and proposed action plans to assist in solving them.<sup>92</sup> For example, the Cotonou Agreement, a partnership agreement between the European Union and members of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States, explicitly states that ". . .account shall be taken of the situation of women and gender issues in all areas - political, economic and social." Numerous other conventions also seek to eliminate discrimination against women.<sup>93</sup> These examples demonstrate a global concern for gender inequalities; however, the language is aspirational at best. This paper seeks to enumerate three core principles with respect to women's rights as they pertain to trade and to provide examples of how these principles apply to trade on a practical level.

#### D. Core Principles With Respect to Women and Trade

Consistently with these links between women's rights and trade, we have identified – from among the dozens of human rights of women - three core women's rights that should be included in all trade agreements. They are the elimination of discrimination against women in the workplace, equality in investments in physical capital, and

---

412, ¶ 73 (Aug. 20, 2004), available at [http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/td412\\_en.pdf](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/td412_en.pdf).

<sup>90</sup> Heather Gibb, *Gender and Regional Trade Agreements* at 8, 13th Meeting of the APEC Women Leaders Network, May 12-14, 2008), available at <http://archive.unctad.org/Templates/StartPage.asp?intItemID=2068> [hereinafter Gibb, *Regional Trade*].

<sup>91</sup> *Id.*

<sup>92</sup> United Nations Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995, *Report of the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women*, available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/Beijingpercent20fullpercent20reportpercent20E.pdf>.

<sup>93</sup> In 1986, the Organization of African Unity adopted the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (Banjul Charter), which required the State to eliminate discrimination against women. See African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5 (June 27, 1981), 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), entered into force Oct. 21, 1986.



114 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

the right to participate in the markets and institutions that set policies.<sup>94</sup>

1. *Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in the Workplace*

ILO Convention No. 111 addresses discrimination in the workplace and defines “discrimination against women” as any distinction, preference, or exclusion based upon sex, which nullifies or impairs the equality of opportunity or treatment in occupation or employment.<sup>95</sup> In order to promote equality at work, discrimination against women needs to be eliminated by dismantling the barriers between men and women.<sup>96</sup> This first core right has three components. The wage gap between men’s and women’s work must be eliminated, their educational opportunities must be increased, and they must be given more job opportunities.

a) *Elimination of the Gender Wage Gap*

According to the Universal Declaration, everyone has the right to equal pay for equal work without discrimination.<sup>97</sup> A 2001 World Bank study found that if wage and employment differences between men and women were eliminated, world GDP would experience a 6 percent increase.<sup>98</sup> This shows the enormity of the inequality in pay

<sup>94</sup> Integrating Gender Report, *supra* note 72, at 5.

<sup>95</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, art. 1 (June 15, 1960), available at <http://www.ilo.org/declaration/principles/eliminationofdiscrimination/lang—en/in dex.htm> [hereinafter Convention No. 111].

<sup>96</sup> *See generally id.*

<sup>97</sup> Universal Declaration, *supra* note 25, art. 23. *See also* International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights [ICESCR], which guarantees the right to “[f]air wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value, without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work.” Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, G.A. Res. 2200A (XXI), art. 7 (Dec. 16, 1966); *see also* Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Domestic Violence Against Women [CEDAW], which provides for the right “to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work.” Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Domestic Violence Against Women, art. 11(d) (1979), available at <http://www.un.org/women watch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article11>.

<sup>98</sup> Elizabeth M. King & Andrew D. Mason, *Engendering Development Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources and Voice, a World Bank Policy Report 2001*, available at [http://econ.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64165259&theSitePK=477960&piPK=64165421&menuPK=64166093&entityID=000094946\\_01020805393496](http://econ.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64165259&theSitePK=477960&piPK=64165421&menuPK=64166093&entityID=000094946_01020805393496) (last visited Apr. 13, 2012).

and types of work. ILO Convention No. 100 provides that the principle of equal remuneration should be applied to men and women for work of equal value.<sup>99</sup> The 2001 World Bank study found that even at comparable skill levels, women still earn significantly less than men worldwide.<sup>100</sup> Women's earnings represented 73 percent of men's earnings in emerging market countries and only 20 percent of the earnings gap could be explained by differences in work experience and educational attainment.<sup>101</sup> Even in highly skilled occupations, presumably where the education and training of men and women are comparable, the average wage a woman earns is only 88 percent of a man's wage.<sup>102</sup>

Participation in labor unions can also influence the gender wage gap. As we might expect, the gender wage gap is only 6 percent among unionized employees. A female unionized worker earns about 80 percent of what a male unionized worker earns; by comparison, a non-unionized female worker earns approximately 74 percent of what an equivalent non-unionized male worker earns.<sup>103</sup> Another influential factor appears to be age, as the wage gap increasingly favors men as the years go by.<sup>104</sup>

*b) Elimination of the Educational Gap*

Reducing the earnings gap between men and women is intricately connected with increasing a woman's skill level.<sup>105</sup>

Women should be accorded equal access to opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge, and competencies relevant to the activities in which they choose to participate.<sup>106</sup> Recognizing women's reproductive role, training centers could be set up in neighborhoods or travel from neighborhood to neighborhood.

<sup>99</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], *Convention Concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value*, art. 2 (1951), available at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C100> [hereinafter Convention No. 100].

<sup>100</sup> Melanie Ramjoue, *Can Trade Policies Promote Gender Equalities? Exploring the Trade-Growth-Gender Nexus*, U.N. ESCAP (Nov. 2010), available at <http://www.unescap.org/tid/artnet/pub/alert7.pdf>.

<sup>101</sup> *Id.*

<sup>102</sup> Tran-Nguyen & Zampetti, *supra* note 67, at 6.

<sup>103</sup> *Id.* at 11.

<sup>104</sup> *Id.* at 13.

<sup>105</sup> Ramjoue, *supra* note 100, at 4; The gender wage gap is closing in some countries, likely because of increased training and education among the female population. Gibb, *Gender and Trade*, *supra* note 66, at 3.

<sup>106</sup> *Elimination of Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation*, INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION [ILO], <http://www.ilo.org/declaration/principles/eliminationofdiscrimination/lang-en/index.htm> (last visited Jan. 23, 2013).

116 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

In the rural areas of Guatemala and Bolivia, large gender gaps in literacy and educational attainment remain; however, even in countries where there is a smaller gender gap in educational attainment, women are less likely to have participated in on-the-job training. Better training will qualify women for service sectors such as automobile and electronics repair, rather than the consumer-oriented sectors such as personal services and small commerce to which they often are relegated because they lack the needed skill sets.

Increasing a woman's training and education is critical for developing a country's productive capacity, including the rate of return on investment, which of course will attract more investors. More educated women are better able to profit from new forms of technology and the opportunities they create.<sup>107</sup> Evidence from Mexico and Singapore indicates that as production becomes more capital- and machine-intensive, higher skilled male workers replaced lesser skilled women workers.<sup>108</sup> Studies have also found a need for business training such as money management and financial education, costing and accounting skills, bookkeeping, and technical and vocational training.<sup>109</sup> Because of the link between women's productivity and the potential gains to the country, it is important for RTAs to include provisions that require secondary and vocational training for women.

*c) Access to Equal Work Opportunities*

Another barrier to reducing the wage gap is a lack of access to certain types of work as a result of social conventions and family responsibilities. Throughout the world, many people believe that work can be classified as "women's work" or "men's work." "Women's work" relies on the abilities and social characteristics learned by women (such as administrative and domestic services), while "men's work" generally encompasses cash crops (instead of food and subsistence crops), physical labor, and managerial roles.<sup>110</sup> According to the Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific, women are overrepresented in poorly paid positions and sectors of the economy and under-

<sup>107</sup> Integrating Gender Report, *supra* note 72, at 5; A 2009 U.N. study spanning a 40-year period indicated that gaps in women's education and training significantly affected economic growth through the reduction of the average ability of the workforce. See Ramjoue, *supra* note 100, at 2.

<sup>108</sup> Ramjoue, *supra* note 100, at 4; In the textile and clothing sector, certain countries such as Madagascar, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and South Africa exclude women from training activities, making them less likely to be promoted into higher positions, thereby limiting them to lower function jobs. See Tran-Nguyen & Zampetti, *supra* note 67, at 21.

<sup>109</sup> Powers & Magnoni, *supra* note 79, at 2.

<sup>110</sup> Gibb, Regional Trade, *supra* note 90, at 9.

represented in better-paid industrial and service sectors.<sup>111</sup> In 2008, data showed that 47 percent of women in the region were engaged in agriculture.<sup>112</sup>

Social conventions in Latin America have somewhat evolved so that the thinking is no longer that the woman's place is solely in the home. Still, these conventions tend to dictate the roles and responsibilities of men and women. A woman's familial responsibility can play a role in the type of business in which she can engage. Women are still largely considered the primary caregivers of the children, their husbands, and older relatives, thereby placing constraints on the hours and jobs a woman can work.

This leads to many women opening small businesses. In Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru, women largely enter into consumer-oriented sectors such as personal services where the profit margins tend to be much lower than in male-dominated businesses such as business services and manufacturing.<sup>113</sup> Studies revealed that profits in business services are much higher than in the personal services sector. Through retraining and investment, women could move into more profitable work.

#### *E. Equality of Investments in Physical Capital*

It is difficult to address the issue of discrimination in the workplace without considering the discrimination that exists outside the more traditional notions of the workplace. This leads to the second core women's right, equality of investments in physical capital. Two areas in which this disparity is especially notable are in equality of access to financing and technology.

Women often own small or medium sized enterprises and face different types of barriers which constrain their potential growth.<sup>114</sup> Even without these barriers, women's entrepreneurial endeavors have been notable. In low- and middle-income countries, women entrepreneurs make an important contribution to economic development, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>115</sup> Latin America has the highest rate of entrepreneurial activity in the world with 21 percent,

---

<sup>111</sup> *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific*, U.N. ESCAP (2011), <http://www.unescap.org/stat/data/syb2011/I-People/Women-empowerment.asp> [hereinafter Yearbook for Asia].

<sup>112</sup> *Id.*

<sup>113</sup> Powers & Magnoni, *supra* note 79, at 13.

<sup>114</sup> Gibb, Gender and Trade, *supra* note 66, at 1.

<sup>115</sup> I. Elaine Allen & Nan Langowitz et al., 2007 *Report on Women and Entrepreneurship*, *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor*, The Centre for Women's Leadership, Babson College and Baruch College, available at <http://www.gemconsortium.org/docs/download/282>.

118 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

as compared with 12.2 percent in other low- and middle-income countries in Europe and Asia. Even in high-income countries, the rate is only 7.9 percent.

Women's entrepreneurial activity in Latin America is a great contributor to countries' economies. Because the number of women entrepreneurs can account for up to a 19 percent change in GDP in Latin America, it is important to take steps to increase this number.<sup>116</sup> Women's entrepreneurship allows countries to exponentially capitalize on new venture creation, because there is evidence that returns on investment in women is higher than investments in men because women are more likely to share their gains in health, education, and resources with their families and their communities.

However, women entrepreneurs face a myriad of barriers, including constraints in accessing financing and gender based bias in legal structures and financial institutions. As with the gender gap, other key barriers include family responsibilities, social conventions, and lack of access to education and technology.<sup>117</sup> Research conducted on entrepreneurial activity shows a gender gap in ownership activity and venture creation. In general, women are underrepresented as business owners and their businesses are smaller and slower growing than men's in terms of the number of employees and the level of sales.<sup>118</sup>

### 1. *Equality in Access to Financing*

Access to markets and enterprise development are considered fundamental in enabling emerging market countries to engage in international trade.<sup>119</sup> However, trade liberalization has generally not caused a significant increase in women's access to credit and has not provided more opportunities to use domestic savings for entrepreneurial activities.<sup>120</sup> Women face the discriminatory attitudes of financial institutions,<sup>121</sup> thereby limiting their access to bank loans. Additionally, their access to other forms of property is very low.<sup>122</sup> Frequently, collateral requirements are higher for women, who in any event often lack collateral because of gender inequalities in property

<sup>116</sup> Powers & Magnoni, *supra* note 79, at 5.

<sup>117</sup> *Id.* at 1.

<sup>118</sup> *Id.*; The exceptions to the under-representation of women business owners are Peru, Thailand, Japan, and Brazil. *See* Allen & Langowitz et al., *supra* note 115, at 2.

<sup>119</sup> Randriamaro, *supra* note 78, at 18.

<sup>120</sup> *Id.* at 18.

<sup>121</sup> Powers & Magnoni, *supra* note 79, at 12.

<sup>122</sup> In Afghanistan and Papua New Guinea, women lack access to property other than land. *Id.* at 12.

ownership and rights.<sup>123</sup> Women's businesses also tend to have fewer fixed assets, all of which translates into less collateral that women can post<sup>124</sup> to secure loans from traditional banks.

Access to capital presents a significant constraint for women entrepreneurs.<sup>125</sup> Women have been empowered through the experience of microcredit programs in South Asia and other low-income countries.<sup>126</sup> Women micro-entrepreneurs in Latin America have benefited from the growth of the microfinance industry because it has provided them more equitable access to financing for their businesses. Women have proven themselves to be reliable borrowers and have higher rates of repayment than men, thus, raising their profile with lending institutions. Women are being given access to short-term loans, which can help meet their working capital needs. However, banks have not been successful at developing products that meet women's investment capital needs, which could potentially support the long-term growth and development of their businesses.<sup>127</sup>

Savings is a useful source of capital for women to expand their business through the purchase of additional market space or to diversify into other businesses. However, women generally have lower savings because their businesses have lower profits.<sup>128</sup> Very often, women lack seed money for their business because they have not previously held wage-earning jobs. Moreover, even if they held such jobs, cultural conventions may dictate that women must turn their wages over to their husbands or other male family members.

## 2. Access to Technology

Women around the world play a significant role in farming and post-harvesting activities.<sup>129</sup> In Sub-Saharan Africa, the agricultural sector has become predominantly women-based with women contributing between 60 percent and 80 percent of the labor for food production.<sup>130</sup> Studies on productivity indicate that women farmers have lower rates of productivity because they lack resources; however, there is no evidence that this discrepancy is attributable to efficiency in per-

<sup>123</sup> Randriamaro, *supra* note 78, at 18.

<sup>124</sup> Powers & Magnoni, *supra* note 79, at 12.

<sup>125</sup> Examples include Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, and Colombia. *Id.* at 1.

<sup>126</sup> *Integrating Gender Report*, *supra* note 72, at 8.

<sup>127</sup> Powers & Magnoni, *supra* note 79, at 1.

<sup>128</sup> Examples include Mexico, Peru, Nicaragua, and Bolivia. *Id.* at 1.

<sup>129</sup> *Women Farmers' Productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, UNEP, [http://www.unep.org/training/programmes/Instructor%20Version/Part\\_2/Activities/Human\\_Societies/Agriculture/Supplemental/Women-Farmers\\_Productivity\\_in\\_Sub-Saharan\\_Africa.pdf](http://www.unep.org/training/programmes/Instructor%20Version/Part_2/Activities/Human_Societies/Agriculture/Supplemental/Women-Farmers_Productivity_in_Sub-Saharan_Africa.pdf) (last visited Jan. 24, 2013) [hereinafter Women Farmer's Productivity].

<sup>130</sup> For example, In Kenya, approximately 86 percent of farmers are women. *Id.*

120 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

forming their tasks.<sup>131</sup> There is some indication that if women and men had equal access to resources, total agricultural output could increase between 6 percent and 20 percent.<sup>132</sup>

Women also are less likely to utilize technology in their businesses.<sup>133</sup> It is critical for women to be educated to utilize newer technologies to increase their productivity because evidence indicates that with training and education, women are more likely than men to utilize their knowledge and new technologies. The lower productivity of women can be explained by a number of reasons. In the agricultural sector, women farmers have less access to technology, land, information, inputs, and credits.<sup>134</sup> They are severely disadvantaged because they farm smaller plots with uncertain tenure. Women's access to land is limited by institutional and legal factors which prevent ownership and inheritance of land.<sup>135</sup> Because women are unable to secure title to land, they are excluded from participating in cooperatives and other organizations, making it more difficult for their voices to be heard in policies developed by these groups.

Women also lack access to reliable accounting systems and have limited access to channels through which they can market their products. This saturation limits their ability to compete for large orders, much less deliver them.<sup>136</sup>

#### F. *Right of Participation*

The third core principle with respect to women's rights is the ability to participate in decision-making, which can increase the likelihood that their interests are considered.<sup>137</sup> Men seek to preserve their authority, naturally leading them to exclude women from their decision-making circles.<sup>138</sup> Policy-makers and managers are predominantly male, especially in the agricultural sector, and rarely understand the challenges and needs of women, which leads to wo-

<sup>131</sup> *Id.*

<sup>132</sup> *Id.*

<sup>133</sup> Powers & Magnoni, *supra* note 79, at 1.

<sup>134</sup> *Women Farmers' Productivity*, *supra* note 129.

<sup>135</sup> For example, in Sudan, any land owned by women is registered in the name of the male. *Id.* For example, in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, and Sri Lanka, women's access to land is very limited. See *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2011*, U.N. ESCAP, <http://www.unescap.org/stat/data/syb2011/I-People/Women-empowerment.asp> (last visited Jan. 12, 2013).

<sup>136</sup> Powers & Magnoni, *supra* note 79, at 13.

<sup>137</sup> UN ESCAP *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific, 2011*, available at <http://www.unescap.org/stat/data/syb2011/I-People/Women-empowerment.asp> (last visited Jan. 12, 2012).

<sup>138</sup> Tran-Nguyen & Zampetti, *supra* note 67, at 2.

men's interests being underrepresented and potentially harmed by the policies and rules that are put in place. Many cultures consider women inferior members of society, causing women to lack any semblance of power in the workplace.<sup>139</sup>

Even with advancements in education, women still are greatly underrepresented in top government posts and senior managerial positions.<sup>140</sup> Women thus lack experience in organizing lobbying groups or entering into negotiations to address critical work issues.<sup>141</sup> The ongoing gender gaps in income and business leadership limit achievement of development objectives and threaten long-term sustainable development. Women's participation in business leadership is highly correlated to growth in GDP,<sup>142</sup> and although education alone does not guarantee power or rights, it is a critical step in empowering women and increasing their participation in the political system.<sup>143</sup>

Good governance is necessary to sustainable development and evidence suggests that gender equality in resources and rights is associated with better governance and less corruption. Attitudinal studies from 43 countries show that women view corruption more negatively than men, giving further support to the proposition that gender equality promotes economic growth through better governance.<sup>144</sup>

### G. Conclusion

Throughout the world, men and women have unequal access to resources, rights, and a voice in decision-making. In order to ensure equality in the workplace, effective structures must be put in place to deal with the issues explored in this paper. To facilitate gender equality, countries need to consider "engendering" their trade agreements.

## V. TRADE AND HEALTH

### A. Introduction

The pursuit of economic growth often has disastrous consequences for human health, particularly in the areas of food safety and access to lifesaving medicines.<sup>145</sup> These aspects of the human right to health form the basis for our two core rights to health in a RTA. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

<sup>139</sup> *Id.*

<sup>140</sup> Powers & Magnoni, *supra* note 79, at 5.

<sup>141</sup> Tran-Nguyen & Zampetti, *supra* note 67, at 3.

<sup>142</sup> Powers & Magnoni, *supra* note 79, at 5.

<sup>143</sup> *Integrating Gender Report*, *supra* note 72, at 6.

<sup>144</sup> *Integrating Gender Report*, *supra* note 72, at 8.

<sup>145</sup> M. Gregg Bloche & Elizabeth R. Jungman, *Health Policy and the WTO*, 31 J. LEG. MED. & ETHICS 529 (2003).



122 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

(ICESCR) ensures the right to “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,” as well as the right to enjoy the fruits of scientific development.<sup>146</sup> As explained in the Universal Declaration, every person “has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family.”<sup>147</sup>

### B. *Relationship Between Trade and Health*

However, we must consider the competing societal interests that may be found at the intersection of trade and health. On the one hand, a healthy population is necessary to create a productive and prosperous economy and thus is fundamental to trade and sustainable development. On the other hand, the human right to health must be balanced against the human rights to property and self-determination as represented in intellectual property rights (IPR) protections. For this reason, it is important that RTAs not only take care to ensure that trade policies avoid adverse impacts on public health—and even that they take reasonable steps to promote health—but also that IPRs be preserved.

It is imperative that governments learn the consequences of globalization on issues such as food safety and access to medicine, in order to determine policies to best deal with them.<sup>148</sup> These issues affect not only individuals, but also states and the global economy. We find that two core rights to human health, the right to essential medicines and the right to food safety, have such close linkages to trade that RTAs must explicitly account for them.

### C. *Right to Essential Medicines*

The *sine qua non* of a healthy population is its access to essential medications, which will prevent or control epidemics and plagues. Article 4 of the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health,<sup>149</sup> later memorialized as an amendment to the TRIPS Agreement,<sup>150</sup> recognizes a state’s right to protect public health and to promote access to medications for all of its citizens despite the IPRs protected by the Agreement. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines essential

<sup>146</sup> ICESCR, *supra* note 97, arts. 12 & 15(1).

<sup>147</sup> Universal Declaration, *supra* note 25, art. 25(1).

<sup>148</sup> *The Effects of Globalization on Working Conditions in Developing Countries: An Analysis Framework and Country Study Results*, EMPLOYMENT POLICY PRIMER No. 9 (2008), available at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLM/214578-1103128720951/21692675/EPPNoteNo9\\_Eng.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLM/214578-1103128720951/21692675/EPPNoteNo9_Eng.pdf) [hereinafter *Globalization on Working Conditions*].

<sup>149</sup> World Trade Organization, *Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health*, WT/MIN(01)/DEC/2, ¶ 4 (Nov. 20, 2001) [hereinafter *Doha Declaration*].

<sup>150</sup> Amendment of the TRIPS Agreement, Decision of Dec. 8, 2005, WT/L/641.

medicines as medications that “satisfy the priority health care needs of the population.”<sup>151</sup> This broad recognition of the link between trade and essential medicines confirms its place in RTAs as a core right to human health.

Evidence indicates a strong correlation between poverty and high levels of disease. The WHO projects that there will be over 40 million deaths this year from lack of life-saving medications,<sup>152</sup> and estimates that two million people die from tuberculosis, one million from malaria, and three million from HIV/AIDS in developing countries annually.<sup>153</sup> Incredibly, as much as one-third of the world’s population lacks access to essential medications, rising to over 50 percent in the poorest parts of Asia and Africa.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, diarrheal diseases account for 4 percent of the burden of disease, with 88 percent of this type of illness caused by unsafe water supplies, hygiene, and sanitation.<sup>155</sup>

Although effective drug treatments exist for these life-threatening diseases,<sup>156</sup> extreme disparities in access to pharmaceuticals globally still abound. For some serious diseases discussed above, the treatments are either unaffordable or unavailable, and the situation only gets bleaker for rural areas.<sup>157</sup> These areas often lack access to the most basic of drugs for treating common illnesses, much less drugs for more complicated diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Does this mean that individuals who can afford these drugs deserve to live and are worth

<sup>151</sup> WHO *Policy Perspectives on Medicines: The Selection of Essential Medicines 1*, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (June 2002), <http://archives.who.int/tbs/sel/s2296e.pdf> [hereinafter WHO Essential Medicines].

<sup>152</sup> WHO: *Medicines, A Summary of Essential Medicines and Pharmaceutical Policies*, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (2012), [http://www.who.int/medicines/services/essmedicines\\_def/en/](http://www.who.int/medicines/services/essmedicines_def/en/)[hereinafter WHO Essential Medicines Summary].

<sup>153</sup> *Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property Rights: Report of The Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health 2-3*, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (2006), <http://www.who.int/intellectualproperty/documents/thereport/ENPublicHealthReport.pdf> [hereinafter Public Health].

<sup>154</sup> WTO Agreements and Public Health: A Joint Study by the WHO and the WTO Secretariat 103, 87, WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (2002), [http://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/booksp\\_e/who\\_wto\\_e.pdf](http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/who_wto_e.pdf) [hereinafter Joint Study].

<sup>155</sup> Evidence also suggests that by 2030 in sub-Saharan Africa, burning wood for fuel could cause the premature deaths of 2 million women and 8 million children through respiratory illnesses. Public Health, *supra* note 153, at 6.

<sup>156</sup> Because the communicability of a disease does not delimit its requirement for essential medication, this paper uses the term, disease, to refer both to communicable and non-communicable diseases. Joint Study, *supra* note 154, at 87.

<sup>157</sup> Zita Lazzarini, *Making Access to Pharmaceuticals a Reality: Legal Options Under TRIPS and the Case of Brazil*, 6 YALE HUM. RTS. & DEV. L.J. 103, 105 (2003).

124 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

more than those who cannot? This question cuts straight to the core of the issue.

Which pharmaceuticals must be considered “essential” for our purposes? The WHO has a Model List of Essential Drugs whose availability will satisfy the needs of a majority of the population. These drugs should be affordable and represent a balance of safety, quality, efficacy, and cost for a given health setting.<sup>158</sup> While the WHO’s Model list is purely a guide, it has led to global acceptance of the concept of essential medications and their ability to promote a healthy and sustainable population.<sup>159</sup> Each state must determine and periodically update its own essential medication list. The emergence of new epidemics such as HIV/AIDS and of anti-microbial resistance has brought the notion of essential medicines to the forefront.<sup>160</sup> The list of essential medicines should not take into account whether the medicines are patented.

Essential medications are not accessible if they are cost prohibitive. One example of the importance of affordable drugs is highlighted in the Philippines. If Filipinos were required to purchase the patented version of the beta blocker, atenolol, an additional 22 percent of the population would live below the poverty line, compared to the 7 percent affected if they bought the generic equivalent instead.<sup>161</sup> Insulin is much more inaccessible and is definitively less affordable. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, a 10 ml vial of insulin costs about \$1.50, as compared to more than \$47 in the Congo and Namibia. This represents an incredible price difference and highlights the problem of access to essential medicines.<sup>162</sup>

With respect to low-income countries, the cost of pharmaceuticals needs to be brought down to a level that is more affordable for the majority of people. While medical expenses can represent a significant portion of the household expenditure, they often are lower in priority than food and shelter. While the cost of a drug is largely determined by the price tag the manufacturer ascribes to it, the Joint Study proposes a number of things that governments and RTAs can do to reduce the

<sup>158</sup> Joint Study, *supra* note 154, at 87.

<sup>159</sup> The WHO also posits that essential medications should be chosen on the basis of the prevalence in the state of the diseases they counteract. WHO Essential Medicines Summary, *supra* note 152.

<sup>160</sup> WHO Essential Medicines, *supra* note 151, at 1.

<sup>161</sup> The poverty line in the Philippines is \$1.25 per day. Dele Abegunde, *Essential Medicines for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)*, Background Paper 4 (2010) [hereinafter Abegunde Essential Medicines].

<sup>162</sup> In the case of diabetes mellitus, over 220 million people live with the disease; however, the cost of the oral drugs as compared to an individual’s income makes the drugs inaccessible. Even the generic brand would cost over two days’ wages in some countries and a shocking eight days’ pay in Ghana. *Id.* at 12.

cost. States can reduce import duties and other taxes on pharmaceuticals and they can rely on the use of safety measures built into the TRIPS Agreement, such as compulsory licensing,<sup>163</sup> parallel imports,<sup>164</sup> and exceptions which permit early testing and approval of generics.<sup>165</sup>

Another reason that medicines are expensive, in addition to the cost imposed by IPR protections, is that some countries try to derive tariff revenue from the import of medications. As RTAs to reduce tariffs have come into effect, import duties for medical supplies, vaccines, and other drugs have also begun to decrease, with average tariff rates in developing countries being low to moderate.<sup>166</sup> A number of emerging market countries allow duty free entry of a limited number of essential drugs, while others impose tariffs.<sup>167</sup> For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, import tariffs on mosquito insecticides and netting in-

<sup>163</sup> The TRIPS Agreement does not specifically use the term “compulsory licensing.” Joint Study, *supra* note 154, at 60. However, Article 31, which provides for such licensing as “other use without authorization of the right holder.” Marrakesh Agreement Establishing World Trade Organization Annex 1C, Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights art. 31, Apr. 15, 1994, 1867 U.N.T.S. 154 [hereinafter TRIPS Agreement].

<sup>164</sup> Parallel importation involves the importation of trademarked or patented products from a country where the product is marketed either by the right holder or the right holder’s consent. Joint Study, *supra* note 154, at 60. This concept is regulated by the concept of exhaustion of IPRs under the TRIPS Agreement. Essentially, parallel exports allow a country to take advantage of products the right holder has released in a different country at a lower price. TRIPS Agreement, art. 6.

<sup>165</sup> Joint Study, *supra* note 154, at 44. Art. 30 of the TRIPS Agreement provides limited exceptions for usage, such as the ability of researchers to use the patented products to understand them more fully. Art. 30 of the TRIPS Agreement permits countries to allow manufacturers of generic drugs to use the patented drugs, *sans* permission from the rights holder and prior to the expiration of the patent in order to obtain marketing approval from public health authorities. This puts generic producers in a position to market their versions immediately after the patent expires.

<sup>166</sup> Two exceptions to this are Tunisia and India, where the tariff rates are 20.6 percent and 30 percent, respectively. Joint Study, *supra* note 154, at 88.

<sup>167</sup> Countries such as Pakistan, Tanzania, India, Tunisia, Kenya, and Burkino Faso have tariff rates in the range of 20 to 30 percent for active ingredients that go into the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, such as insulin or penicillin. See generally Müge Olcay & Richard Laing, *Pharmaceutical Tariffs: What is their Effect on Prices, Protection of Local Industry and Revenue Generation?*, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (2005), <http://www.who.int/intellectualproperty/studies/TariffsOnEssentialMedicines.pdf>.

126 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

creased their cost by 20 percent to 40 percent.<sup>168</sup> Reducing the cost of mosquito nets can increase utilization and decrease rates of malaria.

The main barrier to essential medications arises out of IPR concerns because current standards intended to protect patent-holders often compromise public health. It is generally agreed that IPRs must be tempered with considerations of health issues, which has led the trade regime to attempt to balance the need for affordable medications with the need for the regulation of patent rights.<sup>169</sup> Infringing on the rights of patent holders would deter innovation; however, this policy needs to take into account the interests of public health. In 1994 members of the WTO adopted the TRIPS Agreement to create a global consensus on the protection of patent rights. The TRIPS Agreement acknowledges the intersection between public health and IPRs by addressing the needs of emerging markets countries with respect to pharmaceutical patents.<sup>170</sup> The TRIPS Agreement grants patent protection to suitable products and processes for twenty years, with limited exceptions for public health, among others.<sup>171</sup>

The Agreement also contains mechanisms designed to increase access to pharmaceuticals for public health concerns and to include compulsory licensing, parallel importing, exceptions from patentability, and generic substitution.<sup>172</sup> The balance of interests under the TRIPS Agreement involves the interplay between Articles 30 and 31. Article 31 of the TRIPS Agreement provides for government mandated manufacturing of generic pharmaceuticals if good-faith negotiations fail with the patent-holder. However, this Article has burdensome requirements that a state must meet before utilizing Article 31. For example, Article 31(f) provides that in the case of this compulsory licensing, the pharmaceuticals must be only for domestic use,<sup>173</sup> which clearly fails to provide a solution for states that lack the manufactur-

---

<sup>168</sup> Prices for malaria nets vary throughout Africa with prices being as high as \$45 in Swaziland and \$30 in Sudan. In contrast, Tanzania reduced its taxes and tariff duties on mosquito nets to 5 percent, making mosquito nets on average \$3.50. Joint Study, *supra* note 154, at 88.

<sup>169</sup> See TRIPS Agreement, *supra* note 163, art. 8 (noting right of Member states to protect and promote public health).

<sup>170</sup> *Id.* art. 8. Article 8 lets states "adopt measures necessary to promote public health" so long as these measures do not conflict with other provisions of the TRIPS Agreement. Article 30 also allows Member states to make limited exceptions to patent rights if they "do not unreasonably prejudice the legitimate interests of the patent holder."

<sup>171</sup> See generally TRIPS Agreement, *supra* note 163.

<sup>172</sup> *Id.*

<sup>173</sup> TRIPS Agreement, *supra* note 163, art. 31.

2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

127

ing capability for drugs.<sup>174</sup> Also, Article 31(h) provides that the user must provide adequate compensation, taking into account the economic value of the compulsory licensing.<sup>175</sup> However, Article 31 must be read in conjunction with Article 30 which allows the exceptions under Article 31 provided that they do not conflict with the normal exploitation of the patent and do not prejudice the interests of the patent holder.<sup>176</sup>

The hyper-epidemic of HIV/AIDS highlights the problem with the disparity in access to pharmaceuticals. In the developed world, HIV/AIDS is largely considered a chronic but treatable illness. However, in emerging and underdeveloped countries, HIV/AIDS is considered a plague and a death sentence.<sup>177</sup> Statistics show that sub-Saharan Africa continues to bear the brunt of the global HIV burden. While the percentage of the population living with HIV/AIDS has started to decrease, the absolute numbers continue upward. In 2009, these countries represented 22.5 million of the 33 million people still living with HIV, which is 68 percent of the global total. More women than men have the disease in this region.<sup>178</sup>

In the Americas, Brazil is considered the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and accounts for 57 percent of all of the cases in the Caribbean and Latin America.<sup>179</sup> The price tag for the triple-cocktail drug therapy used to treat HIV/AIDS is between \$10,000 and \$15,000 per person per year, despite the fact that it costs the manufacturer a fraction of this amount to produce.<sup>180</sup> Access to anti-retroviral medications makes the difference between life and death.

---

<sup>174</sup> *Id.* art. 31(f). In the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health, the WTO reached an agreement allowing a waiver to art. 31(f) of the TRIPS Agreement for nations that need to import generic drugs. This Declaration was formally incorporated into the Agreement as art. 31b in a 2008 amendment. Amendment of the TRIPS Agreement, Dec. 8, 2005, WT/L/641. This new policy allows a Member with manufacturing capacity to export the pharmaceuticals made under the compulsory license subject to burdensome, but viable, requirements. *See also* Press Release, World Trade Organization, Decision Removes Final Patent Obstacle to Cheap Drug Imports (Aug. 30, 2003), available at [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/trips\\_e/implem\\_para6\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/implem_para6_e.htm).

<sup>175</sup> Trips Agreement, *supra* note 163, art. 31(h).

<sup>176</sup> *Id.* art. 30.

<sup>177</sup> Zita Lazzarini, *Making Access to Pharmaceuticals a Reality: Legal Options Under TRIPS and the Case of Brazil*, 6 YALE HUM. RTS. & DEV. L.J. 103, 106 (2003).

<sup>178</sup> *Global Report 2010* at 25, U.N. AIDS, [http://www.unaids.org/globalreport/Global\\_report.htm](http://www.unaids.org/globalreport/Global_report.htm) [hereinafter AIDS Report].

<sup>179</sup> Approximately 640,000 Brazilians live with HIV/AIDS. JUST TRADE, *supra* note 2, at 115.

<sup>180</sup> *Id.* at 116.

128 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

In an attempt to quantify the economic impact of the losses, studies estimate that the loss of national income from stroke, diabetes, and heart diseases in 2005 was \$11 billion in the Russian Federation, \$18 billion in China, \$9 billion in India, and a startling \$43 billion in Brazil.<sup>181</sup> A lack of access to essential pharmaceuticals impacts the affected person, and that person's family productivity and well-being. Estimates indicate that between 2005 and 2015, China will have lost \$558 billion in national income due to stroke, diabetes, and heart diseases.<sup>182</sup>

It seems clear that meaningful observance of human rights to health in this area requires the prioritization of direct protection of those rights. This can be accomplished through treatment with existing medicines over protection of business incentives to innovate new medicines and treatments, which has only an attenuated benefit to human health rights. Recognizing the need for access to essential medicines as a fundamental aspect of the right to health would ensure medicines with regard to the prevalence of a disease. The concept of essential medicines means those pharmaceuticals that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population,<sup>183</sup> those that address diseases reaching epidemic proportions or that present a threat to public health.<sup>184</sup>

#### D. Food Safety

Another topic that deserves emphasis, and denominates our second core human right to health, is the connection between liberalized trade and food safety, including the quality of foods available in transitioning food markets, especially because of the probability that these products contribute to a new generation of public health risks. As explained by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies,

The increasing cross-border and cross-continental movements of people, commodities, vectors, food, capital, and decision-making power that characterize globalization, together with global demographic trends, have enormous potential to affect the emergence and spread of infectious diseases.<sup>185</sup>

---

<sup>181</sup> Essential Medicines, *supra* note 151, at 4.

<sup>182</sup> *Id.*

<sup>183</sup> See generally WHO Essential Medicines Summary, *supra* note 152.

<sup>184</sup> Melissa McClellan, "Tools for Success": *The TRIPS Agreement and the Human Right to Essential Medicine*, 12 WASH. & LEE J. CIVIL RTS. & SOC. JUST. 153, 161 (2005).

<sup>185</sup> THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INFECTIOUS DISEASE EMERGENCE AND CONTROL: EXPLORING THE CONSEQUENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES, Workshop Summary,

2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

129

These new risks include the possibility that dangerous infectious diseases such as swine flu are connected to intensive meat production. The Food and Agricultural Organization warned in a 2007 report that an excessive concentration of industrial animals has greatly exacerbated the risk of spreading swine and bird flu, hoof and mouth disease, and other pathogens from animals to humans in the quest to meet the burgeoning demand for beef, chicken, turkey, and pork:

The risk of disease transmission from animals to humans will increase in the future due to human and livestock population growth, dynamic changes in livestock production, the emergence of worldwide agro-food networks and a significant increase in the mobility of people and goods.<sup>186</sup>

Food-borne illness<sup>187</sup> is no longer a problem localized to a particular nation or region. Trade liberalization has led to rapid and widespread marketing of food products internationally, making food-borne illness a concern of global scope. As of 2009, the value of the world food trade was roughly \$1.2 trillion and it is steadily increasing as a result of the liberalization of agricultural trade and a more prosperous and growing middle class that is demanding greater meat consumption.<sup>188</sup> The risk that food-borne illnesses can spread worldwide has led to the notion of “farm to fork” regulation, meaning that food controls and oversight must take place along the entire food chain.<sup>189</sup>

---

Forum on Microbial Threats, Inst. of Med. of the Nat'l Acads. 21 (2006), available at [http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=11588&page=R1](http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=11588&page=R1).

<sup>186</sup> *Dramatic Changes in Global Meat Production could Increase Risk of Diseases*, FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (Sept. 17, 2007), <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2007/1000660/index.html> [hereinafter *Dramatic Changes*].

<sup>187</sup> Food-borne illness is defined by the WHO as diseases that are either toxic or infectious in nature, and are caused by agents that enter the body through the ingestion of food. *Food Safety and Foodborne Illness*, Fact Sheet No. 37 (2007), WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs237/en/>.

<sup>188</sup> *International Trade Statistics 2010*, WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION, [http://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/statis\\_e/its2010\\_e/its10\\_merch\\_trade\\_product\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/its2010_e/its10_merch_trade_product_e.htm); See *Dramatic Changes*, *supra* note 186.

<sup>189</sup> *Veterinary Public Health and Food and Feed Safety Programme: the Safety of Animal Products from Farm to Fork*, FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (2002), <http://www.fao.org/docrep/MEETING/004/AB500E.htm>.



## 130 RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW &amp; BUSINESS [Vol. 12:1

Recent highly publicized food contamination problems in the United States after a 46-state salmonella poisoning from peanuts,<sup>190</sup> in Canada with 22 deaths from listeria poisoning from deli meat,<sup>191</sup> and in China with melamine-contaminated infant formula,<sup>192</sup> have underlined both the importance of food safety and its linkage to trade.<sup>193</sup> Nations need effective food control systems in place to protect the health and safety of their people and to prevent epidemics of foodborne illnesses. Complications arise from the fact that many countries are themselves involved in the actual food production and distribution process, and each country has its own food control systems or lack thereof. The presence of pathogens in food is extremely complicated precisely because of the numerous vectors from which the food became contaminated. Mechanisms of control are critical to nations in ensuring the safety and quality of the foods that enter international trade, while ensuring that the foods they import also meet these requirements. Because of globalization, the burden is on both the importing

---

<sup>190</sup> In 2008, outbreaks of *Salmonella* Typhimurium in forty-six States and Canada caused 691 illnesses and at least nine deaths. The culprit turned out to be peanut butter produced by a Georgia processing plant. Producers recalled all peanut products from that plant. See *2008-2009 Salmonella Typhimurium Outbreak Response*, CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (May 18, 2009), <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/typhimurium/SalmonellaTyphimuriumAAR.pdf>.

<sup>191</sup> In the summer of 2008, Canada experienced a widespread outbreak of *Listeria Monocytogenes* found to be caused by deli meat from a Maple Leaf Foods plant in Toronto. Even though Maple Leaf voluntarily recalled all of its products, the contamination resulted in 22 deaths. See *Listeriosis Outbreak Timeline*, CBCNEWS, Sep. 11, 2009, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/story/2008/08/26/f-meat-recall-time-line.html>.

<sup>192</sup> In November 2008, 50,000 infants were hospitalized from a variety of kidney ailments. In total, 294,000 infants fell ill and six died. This outbreak was related to the consumption of melamine-contaminated infant formula and related dairy products. Contamination traces were also detected in liquid milk and powdered milk products originating from the Sanlu Group in China. Many countries banned Chinese dairy food and the WHO defined this crisis as one of the largest food safety events that it had dealt with in recent years. See Report of a WHO Expert Meeting in Collaboration with FAO, *Toxicological and Health Aspects of Melamine and Cyanuric Acid* (Dec. 1-4, 2008), [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2009/9789241597951\\_eng.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2009/9789241597951_eng.pdf).

<sup>193</sup> The term food safety is often used interchangeably with food quality. Food safety refers to hazards, whether acute or chronic, that make food injurious to the health of the end-user, while food quality refers to other attributes that influence a product's cost, and includes things such as contamination and spoilage. Food quality seems to be an additional requirement after already having achieved the minimum standards of food safety. For the purposes of this paper, we will treat the terms interchangeably.

and exporting countries to implement and enforce food control systems, while establishing risk criteria for their imports and exports.

The purpose of control systems is to enforce national laws already in place for the protection of the consumer. However, recognition that contamination can occur at all stages of the food chain—from farm to fork<sup>194</sup>—has inspired the creation of international instruments to extend this regulation to agricultural products transnationally. The WTO has recognized the importance of food safety and standards in two agreements: the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement)<sup>195</sup> and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement).<sup>196</sup> Both the SPS and TBT Agreements provide Members with blueprints to protect human, animal, and plant life or health, as well as the environment, from disease and pest infestation.<sup>197</sup>

The SPS Agreement applies to trade-related measures taken to protect human health from various risks arising from toxins, contaminants, additives, drug and pesticide residues, and organisms that carry or cause disease in foods or beverages.<sup>198</sup> While the Agreement provides Members with the ability to take measures to protect its interests, and allows them to discriminate between like products if one of the products presents a health risk, it requires that such discrimination may only be in pursuit of the concerns of the SPS measure, not for arbitrary or unjustifiable purposes or otherwise as a disguised trade restriction.<sup>199</sup>

The SPS Agreement attempts to create an international consensus on food safety standards, using other international instruments such as the joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission.<sup>200</sup> Members can take measures that result in higher

<sup>194</sup> *The Importance of Food Quality and Safety for Developing Countries*, FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS, [http://www.fao.org/trade/docs/LDC-foodqual\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/trade/docs/LDC-foodqual_en.htm) (last visited Jan. 28, 2013)[hereinafter Food Safety].

<sup>195</sup> Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Apr. 15, 1994, Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade, Annex 1A, 33 I.L.M. 1125, 1867 U.N.T.S. 493 (1994) [hereinafter SPS Agreement].

<sup>196</sup> See Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, Apr. 15, 1994, Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, Annex 1A art. 2 [hereinafter TBT Agreement].

<sup>197</sup> See generally SPS Agreement, *supra* note 195; TBT Agreement *supra* note 196.

<sup>198</sup> See Joint Study, *supra* note 154, at 103.

<sup>199</sup> See generally SPS Agreement, *supra* note 195.

<sup>200</sup> The Codex Alimentarius Commission is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to create international standards for food quality and safety requirements. Codex has formulated international standards for a range of food products and has developed specific requirements with respect to veterinary drugs, pesticide resi-

132 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

levels of sanitary or phytosanitary protection for its citizens than these agreed international standards if they have scientific justification or if the Member meets the Agreement's version of the precautionary principle.

The Agreement imposes on Members the requirement to prepare scientific risk assessments justifying sanitary and phytosanitary measures that seek higher levels of protection than agreed international standards. The assessment must take into account the nature of the risks to human, animal, or plant life or health presented by the import, as well as the effectiveness of the Member's chosen border measure in preventing that risk.<sup>201</sup>

The main difference between the SPS Agreement and the TBT Agreement is that the SPS Agreement covers health protection measures as discussed above, while the TBT Agreement covers technical requirements, voluntary standards, and conformity assessment standards, excluding issues that are covered by the SPS Agreement.<sup>202</sup> With respect to food safety issues, the TBT Agreement has a much broader focus and covers things such as the non-deceptive labeling of the composition or quality of drugs, food and beverages, or products; quality requirements for fresh food; and packaging requirements.<sup>203</sup> For example, the TBT Agreement covers labeling issues dealing with nutritional claims, and quality and packaging regulations, which fall outside of the scope of the SPS Agreement.<sup>204</sup> Because the coverage of the SPS Agreement is relatively narrow, this leaves the TBT Agreement with a wide variety of risks to cover.<sup>205</sup> With food safety primarily the domain of the SPS Agreement, the TBT Agreement focuses on food quality and seeks harmonization of these characteristics so that producers may easily trade in all WTO markets.

Food-borne illnesses not only create health problems for the population, but also have severe economic effects for the state. Quantifying these effects is difficult,<sup>206</sup> so we will illustrate with representa-

---

duces, food additives, contaminants, methods of analysis and sampling, and codes and guidelines of hygienic practices, among many other standards. Food Safety, *supra* note 194, para. 32.

<sup>201</sup> SPS Agreement, *supra* note 195, art. 5.1.

<sup>202</sup> TBT Agreement, *supra* note 196, art. 1.5.

<sup>203</sup> The TBT Agreement covers most aspects of human disease control, with the exception of food safety or diseases carried by animals or plants. *SPS Agreement Training Module, Chapter 1, Introduction to the SPS Agreement*, WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION, [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/sps\\_e/sps\\_agreement\\_cbt\\_e/c1s4p1\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_agreement_cbt_e/c1s4p1_e.htm) (last visited Jan. 28, 2012).

<sup>204</sup> *Id.*

<sup>205</sup> *Id.*

<sup>206</sup> Studies rely on numerous methods in determining costs from food-borne illnesses. For example, these studies can use measurements of the monetary costs of

2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

133

tive examples.<sup>207</sup> For example, approximately 70 percent of the 1.5 billion instances of diarrhea that occur in the world annually are attributed to chemical or biological contamination of foods. Even though the disease by itself may not be fatal, it can lead to physical disabilities and mental retardation.<sup>208</sup>

A study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2011 estimated that roughly 48 million new cases of food-borne illnesses occur in the United States every year, resulting in 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths.<sup>209</sup> This study specifically focused on health related costs and estimated the cost of food-borne illnesses in the United States to be \$152 billion,<sup>210</sup> with approximately \$39 billion being attributed to produce.<sup>211</sup> This study estimated the health related cost as the sum of medical costs<sup>212</sup> together with quality-of-life losses.<sup>213</sup> These costs include the cost to others in society<sup>214</sup> together with costs incurred by the affected person. Differences in wages, access to medications, and exposure to pathogens all affect the costs of illness in each nation. Obviously, these effects translate into production decreases and health care costs.

The complexity in quantifying the economic consequences of contaminated food is derived from a number of factors including: a) the value of the animal products and crops that are spoiled or have to be destroyed as a result of contamination; b) the value of the rejections or detentions of these products in the export trade, such as losses from product bans, loss of reputation, and other breach of contract costs; c) the cost of healthcare; and d) the loss of productive output or earnings that result from premature death, morbidity, or disability.<sup>215</sup>

---

the illness to society, the “willingness-to-pay” principle to avoid illness, as well as hybrid approaches. Robert L. Scharff, *Health-Related Costs from Foodborne Illness in the United States* 1 (2010), available at <http://www.producesafetyproject.org/media?id=0009> [hereinafter Health Cost Study].

<sup>207</sup> *Id.* Studies that attempt to quantify the losses are often based on limited inputs. For example, only some studies take into account the long-term health consequences of acute food-borne illnesses.

<sup>208</sup> Food Safety, *supra* note 194, para. 18.

<sup>209</sup> *2011 Estimates of Foodborne Illness*, CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (Apr. 3, 2012), <http://www.cdc.gov/foodborneburden/2011-foodborne-estimates.html>.

<sup>210</sup> Food Safety, *supra* note 194, at 1.

<sup>211</sup> *Id.* at 14.

<sup>212</sup> *Id.* at 2. Medical costs include pharmaceuticals, physician and hospital services.

<sup>213</sup> *Id.* Examples of the cost of quality of life losses include pain, suffering, death, and disability.

<sup>214</sup> *Id.* For example, costs to society include costs to the insurance companies that pay the medical expenses.

<sup>215</sup> Food Safety, *supra* note 194, para. 20.

134 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

The greatest health impact on the economy is the loss of output and earnings caused by contaminated food. The disability or death of the wage earner affects the country's economy as well as the individual's family.<sup>216</sup> The affected nation can lose a global comparative advantage when it loses the productive capacity of many of its citizens.

As an example of these many vectors, in 1996 an outbreak of an intestinal parasite in the United States and Canada sickened 1,500 people.<sup>217</sup> California strawberries were erroneously implicated as the culprit by Ontario's chief medical examiner. Though the chief medical examiner proclaimed that Ontario strawberries were safe to eat, some consumers stopped eating them entirely and supermarkets removed them from their shelves. Shortly thereafter, the CDC determined that Guatemalan raspberries were actually to blame. Because of the confusion, the California Strawberry Commission estimated a loss of \$20 million to \$40 million. A spokesperson for the Commission was quoted as saying that "[Y]ou can take consumer confidence away in a day, but it takes forever to restore."<sup>218</sup>

A subsequent outbreak occurred in 1997 from Guatemalan raspberries and a temporary suspension on the export of raspberries was instituted.<sup>219</sup> This suspension affected over 250 producers and 5,000 workers and resulted in a \$10 million loss of income.<sup>220</sup> The United States even issued an import ban on these raspberries.<sup>221</sup> Even though the ban on Guatemalan raspberries has since been lifted, the demand is only one-third of what it once was,<sup>222</sup> giving other exporters an opportunity to corner the market. A study completed in 2000 found that only six Guatemalan raspberry farms remained, down from eighty-five farms in 1996.<sup>223</sup>

In 2006, the FDA informed the public of an outbreak of a specific strain of *E. coli* which had been linked to bagged spinach.<sup>224</sup> Be-

---

<sup>216</sup> *Id.*

<sup>217</sup> Dr. Douglas Powell, *Risk-Based Regulatory Responses in Global Trade: Guatemalan Raspberry Imports in the U.S. and Canada, 1996-1998*, at 7, available at [http://www.foodsafety.ksu.edu/articles/443/guatemalan\\_rasp\\_imports.pdf](http://www.foodsafety.ksu.edu/articles/443/guatemalan_rasp_imports.pdf) [hereinafter *Raspberry Case*].

<sup>218</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>219</sup> *Raspberry Case*, *supra* note 217, at 10.

<sup>220</sup> *Id.*

<sup>221</sup> *Id.* at 11.

<sup>222</sup> Judy C. Buzby, *Effects of Food-Safety Perceptions on Food Demand and Global Trade* 59 (May 2001), available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/wrs011/wrs011i.pdf>.

<sup>223</sup> *Id.*

<sup>224</sup> Robert M. Yoke, Note, *Let Us Eat Lettuce (and Spinach): Is The Bioterrorism Preparedness Act Enough or Is An Independent Food Safety Agency Required?*, 96 *Ky. L.J.* 731, 731 (2007-08).

2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

135

cause the source of the contamination was unknown at that time, the FDA warned consumers to stay away from all bagged spinach.<sup>225</sup> Even though the FDA was subsequently able to determine possible causes of the E. coli outbreak, it was not able to identify a single source. As of 2006, this was considered one of the deadliest outbreaks in the country,<sup>226</sup> and one of the costliest to date because of lost profits. The spinach industry was shut down by the FDA's warning for 5 days, causing grocery stores to pull the bagged spinach from their shelves and restaurants to remove it from their menu. One year after the outbreak, the California spinach market lagged \$60 million from before the outbreak. The spinach industry in general lost as much as \$350 million in profits.<sup>227</sup>

As discussed, unsafe food can have far-reaching consequences on individuals, nations, and the global economy. For these reasons, we consider food safety a fundamental aspect of the human right to health and a necessary right in achieving sustainable development in a growing economy.

*E. Conclusion*

This paper seeks to highlight the two core human rights we find most fundamental to the intersection of trade and health. If the moral consequences highlighted in this paper are not enough to push nations towards creating programs to protect these rights, the numbers and what they mean for the global economy should be enough. Without access to essential life-saving medications and food safety the population as a whole will suffer. The loss of millions of people decreases the demand for products as well as efficient production of such products. A healthy population is the foundation to achieving a prosperous and sustainable economy.

## VI. TRADE AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

*A. Introduction*

As previously discussed, while trade liberalization can create benefits, it can also have unintended consequences such as human rights abuses.<sup>228</sup> Critics of trade liberalization and RTAs claim that

---

<sup>225</sup> The outbreak resulted in 204 cases of illness across 26 states and Canada. Sara M. Benson, *Guidance for Improving the Federal Response to Foodborne Illness Outbreaks Associated with Fresh Produce*, 65 FOOD & DRUG L.J. 503, 508 (2010).

<sup>226</sup> See generally *id.*

<sup>227</sup> *Id.* at 509.

<sup>228</sup> *Trade and Development - an Introduction, A Global Focus Key Issues Paper*, GLOBAL FOCUS (2010), <http://www.globalfocus.org.nz/uploaded/documents/Trade%20and%20development.pdf>.

136 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

this system and these agreements only benefit a few multinational corporations and local elites, while harming large parts of civil society,<sup>229</sup> particularly indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are inarguably entitled to share in the benefits of trade liberalization, including the opportunities and economic growth it creates.

Economic policies often ignore the non-economic effects of these policies, including increases in low-quality, unstable, low-paying employment and increased inequity and poverty, especially for women, children, the elderly, and indigenous peoples.<sup>230</sup> Additionally, participants in international trade often do not abide by land rights and international labor standards.<sup>231</sup> Local government human rights organizations insist that the continuing discrimination and exclusion of indigenous peoples has significant negative consequences.<sup>232</sup>

The term “indigenous peoples” refers to a population that shares a common culture, language, race, historical condition, or territorial connection, which are all objective elements. There is also a subjective element in which the group self-identifies as a distinctive ethnic or cultural group.<sup>233</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the term “indigenous peoples” will be defined as communities that pre-date colonization periods, are still characterized by a distinctive culture, and still inhabit ancestral lands.<sup>234</sup> These indigenous populations represent a minority group within their resident territories and generally live under conditions of severe economic deprivation in comparison to the majority group around them.<sup>235</sup>

As of 2011, there were approximately 300 million indigenous peoples worldwide, a majority of whom face marginalization from the dominant society and live under conditions of severe disadvantage, poverty, discrimination, and exclusion, all while struggling to preserve their original way of life and their culture.<sup>236</sup> Even though indigenous peoples comprise roughly 5 percent of the world’s population, they ac-

<sup>229</sup> Roberto R. Coll, *Wielding Human Rights and Constitutional Procedure to Temper the Harms of Globalization: Costa Rica’s Battle Over the Central America Free Trade Agreement*, 33 U. PA. J. INT’L L. 461, 464 (2011).

<sup>230</sup> *Trade and Development*, *supra* note 228.

<sup>231</sup> *Id.*

<sup>232</sup> *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples—Nicaragua: Overview*, REFWORLD (June 3, 2008), <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4954ce1bc.html> [hereinafter *World Directory Nicaragua*].

<sup>233</sup> Patrick Wieland, *Why the Amicus Curia Institution is Ill-suited to Address Indigenous Peoples’ Before Investor State Arbitration Tribunals: Glamis Gold and the Right of Intervention*, 3 TRADE, LAW AND DEVELOPMENT 335, 345-46 (Fall 2011).

<sup>234</sup> *Id.* at 346.

<sup>235</sup> JUST TRADE, *supra* note 2, at 207.

<sup>236</sup> Wieland, *supra* note 233, at 345.

count for about 15 percent of the world's poor.<sup>237</sup> A 2004 World Bank study indicated that indigenous peoples in Latin America have made little social and economic progress in the last decade and suffer from lower education, poverty, and a greater incidence of discrimination and disease than most other groups.<sup>238</sup>

For example, the majority of Nicaragua's minorities live in the Atlantic lowlands, which comprise approximately 56 percent of the national territory.<sup>239</sup> Nicaragua, for example, is comprised of 15 districts and two Autonomous Regions, with significant inequalities existing between the districts and the Autonomous Regions.<sup>240</sup> This area contains some of the nation's richest reserves of natural resources and the second largest tropical jungle in the Americas,<sup>241</sup> providing a prime opportunity for investors and the government. The Autonomous Regions are primarily inhabited by indigenous peoples who have very low rates of formal employment and generally work in the subsistence fishing, mining and farming sectors, with the rate of unemployment in these regions being 90 percent as opposed to approximately 7 percent in the country as a whole. In addition, a majority of Nicaragua's indigenous population suffers from a lack of access to health care. Even while the rate of poverty in Nicaragua has decreased by about 14 percent during the past 5 years, it has increased by 11 percent among minority and indigenous Caribbean coast populations of Nicaragua.<sup>242</sup> These are troubling statistics that need to be addressed in order for these countries to both become more economically productive and to enjoy higher standards of living for all of civil society.

A majority of indigenous peoples have been separated from lands they consider sacred, deprived of their natural environments, and economically, culturally, politically, and religiously dispossessed.<sup>243</sup> They have borne the brunt of the international trade policies as evidenced by significant increases in unemployment, underemployment, and other social indicators indicative of Third World populations. Resource extraction can cause the forceful removal of people from their lands and the destruction of their natural environ-

<sup>237</sup> *Statistics and Key Facts about Indigenous People*, Rural Poverty Portal (Apr. 27, 2012, 9:48 AM), <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/topic/statistics/tags/indigenous%20peoples>.

<sup>238</sup> Gillian Moon, *Fair in Form, But Discriminatory in Operation — WTO Law's Discriminatory Effects on Human Rights in Developing Countries*, 14 J. INT'L ECON. L. 553, 570 (2011).

<sup>239</sup> *World Directory Nicaragua*, *supra* note 232.

<sup>240</sup> *Id.*

<sup>241</sup> *Id.*

<sup>242</sup> *Id.*

<sup>243</sup> Wieland, *supra* note 233, at 345.



138 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

ments.<sup>244</sup> This presents a significant issue when they face the loss of biodiversity, land, water, culture, livelihoods, and traditional knowledge.<sup>245</sup> Investor's rights under investment treaties disproportionately affect indigenous peoples when "the boundaries of their sovereignty remain disputed."<sup>246</sup> Because of this, investors may not recognize indigenous peoples' rights to natural resources and land.

Additionally, indigenous peoples have a weakened bargaining position vis-à-vis their employers because of high levels of unemployment and the increased mobility of capital. They are particularly vulnerable when their integration into the global economy occurs without their free prior knowledge and consent because they are inadequately able to protect their livelihoods, culture, and rights,<sup>247</sup> making it difficult, if not impossible, to enjoy the opportunities and growth that come with trade liberalization.

### B. *Link Between Trade and Indigenous Rights*

The global economy operates under rules and legal frameworks, which can be adverse to indigenous peoples' rights and can lead to the destruction of their cultures and ways of life.<sup>248</sup> Indigenous peoples and their livelihoods need to be able to co-exist with other systems<sup>249</sup> in order for them to flourish in the economy. They need to be supported in the push for them to be integrated into the global market economy.<sup>250</sup> Investment in the indigenous potential of poorer regions can increase the competitiveness of regional economies. Indigenous communities are the keepers of unique skills, knowledge, and production systems, which can be an asset not only to the indigenous populations that discovered it, but also to the economy and global welfare.<sup>251</sup> It is important to take steps to protect, promote, and recognize the traditional industries, occupations, and economies of indigenous peoples.<sup>252</sup> Doing so can have far-reaching effects on the economy, both nationally and globally through the increased productivity of more of the population.

<sup>244</sup> Trade and Development, *supra* note 228.

<sup>245</sup> *Id.*

<sup>246</sup> Wieland, *supra* note 233, at 348.

<sup>247</sup> *A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All*, WORLD COMMISSION ON THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF GLOBALIZATION 46 (2004), <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/wcsdg/docs/report.pdf> [hereinafter Fair Globalization].

<sup>248</sup> *Id.* at 70.

<sup>249</sup> *Id.*

<sup>250</sup> *Id.*

<sup>251</sup> *Rural Development through Decent Work, Rural Policy Brief*, INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION, available at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_165311.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_165311.pdf) (last visited Jul. 1, 2012).

<sup>252</sup> *Id.*

Indigenous peoples are no strangers to entrepreneurship, innovation, and enterprise.<sup>253</sup> They are the world's first peoples and they are responsible for the creation and development of early forms of trade and barter, which now provide the base for modern commerce.<sup>254</sup> Indigenous innovation was based upon their extensive knowledge of their traditional lands and skills in designing artifacts and tools that were adaptable to their environment.<sup>255</sup> Indigenous peoples are critical to the development of the economy and their economic success can help maintain the survival of indigenous communities. Indigenous peoples are struggling to improve their socio-economic status and many of them believe that economic development is the way to achieve wealthier and healthier communities.<sup>256</sup> It also allows them to participate in the global economy through entrepreneurship and business development.<sup>257</sup>

### C. *The Role of RTAs in Indigenous Rights*

While international and non-governmental organizations have attempted to address human rights applicable to indigenous peoples, there are limited mechanisms in place to accomplish the goal of protecting indigenous rights. Indigenous peoples' rights were not even covered by the UN until the adoption by the General Assembly of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the "Indigenous Declaration") on September 13, 2007.<sup>258</sup> Even though it is an aspirational, non-binding document, the Indigenous Declaration has created a new awareness of indigenous peoples' concerns and human rights, recognized the invaluable contributions of indigenous peoples to the culture and heritage of the world, and created an awareness of the need to address the issues of indigenous peoples through regulations and budgets. The Indigenous Declaration can prove to be extremely useful

<sup>253</sup> Danielle M. Conway, *Promoting Indigenous Innovation, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Through the Licensing of Article 31 Indigenous Assets and Resources*, 64 SMU L. Rev. 1095, 1098 (2011)[hereinafter *Promoting Innovation*].

<sup>254</sup> *Id.* at 1099.

<sup>255</sup> *Id.*

<sup>256</sup> Bob Kayseas et al., *Fostering Indigenous Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of the Membertou First Nation, Nova Scotia, Canada 2* (2006) (unpublished manuscript), available at <http://ciede.mgt.unm.edu/pdf/papers/BobKayseas.pdf> (last visited July).

<sup>257</sup> *Id.*

<sup>258</sup> See United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, G.A. Res. 61/295, at 1, U.N. GAOR, 61st Sess., 107th plen. mtg., U.N. Doc. A/RES/61/295 (Sept. 13, 2007), available at [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf) [hereinafter *Indigenous Declaration*].

140 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

if states, civil society, indigenous peoples, and the UN make use of it to provide guidance on indigenous rights.<sup>259</sup>

RTAs can manage trade between economic rivals and neighbors and can regulate competition in politically sensitive sectors of the economy.<sup>260</sup> Structural change provided by RTAs has brought uncertainty and insecurity to workers because of the lack of social and economic provisions for adjustment. Indigenous peoples are among the most vulnerable because they lack economic assets and trade-significant skills.<sup>261</sup> Today, a myriad of actors play an important role in shaping trade policy. These global networks can help bring together diverse groups of people to try to affect change<sup>262</sup> and can help address common problems such as gender equality, the environment, and the rights of indigenous peoples.<sup>263</sup>

Despite the aspirational language, these RTAs do not set out specific mechanisms for ensuring these rights. They are merely aspirational discussions in the social dimensions of the agreements or are often separate from the main text of the agreements. Although these examples demonstrate a global concern for indigenous inequalities, it is difficult to integrate this concept at a practical level. Enabling language such as that discussed above is not enough. This paper seeks to enumerate four core principles with respect to indigenous rights as they pertain to trade, and will provide examples of how these principles apply to trade on a practical level.

#### *D. Core Principles for Indigenous Peoples*

We have identified four core indigenous rights that are so closely linked to trade and so critical to indigenous peoples that they must be included in RTAs. These are the right to own land and resources, the protection of traditional knowledge, access to education, and the right to participate in the institutions that set policies affecting them.

##### *1. Right to Own Land and Resources*

One of the objectives of the indigenous rights movement has been articulated by Article 26(2) of the Indigenous Declaration which

<sup>259</sup> UNFPII, State of the World's Indigenous Peoples, available at [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP\\_web.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP_web.pdf) (last visited Feb. 6, 2012) [hereinafter UNFPII].)

<sup>260</sup> Roberto R. Coll, *Wielding Human Rights and Constitutional Procedure to Temper the Harms of Globalization: Costa Rica's Battle Over the Central America Free Trade Agreement*, 33 U. PA. J. INT'L L. 461, 463 (2011).

<sup>261</sup> Fair Globalization, *supra* note 247, at 4.

<sup>262</sup> *Id.* at 9.

<sup>263</sup> *Id.* at 10.

states that “[i]ndigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.”<sup>264</sup> This objective often stands in opposition to trade’s alluring potential for economic growth and development, which creates pressure for governments to use indigenous land in a way that maximizes financial rewards and increases the country’s standing in the global market.

The right to control resources and land is crucial to the survival of indigenous populations as distinct peoples.<sup>265</sup> Indigenous peoples’ rights over land and resources need to be recognized because these lands and resources have been looked after by the indigenous for time immemorial.<sup>266</sup> Indigenous populations continue to lose their lands, leading to the loss of their culture and livelihoods,<sup>267</sup> together with their traditional knowledge as discussed below. The development of indigenous peoples depends on control of their land because land provides a base to rebuild indigenous communities by establishing an economic footing in modern society.<sup>268</sup>

Trade greatly affects the resources that are necessary to the survival of indigenous peoples and has caused the destruction of these resources. In cases of investments in extractive industries, plantations, and mega-hydroelectric dams, indigenous peoples have been subjected to disruption of livelihoods, massive dislocations, and the ecological degradation of their lands.<sup>269</sup> For example, oil development interests have affected five of Ecuador’s indigenous tribes in the Amazon rain forest because the oil development by Texaco and its successor caused an oil spillage, which detrimentally affected the Amazon rain forest.<sup>270</sup>

One flagrant example of a massive dislocation of indigenous peoples from their land is the Mapuche people. In South America, the

<sup>264</sup> Lillian Aponte Miranda, *The Hybrid State- Corporate Enterprise and Violations of Indigenous Land Rights: Theorizing Corporate Responsibility and Accountability Under International Law*, 11 LEWIS & CLARK L. REV. 135, 137 (2007); Indigenous Declaration, *supra* note 258, at art. 26(2).

<sup>265</sup> Wieland, *supra* note 233, at 349.

<sup>266</sup> Fair Globalization, *supra* note 247, at 70.

<sup>267</sup> Rural Development through Decent Work, Rural Policy Brief, INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION [ILO], available at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_165311.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_165311.pdf) (last visited Feb. 16, 2012).

<sup>268</sup> Danielle M. Conway, *Indigenizing Intellectual Property Law: Customary Law, Legal Pluralism, and the Protection of Indigenous Peoples’ Rights, Identity and Resources*, 15 TEX. WESLEYAN L. REV. 207, 212 (2009).

<sup>269</sup> Fair Globalization, *supra* note 247, at 46.

<sup>270</sup> JUST TRADE, *supra* note 2, at 225.

142 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

Mapuche people are the third largest indigenous group<sup>271</sup> and comprise 8 percent of the population of Chile.<sup>272</sup> The Pehuenche tribe is part of the Mapuche and is actively seeking recognition of its rights to the resources and lands to which it is culturally, spiritually, and materially connected.<sup>273</sup> In 1989, the government of Chile approved a hydroelectric development plan for the upper Bío Bío River,<sup>274</sup> which traditionally was Mapuche-Pehuenche land.<sup>275</sup> The project, once completed, was intended to supply 10 percent of Chile's energy,<sup>276</sup> which would spur economic growth and development.

The Pehuenches claimed that the project would require the displacement of their people because their lands would be flooded.<sup>277</sup> After a series of legal battles, the Pehuenches filed a claim before the Inter American Commission for Human Rights (IACHR).<sup>278</sup> Although this case settled out of court, it demonstrates how economic development trumps indigenous rights that, unlike most land property claims, involve an intimate attachment to the lands which they originally settled.

*Saramaka People v. Suriname* addressed the loss of indigenous resources, when the Saramaka filed various land and resource claims stemming from concessions Suriname granted to transnational companies for the exploration and extraction of natural resources. The IACHR found that Suriname violated the Saramaka people's rights to judicial protection and property through the granting of mining and logging concessions. The IACHR found that these concessions adversely affected resources necessary to subsistence and trade by the Saramaka and ordered Suriname to grant title over the Saramaka people's territory before authorizing new plans for development or investment of natural resources that could affect their territory.

---

<sup>271</sup> Lila Barrera-Hernández, *Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights and Natural Resource Development: Chile's Mapuche Peoples and the Right to Water*, 11 ANN. SURV. INT'L & COMP. L. 1 (2005).

<sup>272</sup> *Id.* at 1, 12.

<sup>273</sup> *Id.*

<sup>274</sup> *Id.* at 1.

<sup>275</sup> José Alwyn, *The Ralco Dam and the Pehuenche People in Chile: Lessons From an Etho-Environmental Conflict*, Paper Presented at the Conference at the Centre for the Study of Global Issues, University of British Columbia, Sept. 25-27, 2002, at 5-6, 9-10, 12, available at [http://www.historiaecologica.cl/Ralco%20\(Alwin\).pdf](http://www.historiaecologica.cl/Ralco%20(Alwin).pdf).

<sup>276</sup> Barrera-Hernández, *supra* note 271, at 13.

<sup>277</sup> *Id.* at 14.

<sup>278</sup> *Id.* at 17.

According to the facts of the Yanomami case,<sup>279</sup> the Brazilian Constitution guaranteed the rights of the Indians to own their territory and it gave them exclusive use of the natural resources in that territory. Nonetheless, the Yanomami Indian inhabitants were displaced from their lands because of the building of a highway. Not only did the construction of the highway cause a considerable number of deaths from epidemics of influenza, tuberculosis, measles, and venereal diseases, it was later discovered that the area contained ores of tin and other metals, which technically belonged to the Yanomami. The displacement of the Yanomami from their lands deprived them of the benefit of these natural resources, making them unable to engage in trade that had brought such great benefit to Brazil's majority populations. This led to many of the Yanomami becoming beggars and prostitutes unable to contribute to the economic development of Brazil.

Indigenous peoples should be afforded equal access to assets and resources. Policies need to be enacted to take into account indigenous peoples' needs where they work and live. It is important to foster local communities by strengthening local cultural identities, economic capabilities, and the need to respect the rights of indigenous peoples.<sup>280</sup> Indigenous peoples' rights over land and natural resources need to be recognized, and mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure this happens. Their lands and natural resources need to be conserved and protected in order to preserve the various indigenous groups, as well as their traditional knowledge.

Since 2005, the ILO has worked with the indigenous peoples' organizations and the Government of Cambodia to empower the indigenous communities by protecting their collective rights to land within the framework of a DANIDA funded project. The ILO supports the implementation of the Forestry Law and the Land Law through the provision of assistance and capacity building to indigenous communities and public officials throughout the steps involved in the process leading to land-titling. These steps include community identification, legal registration, and application for collective land title under the Land Law of 2001 and other related regulations. As of the time of the report, thirty-six communities were identified, and twenty had been registered as legal entities and are now working towards collective land titling.<sup>281</sup>

---

<sup>279</sup> Resolution No. 12/85, Case No. 7615 (Brazil), Mar. 5, 1985, printed in Annual Report of the IACHR 1984-85, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.66, doc. 10 rev. 1, Oct. 1, 1985, available at <http://www.cidh.org/annualrep/84.85eng/brazil7615.htm>.

<sup>280</sup> Fair Globalization, *supra* note 247, at 46.

<sup>281</sup> *Rural Development through Decent Work*, Rural Policy Brief, INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION, [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_165311.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_165311.pdf) (last visited Feb. 16, 2012).

In Australia, the Native Title Legislation has increased the negotiating powers of indigenous peoples by obliging mining companies to consult with the communities. This has led to improvements in the proportion of indigenous peoples employed in the mining sector within the indigenous communities.<sup>282</sup> Licensing can facilitate the control and exercise over indigenous resources and assets, and can provide the foundation for indigenous entrepreneurship.<sup>283</sup> Through licensing, indigenous entrepreneurs can cement in commerce the indigenous resources and assets to commercial market participants.<sup>284</sup>

## 2. *Protection of Traditional Knowledge*

The second core right we consider fundamental is the protection of indigenous knowledge. The Indigenous Declaration provides a guarantee that also contains the definition of traditional knowledge. Article 31 of the Indigenous Declaration states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.<sup>285</sup>

Traditional knowledge generally refers to intangible features of assets and resources that arise from indigenous existence.<sup>286</sup> It also refers to the innovations,<sup>287</sup> knowledge,<sup>288</sup> assets,<sup>289</sup> resources, and

<sup>282</sup> State of the World's Indigenous Peoples, at 17, UNFPII, available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/sowip.html> (last visited Feb. 6, 2012).

<sup>283</sup> Promoting Innovation, *supra* note 253, at 1116-1117.

<sup>284</sup> *Id.* at 1117.

<sup>285</sup> Indigenous Declaration, *supra* note 258, art. 31.

<sup>286</sup> Promoting Innovation, *supra* note 253, at 1115.

<sup>287</sup> See Naomi Roht-Arriaza, *Of Seeds and Shamans: The Appropriation of the Scientific and Technical Knowledge of Indigenous and Local Communities*, 17 MICH. J. INT'L L. 919, 924 (1996). In recent years companies have sought to make their clothing using environmentally-friendly materials. *Id.* In 1990, scientist Sally Fox sought and received a U.S. patent for colored cotton, based on seeds she received from a United States Department of Agriculture collection from Latin America. *Id.* This patented colored cotton resulted from centuries of cultivation and breeding by indigenous groups in Latin America. *Id.* While these indigenous groups are the true inventors of colored cotton, Sally Fox receives all of the proceeds of the pat-

practices<sup>290</sup> of local and indigenous populations around the world that have been developed over time and passed from generation to generation.<sup>291</sup> It is generally practical in nature, especially in fields such as fisheries, agriculture, forestry, horticulture, and health,<sup>292</sup> and can also include manufacturing and handicrafts.<sup>293</sup>

Indigenous assets and resources are referred to as indigenous intellectual property (“indigenous IP”).<sup>294</sup> The use of indigenous knowledge is recognized as a rich source of scientific information,<sup>295</sup> which can contribute to the global well-being. However, indigenous

---

ents. *Id.* Even today thousands of farmers still grow colored cotton and thousands of indigenous women still spin and weave it. *Id.*

<sup>288</sup> Andean indigenous cultures have long used quinine, which comes from the bark of the Peruvian cinchona tree. *Id.* at 921-22. They learned to use quinine to cure fever after seeing feverish jaguars eating it. However, its most-well known use is as a cure for malaria. *Id.*

<sup>289</sup> See Jonathan Vuotto, *One Year After Breakthrough Court Order, Nicaragua Government Still Ignores Awas Tingni Rights*, CULTURAL SURVIVAL, May 5, 2010, <http://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/nicaragua/one-year-after-breakthrough-court-order-nicaragua>. The Awas Tingni is part of the larger Mayagna indigenous group in Nicaragua, which has inhabited the Atlantic coastal region for centuries. *Id.* The group holds their land communally and each family maintains several plots of land, which they cultivate using the slash-and-burn system. *Id.* This method, which has been passed down for centuries, mimics the natural forest system. *Id.* Not only is this method ecologically sustainable, but is also economically productive. *Id.* It involves a rotating period of regeneration where the community does not use a specific plot of land. *Id.* It takes approximately 15 years of disuse for the land to regain its productive capacity. *Id.*

<sup>290</sup> See Roht-Arriaza, *supra* note 287, at 923-24. For centuries, indigenous African peoples have been using katempfe and the serendipity berry to sweeten their food and drink. *Id.* at 923. Thaumutin is the active ingredient in katempfe, is roughly 2,000 times sweeter as sugar, and is calorie free. *Id.* Lucky Biotech, a Japanese corporation, and the University of California, were granted patents over the proteins derived from the two plants, making no arrangements to compensate the African communities from which the knowledge of the plant originated. *Id.* at 923-24.

<sup>291</sup> *Traditional Knowledge Information Portal: Background Material*, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, <http://www.cbd.int/tk/material.shtml> (last visited Feb. 6, 2012) [hereinafter *Traditional Knowledge Information Panel*].

<sup>292</sup> *Id.*

<sup>293</sup> INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORG., UNLOCKING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ POTENTIAL FOR SUBSTANTIAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT 2 (2011) [hereinafter UNLOCKING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ POTENTIAL], available at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_165311.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_165311.pdf).

<sup>294</sup> *Promoting Innovation*, *supra* note 253, at 1115.

<sup>295</sup> Geoffrey Scott, *A Protocol for Evaluating Changing Global Attitudes Toward Innovation and Intellectual Property Regimes*, 32 U. PA. J. INT’L L. 1165, 1170 n.9 (2011).



146 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

peoples are not afforded the protection for their traditional knowledge as creators of new ideas in the West are. Western IP laws support the appropriation of indigenous property without any obligation to allow the originators of the knowledge a share in the proceeds.<sup>296</sup>

Western IP law is useful in protecting indigenous IP,<sup>297</sup> but it is currently inadequate to protect the non-commercial attributes of intangible assets and indigenous resources.<sup>298</sup> Indigenous IPRs are violated because international rules open the door to privatization of indigenous knowledge.<sup>299</sup> The TRIPS Agreement provides patent protection only to inventions that are new, involve an inventive step, and are capable of industrial application.<sup>300</sup>

Today, people are starting to recognize and appreciate the correlation between culture and biodiversity. The practices and knowledge that the indigenous and local populations have passed on through generations is closely linked to the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity.<sup>301</sup> Today, industrialized agriculture favors uniformity, which means large areas are planted with a single, high-yielding variety through the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and irrigation to maximize the yield.<sup>302</sup> This can have disastrous effects on the ecosystem and other crops.<sup>303</sup> Genetic uniformity is dangerous because it is susceptible to attacks from pests.<sup>304</sup> However, crop genetic diversity is crucial to food security.<sup>305</sup> In developing countries, farmers who still practice traditional farming techniques cultivate local varieties of

<sup>296</sup> JOHN MUGABE, *INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: AN EXPLORATION IN INTERNATIONAL POLICY DISCOURSE* (1999), available at <http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/hr/paneldiscussion/papers/pdf/mugabe.pdf> (quoting Thomas Greaves, *Tribal Rights*, in *VALUING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHT* 25, 26 (Stephen B. Brush & Doreen Stabinsky eds., 1996)).

<sup>297</sup> See Conway, *supra* note 268, at 209.

<sup>298</sup> *Id.* at 238.

<sup>299</sup> Fair Globalization, *supra* note 247, at 22.

<sup>300</sup> Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, Annex 1C, TRIPS: Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, 1869 U.N.T.S. 319, 14331, art. 27(1) (1995).

<sup>301</sup> *Traditional Knowledge Information Panel*, *supra* note 291.

<sup>302</sup> U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization Director-General, *Harvesting Nature's Diversity: Biodiversity to Nurture People*, <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/004/V1430E/V1430E04.htm> (last visited Apr. 25, 2012).

<sup>303</sup> See *id.*

<sup>304</sup> See *id.* During the 1970s, a virus devastated rice field from India to Indonesia, endangering a critical food crop. *Id.* After years of research, scientists found a gene in one variety of rice that was resistant to the virus, leading to a virus resistant variety of rice being grown today. *Id.*

<sup>305</sup> See *id.*

crops called “land races.”<sup>306</sup> These land races are the result of generations of farming.<sup>307</sup> There are also closely related varieties that survive in the wild, which are known as “wild relatives” of the crops.<sup>308</sup> These two species form the “richest repositories of crop genetic diversity.”<sup>309</sup> In various parts of the world, women play an important role in preserving and maintaining diversity because of their role in seed selection, vegetative propagation, and livestock management.<sup>310</sup>

Knowledge, including indigenous knowledge, produces information, which in turn produces an intangible asset.<sup>311</sup> This asset production can create opportunities and wealth in the indigenous communities, as well as other communities.<sup>312</sup> This increase in opportunity and wealth creation assists in building infrastructure, which allows the indigenous communities to participate in the global economy.<sup>313</sup> For example, in India, an effort was made to stop transnational bio-prospectors from acquiring IPRs over traditional knowledge.<sup>314</sup> A searchable database of traditional medicine was created to serve as evidence of prior art for patent examiners in examining patent applications so that the pirated use would be shown not to be novel.<sup>315</sup> This followed a case in which the U.S. Patent and Trademark office granted, but later revoked, a patent for the use of turmeric to treat wounds.<sup>316</sup>

Traditional knowledge is valuable not only to those who depend on it for their daily lives, but also to agriculture and modern industry.<sup>317</sup> Products such as plant-based cosmetics and medicines<sup>318</sup>

---

<sup>306</sup> *Id.*

<sup>307</sup> *Id.*

<sup>308</sup> *Id.*

<sup>309</sup> *Id.*

<sup>310</sup> Roht-Arriaza, *supra* note 287, at 932.

<sup>311</sup> See Conway, *supra* note 268, at 209.

<sup>312</sup> *Id.*

<sup>313</sup> *Id.*

<sup>314</sup> See *Traditional Knowledge and Intellectual Property*, WORLD INTELL. PROP. ORG. NEWS & EVENTS, available at [http://www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/briefs/tk\\_ip.html](http://www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/briefs/tk_ip.html) (last visited Feb. 9, 2013).

<sup>315</sup> *Id.*

<sup>316</sup> *Id.*

<sup>317</sup> *Traditional Knowledge Information Portal*, *supra* note 291.

<sup>318</sup> See Shayana Kadidal, *Plants, Poverty, and Pharmaceutical Patents*, 103 YALE L.J. 223, 223-24 (1993). One of the most notable examples is the discovery of the rosy periwinkle plant, which is unique to Madagascar. *Id.* at 223. Scientists discovered that it had cancer-treating properties. *Id.* From that, the drugs vinblastine and vincristine were developed. *Id.* at 224. These drugs have resulted in annual sales of \$100 million for Eli Lilly, without so much as a dollar going to Madagascar. *Id.*

are derived from traditional knowledge.<sup>319</sup> Additionally, it is well known that indigenous peoples have the ability to identify the exact uses of local herbs to cure specific illnesses.<sup>320</sup> Because of their long-standing observations, indigenous peoples are able to find the exact means of preparation, the specific dosages, and the required conditions which can yield the best results.<sup>321</sup> This information is critical to the development of drugs, because without this knowledge, investigators would have to test all of the approximately one quarter of a million species of plants in existence.<sup>322</sup> This indigenous knowledge is crucial to the survival of people around the globe because it helps create cures for diseases, allowing people to live longer and participate in the global economy.

Recognizing and fostering the abilities of indigenous peoples can contribute to their individual growth as well as the growth of the national economy. Creating new and improved processes and technology, especially with respect to indigenous peoples' new adaptations of existing knowledge or processes, is considered the cornerstone of innovation.<sup>323</sup> Indigenous peoples are in a unique position to instigate indigenous economic development by adapting and harnessing indigenous resources and assets to build and sustain enterprises.<sup>324</sup>

### 3. Access to Education

Indigenous peoples face extreme disadvantages and barriers in the labor market because their skills and knowledge are not valued and they lack access to educational and vocational training.<sup>325</sup> Because of this they are often unemployed or underemployed and may even have to resort to exploitative sectors such as trafficking, bonded labor, hazardous work, discrimination at work and child labor.<sup>326</sup> Indigenous peoples need access to educational and vocational training in order to increase their job opportunities and improve their standing in the economy.

The Indigenous Declaration addresses the right of education for indigenous peoples by stating that "[i]ndigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic

<sup>319</sup> UNLOCKING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' POTENTIAL, *supra* note 293.

<sup>320</sup> Mohammad Hossein Erfanmanesh, *Traditional Medicines and the Requirement of Patentability: Do They Have a Technical Character? The European Approach*, 17 INT'L PROC. ECON. DEV. & RES. 305, 306 (2011).

<sup>321</sup> *Id.*

<sup>322</sup> Michael J. Huft, *Indigenous Peoples and Drug Discovery Research: A Question of Intellectual Property Rights*, 89 NW. U.L. REV. 1678, 1723 (1995).

<sup>323</sup> *Promoting Innovation*, *supra* note 253, at 1116.

<sup>324</sup> *Id.*

<sup>325</sup> UNLOCKING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' POTENTIAL, *supra* note 293, at 1.

<sup>326</sup> *Id.*

and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education. . . .<sup>327</sup> Access to education for indigenous peoples is also discussed in a number of international human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Universal Declaration, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.<sup>328</sup>

Despite these international instruments, the right to education has not been afforded to indigenous peoples on a large-scale basis. A critical educational gap exists between the general population and indigenous peoples.<sup>329</sup> In a majority of countries, indigenous children have low school enrollment, poor performance in school, high dropout rates, low literacy rates, and generally lag behind other groups in terms of academic achievements.<sup>330</sup> Illiteracy is generally caused by educational exclusion in the form of poor access, inadequate funding, and ill-equipped instructors.<sup>331</sup> A 2009 study found that indigenous peoples are deprived access to quality education, which leads to their social marginalization, increased poverty, and the dispossession of indigenous peoples.<sup>332</sup>

In general, indigenous girls are more disadvantaged than indigenous boys, but both groups suffer from inadequate education.<sup>333</sup> The Hmong in Vietnam are among the most marginalized of the country's indigenous groups and approximately 97 percent of the women and 83 percent of the men are illiterate.<sup>334</sup> In Ecuador, the indigenous illiteracy rate in 2001 was 28 percent as compared to the national average of 13 percent. In Venezuela, the non-indigenous illiteracy rate is approximately 6.4 percent while the indigenous illiteracy rate is 32 percent.<sup>335</sup> Additionally, in Nicaragua, out of the 5400 primary schools in the country, only 200 are in the Autonomous Regions, and the rate

<sup>327</sup> Indigenous Declaration, *supra* note 258, art. 21.

<sup>328</sup> U.N. OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ADVISER ON GENDER ISSUES AND ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES, GENDER AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' EDUCATION, BRIEFING NOTE NO. 3 at 1 (2010) [hereinafter BRIEFING NOTE NO. 3], available at [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/BriefingNote3\\_GREY.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/BriefingNote3_GREY.pdf).

<sup>329</sup> *Id.*

<sup>330</sup> UNFPPII, *supra* note 259, at 132.

<sup>331</sup> *Id.*

<sup>332</sup> BRIEFING NOTE NO. 3, *supra* note 328, at 13.

<sup>333</sup> *Id.* at 13-14.

<sup>334</sup> UNFPPII, *supra* note 259, at 132.

<sup>335</sup> *Id.*

150 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

of illiteracy in these Regions is 40 percent as opposed to 23 percent for the rest of the country.<sup>336</sup>

Educating indigenous peoples is a critical step toward achieving economic development and improving their situation. With an education, indigenous peoples can increase their entrepreneurial and employment opportunities, and their access to higher levels of education.<sup>337</sup> An education can empower them, leading to increased standards of living. Education also allows indigenous peoples to better develop skills crucial to managing the development of their communities and to actively participating in all levels of the decision-making process.<sup>338</sup>

#### 4. *Participation in Decision-Making*

We believe that the fourth core right for indigenous people is the right to participate in decision-making because everyone should have input into policies that affect them. Indigenous peoples face discrimination and exclusion from the political and economic process.<sup>339</sup> The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization sought to analyze globalization from a wide range of perspectives. This included dialogues with groups across and within countries, including indigenous peoples.<sup>340</sup> One issue was the conflict between the indigenous peoples and the mining corporations because of the liberalization of mining efforts.<sup>341</sup> For example, the 1997 Mining Law in Guatemala failed to consider the rights of indigenous peoples such as the right to prior consultation about major development investment in their communities. The Mining Law also made no provision for closing the mine and did not include any obligations to repair the environmental impact caused by the mining.<sup>342</sup>

One very recent example of the need for prior consultation is the plight of the Ngöbe Buglé people, who demanded the right to participate in discussions to decide whether to allow large-scale development projects. Approximately one year after the Panamanian government agreed to ban hydroelectric dam projects and mining in the Ngöbe Buglé territory, the president of Panama reversed the agreement in late 2011, leading to a bloody protest that could have

<sup>336</sup> World Directory of Nicaragua, *supra* note 232.

<sup>337</sup> BRIEFING NOTE NO. 3, *supra* note 328, at 3.

<sup>338</sup> *Id.*

<sup>339</sup> UNFPPII, *supra* note 259.

<sup>340</sup> Fair Globalization, *supra* note 247, at 12.

<sup>341</sup> *Id.* at 17.

<sup>342</sup> Raquel Aldana, *Transforming Students, Transforming Self: The Power of Teaching Social Justice Struggles in Context*, 24 PAC. MCGEORGE GLOBAL BUS. & DEV. L.J. 53, 59 (2011).

2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

151

been avoided by more involvement of the Ngöbe people in the new decision.<sup>343</sup>

In conclusion, mechanisms need to be put into place to ensure participation of indigenous peoples in political decision-making and in institutions.<sup>344</sup> Indigenous peoples need to be ensured full and effective participation on administrative measures, legislative measures, and programs that affect them directly.<sup>345</sup>

The Latin American rural indigenous communities developed a network called the Redturs in 2000, which promotes tourism-led development based upon the inclusion and sovereignty of these communities in decision-making. This program ensures that indigenous peoples are involved in decisions regarding the extent, nature, and speed of touristic endeavors. The Redturs now have programs in about 14 Latin American countries.<sup>346</sup> The programs connect the indigenous communities to advanced technology, modern economic trends, and market opportunities.

### E. Conclusion

It is critical that national and local authorities ensure the rights of indigenous peoples. Authorities need to enact policies to prevent discrimination and ensure that indigenous peoples are a protected group.<sup>347</sup> Indigenous peoples have begun making their voices heard by building partnerships with the UN system and beyond.<sup>348</sup> Although advances have been made in protecting and recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples, more still needs to be done. Implementation in future RTAs of the four core indigenous rights is necessary because of their high importance and their close connection to trade.

## VII. TRADE AND WORKER RIGHTS

### A. Introduction

Human rights and labor lawyers argue that some labor laws are fundamental to human dignity.<sup>349</sup> In response, the WTO renewed its commitment to “the observance of internationally recognized core

<sup>343</sup> *CIEL Stands with Ngöbe Buglé People of Panama: Repression Cannot Replace Consent*, CTR. FOR INT’L ENVTL. L. (Feb. 28, 2012), available at [http://www.ciel.org/Law\\_Communities/Panama\\_27Feb2012.html](http://www.ciel.org/Law_Communities/Panama_27Feb2012.html).

<sup>344</sup> UNLOCKING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ POTENTIAL, *supra* note 293.

<sup>345</sup> *Id.*

<sup>346</sup> *Id.* at 3.

<sup>347</sup> Fair Globalization, *supra* note 247, at 70.

<sup>348</sup> UNFPPII, *supra* note 259, at 1.

<sup>349</sup> Philip Alston, “Core Labour Standards” and the Transformation of the International Labour Rights Regime, 15 EUR. J. INT’L L. 457, 471 (2004).

152 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

labour standards.<sup>350</sup> Even so, ministers declared the task of identifying these core standards should rest with the ILO, not with the trade body.<sup>351</sup>

Worker rights encompass both procedural and substantive rights. The substantive rights include the rights to minimum wages, maximum working hours, and health and safety protections, while the procedural rights include the rights to collective bargaining and union formation.<sup>352</sup> Workers face many impediments to achieving labor rights and better workplace standards because they lack bargaining power in contractual relationships and are unable to push for the implementation of labor rights and better working conditions.<sup>353</sup> The creation and implementation of labor laws can decrease bargaining disparities and substandard labor conditions by mandating labor conditions and regulating the bargaining process.<sup>354</sup>

The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, adopted in Geneva in 1998 in direct response to the WTO Singapore Ministerial Declaration, identified the core labor standards of international labor law.<sup>355</sup> The four core labor standards consisted of the following: 1) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; 2) elimination of all forms of compulsory or forced labor; 3) effective abolition of child labor; and 4) elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.<sup>356</sup> These four rights were chosen from among the hundreds agreed to in the sixty-five conventions adopted by the ILO as the most closely linked to international trade.

Their adoption has made the subject of worker rights in post-1998 RTAs a hopeful exception to the general rule that human rights provisions in trade agreements are simply aspirational. However, critics of these provisions claim that they are vague and ambiguous. They argue that the ILO Work Declaration promotes undefined and open-ended principles, which inherently undermine ILO rights, and encourage the proliferation of ephemeral, divergent, and inadequate labor standards.<sup>357</sup> The rights under the ILO Work Declaration are meant to establish procedures for workers to achieve substantive rights as opposed to outcome-oriented rights such as minimum wage

<sup>350</sup> Singapore Declaration, *supra* note 10.

<sup>351</sup> *See id.*

<sup>352</sup> *See* Brian Langille, *Core Labour Rights – The True Story (Reply to Alston)*, 16 *EUR. J. INT'L L.* 409, 428-29 (2005).

<sup>353</sup> *Id.* at 428.

<sup>354</sup> *See id.*

<sup>355</sup> ILO Work Declaration, *supra* note 11.

<sup>356</sup> *See id.*

<sup>357</sup> *See* Philip Alston, *Facing up to the Complexities of the ILO's Core Labour Standards Agenda*, 16 *EUR. J. INT'L L.* 467, 476-77 (2005).

and occupational health and safety standards. Its focus is to ensure that workers can participate in setting substantive standards.<sup>358</sup> Conversely, proponents of the ILO Work Declaration argue that these rights are not concerned with setting detailed substantive standards, and, therefore, the ILO Work Declaration's ambiguity was intentional.<sup>359</sup>

In addition to the core principles enumerated under the ILO Work Declaration, this paper proposes that other labor rights should be considered core rights. It will also discuss the ambiguities involved in some of the current core principles under the ILO Work Declaration.

### B. *Link Between Trade and Labor*

Trade and labor are linked in a variety of ways. The two main arguments behind the linkage are a human rights-based approach and a competition-based approach.<sup>360</sup> Supporters of the competition-based argument claim that it is based on unfair competition and a race to the bottom. Countries with lower labor standards will necessarily have lower production costs, hence giving them a competitive advantage.<sup>361</sup> This could potentially cause other countries to lower their labor standards in order to maintain a competitive edge and attract foreign direct investment. What the WTO and ILO had recognized in the Work Declaration was that unfair labor practices can distort free trade, which is contrary to the goal of trade liberalization. This link between trade and labor continues to be undeniable. Free trade maximizes the wealth of all nations because it encourages each one to produce those services and goods in which it has a "comparative advantage," such that it can produce those services and goods most efficiently.<sup>362</sup> A "comparative advantage" can be because of climate or natural resources, or it can be the result of accumulated expertise and investment.<sup>363</sup>

The human rights argument views violations of the core labor standards as violations of fundamental human rights.<sup>364</sup> It is important to consider both arguments because they help explain the importance of fundamental rights and their impact on international trade.

<sup>358</sup> Michael A. Cabin, *Labor Rights in the Peru Agreement: Can Vague Principles Yield Concrete Change?*, 109 COLUM. L. REV. 1047, 1079 (2009).

<sup>359</sup> *Id.*

<sup>360</sup> Junlin Ho, *The International Labour Organization's Role in Nationalizing the International Movement To Abolish Child Labor*, 7 CHI. J. INT'L L. 337, 343 (2006).

<sup>361</sup> *Id.*

<sup>362</sup> David M. Smolin, *Conflict and Ideology in the International Campaign Against Child Labour*, 16 HOFSTRA LAB. & EMP. L.J. 383, 387 (1999).

<sup>363</sup> *Id.*

<sup>364</sup> See Ho, *supra* note 360, at 343.



154 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

Additionally, the global interest in improving workers' bargaining positions was meant to benefit their social welfare, thereby improving the economy by increasing their purchasing power.<sup>365</sup> This global concern led to the ILO Work Declaration.

### C. *Core Labor Principles under the ILO*

The ILO Work Declaration was considered a breakthrough because of its identification of core labor rights that are universally applicable and universally endorsed whether or not a particular state has ratified the corresponding ILO conventions.<sup>366</sup> Delegates to the 86th International Labour Conference reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to uphold fundamental rights in the workplace.<sup>367</sup> By an overwhelming vote, the ILO Work Declaration committed the Organization's 174 member States to respecting the principles inherent in the core labor standards and to promoting their universal application.<sup>368</sup> The vote was 273 for, and 0 against, with 43 abstentions.<sup>369</sup> In the view of the authors of this article, such identification, responding to the challenge thrown down by the WTO in 1996, carries with it the recognition that these basic rights are inseparable from trade and should be included in all trade agreements.

#### 1. *Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining*

Serving as an example of the need for efforts with respect to freedom of association, until 1990, Colombian workers were among the most organized in Latin America, and their trade unions were among the strongest, winning significant economic benefits for the workers.<sup>370</sup> The unions attempted to create a democratic worker's voice; however, they were subjected to unrelenting violence.<sup>371</sup> Since the mid-1980s, approximately 4,000 labor union members have been killed

<sup>365</sup> Cabin, *supra* note 358, at 1051-52.

<sup>366</sup> ILO Work Declaration, *supra* note 11, para. 2 ("[A]ll Members, even if they have not ratified the Conventions in question, have an obligation arising from the very fact of membership in the Organization to respect, to promote and to realize. . . the principles concerning the fundamental rights which are the subject of th[e] [core] Conventions. . .").

<sup>367</sup> *Fundamental Rights Declaration Clears Final Hurdle ILO Conference Seeks End to Child Labour Abuses*, ILO NEWS, June 18, 1998, available at [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/news/WCMS\\_007990/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/news/WCMS_007990/lang-en/index.htm).

<sup>368</sup> *Id.*

<sup>369</sup> *Id.*

<sup>370</sup> AM. CTR. FOR INT'L LABOR SOLIDARITY, JUSTICE FOR ALL: THE STRUGGLE FOR WORKER RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA 11 (2006), available at <http://www.solidaritycenter.org/files/ColombiaFinal.pdf>.

<sup>371</sup> *Id.*

in Colombia, with more than half of those killings occurring since 1991.<sup>372</sup> Bleak statistics show that more trade unionists are killed each year in Colombia than in the rest of the world combined.<sup>373</sup> Perhaps in response, the percentage of workers covered by collective bargaining in South and Central America has dropped to less than 15 percent.<sup>374</sup> This demonstrates that RTAs have an important role to play in protecting the rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining.

As a fundamental ILO principle, freedom of association and the recognition of the right to collective bargaining involves the right of workers to create and participate in organizations that protect and promote their interests.<sup>375</sup> Collective bargaining is a way of attaining productive solutions to potentially conflicting relations between workers and employers.<sup>376</sup> These rights were defined under ILO Conventions 87 and 98.<sup>377</sup> These Conventions also established necessary accompaniments to the core right of freedom of association.<sup>378</sup> We believe that these important additions to the right of association explicate its meaning in the context of trade and should join the core right in trade agreements. The right of association, which is an important right in and of itself, is also a prerequisite of collective bargaining.<sup>379</sup> It should grant workers and employers the right to establish independent organizations representing their benefits in the social dialogue.<sup>380</sup> Reinvigorating organizational efforts to enforce freedom of association is a central issue in international labor law.<sup>381</sup>

The rights articulated under Convention No. 87 are considered extremely fundamental to freedom of association as a whole. The pre-

---

<sup>372</sup> *Id.*

<sup>373</sup> *Id.*

<sup>374</sup> ILO, GLOBAL WAGE REPORT 2008/2009 at 38 (2008), available at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_100786.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_100786.pdf).

<sup>375</sup> ILO, FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION IN PRACTICE: LESSONS LEARNED ix (2008) [hereinafter FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION REPORT], available at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_096122.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_096122.pdf).

<sup>376</sup> *Id.* at 5.

<sup>377</sup> ILO, Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948, No. C87, available at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C087> [hereinafter Convention No. C87]; ILO, Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949, No. C98, available at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C098> [hereinafter Convention No. C98].

<sup>378</sup> *Id.*

<sup>379</sup> Faina Milman-Sivan, *Freedom of Association as a Core Labor Right and the ILO: Toward a Normative Framework*, 3 LAW & ETHICS HUM. RTS. 109, 111 (2009).

<sup>380</sup> FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION REPORT, *supra* note 375, at 5.

<sup>381</sup> Milman-Sivan, *supra* note 379, at 110.

156 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

amble expressly recognizes the right to freedom of association as a means of improving labor conditions and establishing peace between the parties.<sup>382</sup> Convention No. 87 provides workers the rights to establish and join any organization of their choosing without prior authorization, organize their own activities, formulate their own programs, elect their own representatives, and draft their own rules and constitutions.<sup>383</sup> It also includes union rights to join and affiliate with other organizations.<sup>384</sup>

Convention No. 98 ensures that workers enjoy adequate protection against acts of anti-union discrimination<sup>385</sup> including conditioning employment on the prerequisite that a worker refrain from joining a union or relinquish existing membership.<sup>386</sup> It also precludes dismissal of a worker because of union membership or participation. Convention No. 98 further recognizes the need for trade unions to be independent of company interference<sup>387</sup> to prevent company influence and to protect anonymity.

Recognizing and promoting strong and independent workers' and employers' organizations are key elements for the right of collective bargaining.<sup>388</sup> Freedom of association includes the right to information necessary for collective bargaining, including access to the economic status of the company.<sup>389</sup> The rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining are fundamental principles because they allow workers to gain some power vis-à-vis their employer, which increases the chances that their rights will be protected and allows them to push for more outcome-oriented rights.

## 2. *Elimination of All Forms of Compulsory or Forced Labor*

According to the ILO, over 12 million people are victims of forced labor each year, including over one million in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>390</sup> An important problem in this area is the definition and minimum standards of "forced labor."<sup>391</sup> Each country's trade

<sup>382</sup> Convention No. C87, *supra* note 377.

<sup>383</sup> *Id.*

<sup>384</sup> *Id.*

<sup>385</sup> Convention No. C98, *supra* note 377.

<sup>386</sup> *Id.*

<sup>387</sup> *Id.*

<sup>388</sup> See Owen E. Herrstadt, *Voluntary Corporate Codes of Conduct: What's Missing?*, 16 *LAB. LAW.* 349, 353 (2001).

<sup>389</sup> *Id.* at 353-54.

<sup>390</sup> ILO, *A GLOBAL ALLIANCE AGAINST FORCED LABOUR 12-13* (2005) [hereinafter *FORCED LABOUR REPORT*], available at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc93/pdf/rep-i-b.pdf>.

<sup>391</sup> See *id.* at 5.

agreement may have its own definition of “forced labor.”<sup>392</sup> However, the definition should be consistent with the ILO’s minimum standard, which has been recognized by a number of countries around the globe. ILO Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labor<sup>393</sup> covers a variety of cases of forced labor including: (a) as a means of political coercion or education or as punishment for holding or expressing opposing political views; (b) as a method of organizing labor to use for economic development; (c) as a means of labor discipline; (d) as a punishment for participating in strikes; and (e) as a means of social, racial, religious, or national discrimination.<sup>394</sup>

The ILO defines compulsory or forced labor as any work or service compelled from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not volunteered himself.<sup>395</sup> Human trafficking is a form of forced labor, which the ILO estimates claims nearly two and one-half million victims each year, including 250,000 in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>396</sup>

While forced labor inarguably is linked to international trade, trafficking across national borders is international trade. Provisions to eliminate or reduce both inarguably belong in RTAs.

### 3. *Abolition of Child Labor*

Peru is the largest producer of gold in Latin America, mining some fifteen tons per year with a value of \$120 million. The sad fact is that as many as 50,000 children, some as young as six, work in these mines under labor-intensive, dangerous, and risky conditions.<sup>397</sup> A CBS documentary exposed the use of child labor in soccer ball manufacturing in Pakistan, primarily for Nike and Adidas.<sup>398</sup> The documentary showed images of children stitching soccer balls in substandard conditions, with the ILO estimating that 15,000 children were involved in the industry. In both of these examples and hundreds of others, not only are the children being exploited—and in many case trafficked—because their small bodies can enter spaces adults cannot

<sup>392</sup> *See id.*

<sup>393</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957, No. C105, available at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C105>.

<sup>394</sup> *Id.*

<sup>395</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Forced Labour Convention, 1930, No. C29, art. 2, available at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C029>.

<sup>396</sup> FORCED LABOUR REPORT, *supra* note 390, at 14.

<sup>397</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], *Peru: Child Labor in Gold Mines* (June 23, 2005), [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/videos/video-news-releases/WCMS\\_067872/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/videos/video-news-releases/WCMS_067872/lang-en/index.htm).

<sup>398</sup> Farzad R. Khan & Kamal A. Munir, *How the West Was Won: The De-institutionalization of Child-Labor in Pakistan’s Soccer Ball Industry* (Working Paper 4, 2005), available at [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=882395](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=882395).

158 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

reach or their tiny fingers can make stitches too small for adults to manage, in any event they are also not receiving the education that would make at least possible a future escape from poverty and abuse.

The ILO's 1973 Minimum Age Convention sets the general minimum age for admission to employment or work at 15 years (13 for light work) and the minimum age for hazardous work at 18, or 16 under certain strict conditions. In countries where the economy and educational facilities are "insufficiently developed," it allows the initial minimum age to be 14, or 12 for light work.<sup>399</sup> The ILO's 1999 Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor defines a "child" for its purposes as a person under 18 years, and requires states to eliminate all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, and forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; child prostitution and pornography; using children for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs; and work which is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children.<sup>400</sup> The fact that each of us has likely encountered at least one of these worst forms of child labor is witness to the need for trade's power to assist in implementation to ensure that children acquire through school the human capital needed to ensure that every child has the opportunity to develop physically and mentally to his or her full potential.

These, too, are the kinds of crimes, legislated or not, that trade agreements are eminently prepared to prohibit and to enforce with meaningful financial penalties on companies that engage in them.

#### 4. *Elimination of Employment and Occupational Discrimination*

ILO Conventions 100 and 111 aim at eliminating discrimination in employment. ILO Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration is based on the principle of "equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value."<sup>401</sup> Remuneration is broadly defined as "the ordinary, basic, or minimum wage or salary and any additional emoluments payable directly or indirectly, whether in cash or in kind, by the employer to the worker and arising out of the worker's employment."<sup>402</sup>

---

<sup>399</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Minimum Age Convention, 1973, No. C138, available at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C138>.

<sup>400</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999, No. C182, available at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C182>.

<sup>401</sup> Convention No. 100, *supra* note 99.

<sup>402</sup> *Id.*

Convention 111 on Discrimination defines discrimination as any exclusion, distinction, or preference made on the basis of sex, color, race, political opinion, religion, social origin, or national extraction.<sup>403</sup> This broad definition of discrimination allows room for flexibility.<sup>404</sup> Direct discrimination includes regulations that explicitly disadvantage or exclude workers based on characteristics such as age, sex, or disability.<sup>405</sup> Examples include job advertisements with age requirements or requiring women to submit to pregnancy tests to obtain or keep a job.<sup>406</sup>

Indirect discrimination refers to laws that on the surface appear to be gender neutral, but that negatively affect a disproportionate number of members within a particular group of workers.<sup>407</sup> It includes situations where particular categories of workers receive different treatment compared to other workers without justification.<sup>408</sup> One example is offering training courses outside of working hours which excludes workers who cannot attend because they have family or other responsibilities.<sup>409</sup> This limits the career prospects of that group within the company.<sup>410</sup> Another example is requiring applicants to be a certain height, thereby disproportionately excluding women and members of some ethnic groups. Unless the specified height is absolutely necessary to perform the particular job, this evidences discrimination.

Each nation needs to ensure equality regarding labor issues such as access to training, education, and practices related to hiring, assignment of tasks, working conditions, pay, benefits, promotions, lay-offs, and termination of employment. Convention No. 111 leaves too much room for interpretation and does not take into account other forms of discrimination. With respect to the fourth core human right, elimination of discrimination, we believe that more effort needs to be applied to eliminating discrimination based on age, disabilities, and HIV/AIDS infection. The definition of discrimination is ambiguous with respect to those categories, although they clearly qualify, in our view, as workplace discrimination.<sup>411</sup> Some countries have used this

<sup>403</sup> Convention No. 111, *supra* note 95.

<sup>404</sup> *Id.*

<sup>405</sup> Matteo Borzaga, *Accommodating Differences: Discrimination and Equality at Work in International Labor Law*, 30 VT. L. REV. 749, 764 (2006).

<sup>406</sup> ILO DIRECTOR-GENERAL, *EQUALITY AT WORK: TACKLING THE CHALLENGES 9* (2007) [hereinafter ILO Report], *available at* [http://www.ilo.org/public/portugue/region/eurpro/lisbon/pdf/equality\\_07.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/portugue/region/eurpro/lisbon/pdf/equality_07.pdf).

<sup>407</sup> Borzaga, *supra* note 405.

<sup>408</sup> *Id.*

<sup>409</sup> ILO Report, *supra* note 406.

<sup>410</sup> *Id.*

<sup>411</sup> *See id.*

160 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

as an opportunity to expand the number of grounds on which discrimination is prohibited, beyond those in Convention No. 111. For example, sub-Saharan Africa protected workers with HIV/AIDS from discrimination at work, and many jurisdictions prohibit sexual harassment and discrimination based on family status.<sup>412</sup>

Discrimination at work is a violation of human rights because it demeans personhood, emasculates the right to self-determination, and wastes human talent. It also has detrimental effects on a country's economic growth and productivity.<sup>413</sup>

#### *D. Additional Labor Rights*

The fact that the core rights discussed above are exclusively procedural has led to the diminishment in progress toward outcome-oriented worker rights of a more substantive nature. In addition, there are an increasing number of infringements of labor rights other than the fundamental labor rights discussed above. For example, sweatshops operate under substandard working conditions where low wages, unsanitary work environments, 15-hour workdays, rape, coerced labor, and even death are regular occurrences.<sup>414</sup> The substantive rights implicated in these incidents include minimum wages, maximum working hours, and health and safety protections; however, the ILO Work Declaration does not address these important issues. For this reason we contend that other labor rights should be considered core rights.

With approximately 1.2 million workers, Foxconn Technology (Foxconn) is China's largest exporter and employer.<sup>415</sup> The Foxconn suicide incidents, which took place in China in 2010 and resulted in the death of 14 employees, resulted from sweatshop conditions that would not have violated any of the core ILO standards.<sup>416</sup> Research indicates that there were excessively long working hours, low wages, high production quotas, poor living conditions,<sup>417</sup> and a lack of work-

<sup>412</sup> *See id.*

<sup>413</sup> *Id.* at 7.

<sup>414</sup> Annette Burkeen, *Private Ordering and Institutional Choice: Defining the Role of Multinational Corporations in Promoting Global Labor Standards*, 6 WASH. U. GLOBAL STUD. L. REV. 205, 206 (2007).

<sup>415</sup> Charles Duhigg & David Barboza, *In China, Human Costs Are Built into an iPad*, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 25, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/26/business/ieconomy-apples-ipad-and-the-human-costs-for-workers-in-china.html?pagewanted=all>.

<sup>416</sup> NICHOLAS "NICK" HIU FUNG CHAN, *NEW CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMPANIES ENTERING THE CHINESE MARKET* 1 (2011).

<sup>417</sup> Duhigg & Barboza, *supra* note 415.

ing relationships.<sup>418</sup> These incidents serve to remind the global community that these issues need to be addressed.

This case shows that a number of problems regarding wages, working hours, and safety and health have become grave problems in practice. Routine inclusion of the core standards of the ILO Work Declaration in RTAs has not ameliorated this dire situation. In our view, experience since ILO adoption of the Work Declaration some 16 years ago argues strongly for expansion of the four core labor standards to include minimum wages and acceptable working conditions.

### 1. *Right to Minimum Wages*

Globalization has increased the volume of trade among countries due to a reduction in trade interests.<sup>419</sup> This has a strong effect on workers' rights. For example, foreign direct investment (FDI) that produces exports can increase demand for workers, thereby providing incentives for employers to improve working conditions to retain and attract workers.<sup>420</sup> However, FDI that produces for the domestic market can increase competition, causing employers to lower their costs to remain competitive at the expense of proper working conditions.<sup>421</sup> The right to a minimum wage has been neglected because emerging market countries believe that low wages are their comparative advantage, which has spurred the so called "race to the bottom."<sup>422</sup> The right was first addressed in the Universal Declaration in 1948 and defined as "just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity."<sup>423</sup> Additionally, the Economic Covenant included the right to a minimum wage in the context of the right to "just and favourable conditions of work."<sup>424</sup>

However, the right to a minimum wage is critical, especially to disadvantaged workers who otherwise would receive a significantly low wage. This can lead to their continued poverty, so a minimum wage is needed to ensure that the employee and his family can enjoy a

<sup>418</sup> *Foxconn Called to Account for Another Employee Suicide*, WANTCHINATIMES.COM, Nov. 26, 2011, <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20111126000001&cid=1103>.

<sup>419</sup> RUWAN JAYASURIYA, *THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON WORKING CONDITIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: AN ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK AND COUNTRY STUDY RESULTS 1* (2008), available at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLM/214578-1103128720951/21692675/EPPNoteNo9\\_Eng.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLM/214578-1103128720951/21692675/EPPNoteNo9_Eng.pdf).

<sup>420</sup> *See id.* at 4.

<sup>421</sup> *Id.*

<sup>422</sup> Hani Ofek Ghendler, *Globalization and Social Justice: The Right to Minimum Wage*, 3 LAW & ETHICS HUM. RTS. 266, 267-68 (2009).

<sup>423</sup> Universal Declaration, *supra* note 25, art. 23.

<sup>424</sup> G.A. Res. 2200A (XXI), U.N. GAOR, 21st Sess., Supp. No. 16, U.N. Doc A/6316, at art.7 (Dec. 16, 1966).



162 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

basic means of existence. The right to a minimum wage has been an agreed worker right in ILO treaties for at least 90 years. Minimum wage policies can ensure the purchasing power of vulnerable workers and reduce instances of low pay, and therefore should be considered a core labor right for trade agreements.

But what does “minimum wage” mean? When the ILO Work Declaration defined its four core labor standards, the right to a minimum wage was conspicuously absent.<sup>425</sup> Three ILO Conventions discussed the right to a minimum wage, one being general in nature,<sup>426</sup> the second focusing on minimum wages in the agricultural sector,<sup>427</sup> and the third focusing on minimum wages in emerging market nations.<sup>428</sup> Some developing countries such as Brazil, China, and South Africa have been increasing their minimum wages to provide social protection to vulnerable workers.<sup>429</sup> This demonstrates that countries are beginning to take the issue of minimum wages seriously.

In 1992, the Committee of Experts of the ILO revised Convention No. 131’s requirements by identifying four criteria for determining minimum wages: 1) the worker’s needs for subsistence in light of the cost of living in the local economy; 2) the capacity of the employer to pay, with an eye to wages in the nation’s economy as a whole; 3) a comparison among various social groups of their standard of living, including the pay for unionized workers in similar trades; and 4) the requirements of economic development including the effect of wages on the total number of jobs.<sup>430</sup>

To achieve a minimum wage system, that system needs to provide general coverage through a national minimum wage or through minimum wages within occupational or comprehensive sectors.<sup>431</sup> A national minimum wage can facilitate coordination with other economic development policies, simplify the application of the system,

<sup>425</sup> Ghendler, *supra* note 422, at 282.

<sup>426</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928, No. 26, *available at* [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312171:NO](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312171:NO).

<sup>427</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery (Agriculture) Convention, 1951, No. C99, *available at* [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312244](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312244).

<sup>428</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Minimum Wage Fixing Conventions, 1970, No. C131, *available at* <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>.

<sup>429</sup> GLOBAL WAGE REPORT 2008/2009, *supra* note 374, at 35.

<sup>430</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], General Survey: Minimum Wages, ¶ 274 (1992), *available at* <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/surveyq.htm>.

<sup>431</sup> Andrés Marinakis, *THE ROLE OF ILO IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MINIMUM WAGES* 17 (2008).

2012]

*BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS*

163

and improve equity through raising wages of the lowest paid workers.<sup>432</sup>

It is critical that the minimum wage-fixing machinery be set up and operated in consultation with organisations of employers, workers,<sup>433</sup> and social partners.<sup>434</sup> For example, the United Kingdom increased its minimum wages by 25 percent between 2000 and 2007. This increase did not have any demonstrable adverse effects on employment.<sup>435</sup> The United Kingdom Low Pay Commission provides recommendations to the government on minimum wage adjustments and involves social partners and academics in the same consultative forum.<sup>436</sup>

A minimum wage policy is only useful if minimum wages are actually paid. The effectiveness of the enforcement mechanism depends upon such factors as just compensation for workers whose rights have been breached, penalties for the violators, and adequate funding of the enforcement authority.<sup>437</sup>

## 2. *Right to Acceptable Working Conditions*

Acceptable working conditions should be considered a fundamental right. Two aspects of acceptable working conditions that have been identified as closely linked to trade are the right to maximum working hours and the right to occupational health and safety standards.<sup>438</sup>

### a) *Right to Maximum Working Time*

Setting maximum working hours protects workers from becoming overworked to the point of exhaustion or sickness. An example can be found in the scandal from the recent suicide incidents at Foxconn. One of the most significant labor violations identified was excessively long working hours. In peak periods, substantial numbers of the

---

<sup>432</sup> *Id.*

<sup>433</sup> See ILO, General Survey: Minimum Wages, *supra* note 430, ¶ 186.

<sup>434</sup> *Id.* ¶ 230.

<sup>435</sup> ALAN MANNING, MINIMUM WAGE: MAXIMUM IMPACT 1 (2012).

<sup>436</sup> INT'L LABOUR OFFICE, UPDATE ON MINIMUM WAGE DEVELOPMENTS 8 (2009), available at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_101713.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_101713.pdf).

<sup>437</sup> *Id.* at 9.

<sup>438</sup> Marisa Anne Pagnattaro, *Leveling the Playing Field: Labor Provisions in CAFTA*, 29 FORDHAM INT'L L.J. 386, 403 (2006).

164 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

workforce were engaged in continuous production activities without rest breaks for 70 or more hours per week.<sup>439</sup>

ILO Convention No. 1 provides a standard of 48 regular hours of work per week, with a maximum of eight hours per day.<sup>440</sup> ILO Convention No. 14 provides for a rest period of at least 24 consecutive hours every seven days.<sup>441</sup> Other lesser-known ILO Conventions cover paid annual holidays,<sup>442</sup> protections for night workers,<sup>443</sup> and protections for part-time workers in access to employment, working conditions, and social security.<sup>444</sup>

The Conventions only require that the contracting parties set the work week at the 48-hour standard because it is the essential part and the basic right under “hours of work.”<sup>445</sup> As countries may face different economic and social conditions, it is not practical to set the same maximum working hours standards for night work, holidays, and rest periods. In a majority of countries, working hours are governed by regulations and are sometimes supplemented by collective agreements.

*b) Right to Occupational Health and Safety Standards*

One of the principles of the ILO Constitution is that “workers should be protected from sickness, disease, and injury arising out of their employment.”<sup>446</sup> However, this principle is in stark contrast to

<sup>439</sup> *Independent Investigation of Apple Supplier, Foxconn Report Highlights*, FAIR LABOR ASSOC., Mar. 2012, at 8, available at [http://www.fairlabor.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/foxconn\\_investigation\\_report.pdf](http://www.fairlabor.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/foxconn_investigation_report.pdf).

<sup>440</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Hours of Work (Industry) Convention, 1919, (No. 1) No. C001, available at [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12000:2103630277745507:::P12000\\_INSTRUMENT\\_SORT:4](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12000:2103630277745507:::P12000_INSTRUMENT_SORT:4) [hereinafter Hours of Work Convention].

<sup>441</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921, No. C14, available at [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEX\\_PUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312159:NO](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEX_PUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312159:NO).

<sup>442</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970, No. C132, available at [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312277:NO](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312277:NO).

<sup>443</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Night Work Convention, 1990, No. C171, available at [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312316:NO](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312316:NO).

<sup>444</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Part-Time Work Convention, 1994, No. C175, available at [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312320:NO](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312320:NO).

<sup>445</sup> See Hours of Work Convention, *supra* note 441.

<sup>446</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], *Occupational Safety and Health* (Apr. 9, 2012), available at <http://www.ilo.org/global/standards/subjects-covered-by-international-labour-standards/occupational-safety-and-health/lang-en/index.htm> [hereinafter ILO Summary].

reality. Studies have shown that people spend approximately one-third of their time at work each day.<sup>447</sup> It is clearly evident that working conditions directly affect the health of the approximately 210 million workers in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>448</sup> These health effects include accidents, deaths, and work-generated illnesses.<sup>449</sup> These health and safety conditions are referenced as occupational safety and health conditions for the remainder of this article.

Numbers indicate poor working conditions are thriving throughout the world while worker safety is not at the forefront of human rights issues. ILO data reveal that approximately two million people die every year from work-related accidents and diseases, amounting to an average of 6,000 people a day.<sup>450</sup> Indeed, this record of workplace danger is evidence of poor implementation of the Universal Declaration's assurance that each of us should have the chance to work under just and favorable conditions.<sup>451</sup> Occupational safety and health issues have not been readily addressed in Latin America and the Caribbean because of a lack of institutions<sup>452</sup> responsible for promoting work safety standards, and a lack of knowledge and awareness on the part of the workers.<sup>453</sup> These same challenges generally exist throughout the world.

Another aspect of the Foxconn incident involved multiple explosions at the Apple manufacturing plant. About 2 years ago, 137 workers were injured after they were forced to use a poisonous chemical to clean iPhone screens.<sup>454</sup> In addition and more recently, two explosions killed 4 workers and injured 77.<sup>455</sup>

Employers face costly early retirements, loss of skilled staff, absenteeism, and high insurance premiums from work-related accidents and diseases. A nation's economy cannot prosper with a crippled

<sup>447</sup> ROBERTO FONTES IUNES, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: OVERVIEWS, ISSUES AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS 2 (2001), available at <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=354332>.

<sup>448</sup> *Id.*

<sup>449</sup> *Id.*

<sup>450</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], *Facts on Safety at Work*, available at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_067574.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_067574.pdf).

<sup>451</sup> Universal Declaration, *supra* note 25, at art. 23.

<sup>452</sup> See *Deliberate Indifference: El Salvador's Failure to Protect Workers' Rights*, Hum. Rts. Watch Vol.15, No. 5(B), Dec. 4, 2003, available at <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/elsalvador1203.pdf>. In 2003 in El Salvador, there were only 37 labor inspectors covering a workforce of 2.6 million. *Id.*

<sup>453</sup> IUNES, *supra* note 447, at 2.

<sup>454</sup> Duhigg & Barboza, *supra* note 415.

<sup>455</sup> *Id.*

166 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

or poisoned workforce.<sup>456</sup> Yet many of these tragedies are preventable through the implementation of prevention, reporting, and inspection practices. The ILO has adopted more than 40 standards specifically dealing with occupational safety and health, as well as over 40 Codes of Practice.<sup>457</sup>

The right to occupational health and safety standards is one of the most important issues in the area of labor rights. Article 4 of the ILO Convention No. 155 Concerning Occupational Safety and Health and the Working Environment contains a general and comprehensive statement on occupational safety and health with the aim of preventing accidents and injuries to health “arising out of, linked with or occurring in the course of work” through the minimization of hazards inherent in the workplace.<sup>458</sup>

To prevent occupational accidents and diseases, and to continuously improve the working environment, Article 5 of another ILO Convention lists five main spheres where action must be taken. These criteria include: 1) controlling the material elements of work; 2) creating a working environment conducive to the workers’ physical and mental capacities; 3) training workers; 4) communicating and cooperating at all levels of the working group; and 5) protecting workers and their representatives from disciplinary measures.<sup>459</sup>

The Occupational Health Services Convention (No. 161) provides for the establishment of occupational health services which are responsible for advising the employer, workers, and their representatives on maintaining a safe and healthy working environment.<sup>460</sup> The Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 187) aims at promoting a preventive safety and health cul-

<sup>456</sup> See Alan Hyde, *The International Labor Organization in the Stag Hunt for Global Labor Rights*, 3 *LAW & ETHICS HUM. RTS.* 153, 163 (2009).

<sup>457</sup> See International Labor Organization [ILO], *List of Instruments by Subject and Status*, NORMLEX, available at <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12030:0::NO:::> ; ILO, *Codes of Practice*, available at <http://www.ilo.org/safework/info/standards-and-instruments/codes/lang—fr/index.htm>.

<sup>458</sup> See International Labor Organization [ILO], Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981, No. C155, available at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C155> (convention concerning occupational safety and health and the working environment).

<sup>459</sup> See *id.*

<sup>460</sup> International Labor Organization [ILO], Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985, No. C161, available at [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312306:NO](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312306:NO).

ture and progressively achieving a safe and healthy working environment.<sup>461</sup>

This goal requires the development of a national policy on occupational safety and health to provide the infrastructure for implementing national policy and programs, such as regulations, authorities, compliance mechanisms, and arrangements.

Although the intersection between trade and working conditions may seem to be tenuous, they are, in fact, intimately intertwined. In economic terms, the ILO has estimated that 4 percent of the world's annual GDP is lost as a consequence of occupational diseases and accidents.<sup>462</sup> A study found that in the United States alone the direct consequence of occupational injuries was upwards of \$40 billion and indirect costs were estimated at over \$200 billion per year.<sup>463</sup> If the moral consequences do not provide enough impetus to push nations towards stricter working conditions, the numbers and what they mean for businesses is staggering. These numbers represent lost profits for the company instead of increased productivity.<sup>464</sup>

Countries have a responsibility to maintain conditions that foster a healthy and safe working environment.<sup>465</sup> The relationship between safe working conditions and trade is self-evident and definitional. Working hazards refers to different risks arising from the job, including physical and biological/chemical risks.<sup>466</sup>

### 3. *Physical Risks*

Physical risks include ergonomically poor working conditions and heavy physical labor, all of which can lead to musculoskeletal diseases and injuries.<sup>467</sup> It was estimated that between 50 percent and 70 percent of the workforce of emerging market countries has been exposed to these risks, with the most exposed types of workers being farmers, miners, fisherman, construction workers, and lumberjacks.<sup>468</sup> Other major physical hazards include vibration, noise, heat,

<sup>461</sup> See International Labor Organization [ILO], Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006, No. 187, available at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C187>.

<sup>462</sup> ILO Summary, *supra* note 460.

<sup>463</sup> Orly Lobel, *Interlocking Regulatory and Industrial Relations: The Governance of Workplace Safety*, 57 ADMIN. L. REV. 1071, 1079-80 (2005).

<sup>464</sup> See *id.* at 1080.

<sup>465</sup> See World Health Org., *The Right to Health: WHO Fact Sheet No. 323* (Aug. 2007), available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs323/en/index.html>.

<sup>466</sup> IUNES, *supra* note 447, at 3.

<sup>467</sup> *Id.*

<sup>468</sup> *Id.*

168 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

radiation, and other microclimatic conditions.<sup>469</sup> In 2004, more people died at work than from wars. In the United States alone, over a dozen workers were killed each day due to workplace accidents and over a hundred from work-related diseases.<sup>470</sup>

An example of physical hazards directly related to trade is the 1993 fire at the Kadar Industrial Toy plant near Bangkok.<sup>471</sup> Kadar employed 3,000 workers producing Bart Simpson dolls, Sesame Street dolls, and Muppets.<sup>472</sup> The fire exits were all blocked, forcing the workers to jump from the upper stories as their hair and clothes caught fire.<sup>473</sup> Approximately 188 workers died and 469 were seriously injured.<sup>474</sup>

#### 4. *Chemical and Biological Risks*

Chemical and biological risks<sup>475</sup> pose a significant threat to workers' health and include exposure to pesticides, solvents, and metal dusts.<sup>476</sup> Exposure can result in skin and respiratory diseases, cancer, and infertility.<sup>477</sup> One WHO study estimated that pesticides cause more than 1 million poisonings and 10,000 deaths of agricultural workers every year in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>478</sup> For example, pesticides used in banana plantations have caused higher than average rates of cancer in Costa Rica.<sup>479</sup> The ILO estimated that the annual costs from occupational deaths and injuries in Latin America and the Caribbean amount to \$76 billion.<sup>480</sup>

In the electronics industries, electronic components contain both toxic and valuable metals. Previously, the industry recycled electronics to retrieve the precious metals contained inside them.<sup>481</sup> To reduce costs, manufacturers reduced the quantities of precious metals, making it less economically efficient to retrieve the precious metals

<sup>469</sup> *Id.*

<sup>470</sup> Lobel, *supra* note 463, at 1079.

<sup>471</sup> Jonathan P. Hiatt & Deborah Greenfield, *The Importance of Core Labor Rights in World Development*, 26 *MICH. J. INT'L L.* 39, 39 (2004).

<sup>472</sup> *Id.*

<sup>473</sup> *Id.*

<sup>474</sup> *Id.*

<sup>475</sup> In this paper, chemical and biological hazards will be considered as one in the same.

<sup>476</sup> IUNES, *supra* note 447, at 3.

<sup>477</sup> *Id.* (noting respiratory diseases can be caused by inhalation of dusts such as silica, coal dust, asbestos, molds, and fungi).

<sup>478</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>479</sup> *Id.*

<sup>480</sup> *Id.*

<sup>481</sup> Eric V. Hull, *Poisoning the Poor for Profit: The Injustice of Exporting Electronic Waste to Developing Countries*, 21 *DUKE ENVTL. L. & POL'Y F.* 1, 30-31 (2010).

without the most expensive equipment.<sup>482</sup> In order to extract the minimal precious metal components, informal recycling plants arose in developing countries.<sup>483</sup> The workers use extremely primitive retrieval techniques including open air burning, breaking components apart, and dissolving component parts in strong acids, all of which expose the workers to chemicals through inhalation and skin contact.<sup>484</sup>

A study conducted by the ILO in 2001 found that the cost of accidents in the manufacturing sector in the United States amounted to \$190 billion each year, while the cost of work related accidents and diseases amounted to \$25.4 billion per year in Germany and \$4.4 billion in Norway.<sup>485</sup>

Diseases, accidents, and deaths arising from work can be prevented through management systems that control the risks and hazards in the workplace. These systems can be made actionable in RTAs. In light of trade's significant contribution to the reduction in standards of living for the injured workers and the decrease in GDP for the countries in which work-related accidents occur, such management systems must become a requirement of RTAs. For these reasons, we identify a safe workplace as one of the core worker rights that must be accounted for in RTAs.

Poor working conditions not only affect individuals, but the economy as well. Occupational injuries and illnesses are undesirable by-products caused by the production process.<sup>486</sup> These economic costs place a large burden on both the employee and the worker.<sup>487</sup> The costs employers face consist of damage to the plant and equipment, and profit losses due to interruptions in the production process<sup>488</sup> because of lost days of work.<sup>489</sup> Costs to employers also include a loss of the competitiveness of the business,<sup>490</sup> unemployment compensation payments,<sup>491</sup> and the incursion of fixed labor costs, such as the costs

---

<sup>482</sup> *Id.*

<sup>483</sup> These dumps were originally concentrated in China but are emerging in Nigeria, Ghana, Pakistan, and India. *Id.*

<sup>484</sup> *Id.*

<sup>485</sup> BENJAMIN O. ALLI, FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY 7 (2001), available at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_093550.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_093550.pdf).

<sup>486</sup> Terry Thomason & Silvana Pozzebon, *Determinants of Firm Workplace Health and Safety and Claims Management Practices*, 55 INDUS. & LAB. REL. REV. 286, 287 (2002).

<sup>487</sup> *Id.*

<sup>488</sup> *Id.*

<sup>489</sup> ALLI, *supra* note 485.

<sup>490</sup> *Id.*

<sup>491</sup> *Id.*



170 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

associated with recruiting and training replacement workers.<sup>492</sup> The costs to workers include loss of wages and future wage earning capacity, rehabilitative and medical expenses, and non-pecuniary losses such as pain and suffering, etc.<sup>493</sup>

Although the right to a safe workplace should be considered a fundamental right, employers also have a monetary incentive to provide a safe working environment. We believe that respect for human rights and safe working conditions contribute to social and economic growth. Happy and healthy workers produce higher quality items. Although some may argue that increasing labor standards necessarily raises costs, thereby decreasing the amount of jobs available, access to fair work is critical in accomplishing social and economic stability. As discussed in other parts of this paper, more money in the hands of workers increases economic and sustainable development.

#### *E. Conclusion*

Trade and labor rights are intricately linked because trade can only be accomplished through the provision of goods and services by people. Therefore, labor can be considered one of the most important factors in advancing trade liberalization. Without a healthy workforce, trade liberalization could be significantly stunted. A healthy workforce requires labor standards because without appropriate standards, trade could be at risk due to a reduction in the workforce from sub-standard labor conditions, as demonstrated in this paper.

Because of the prominent role of labor in promoting trade liberalization, it is an issue that cannot afford to go unaddressed. Trade negotiators need to be armed with this information to create and enforce labor standards in RTAs. While the idea of “competitive advantage” is useful to some degree, it is a short-sighted approach that can create a race to the bottom with respect to labor rights. It is short-sighted because it fails to take into account the effect of the long term health and safety of the workforce on global wealth.

We believe that additional steps through trade agreements need to be taken to create the infrastructure for implementing national policy and programs promoting occupational safety and health. While some argue that the ILO Work Declaration is vague and ambiguous, it provides a step in the right direction by enumerating four core principles with respect to labor. The ILO Work Declaration demonstrates the importance of labor conditions, and makes it a global issue. The authors of this paper believe that further attention should be paid to conventions regarding health and safety in particular branches of economic activity such as construction, mining, and agricultural

---

<sup>492</sup> Thomason & Pozzebon, *supra* note 486.

<sup>493</sup> *Id.*

safety, as well as to protection against specific risks such as radiation and chemicals. In conclusion, we believe that the four core ILO principles, although vague, provide a framework for trade negotiators. However, we argue that there are additional core principles with respect to labor that must also be taken into account because of their importance to workers and their close connection to trade.

## VIII. TRADE AND A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

### A. Introduction

Our next subject has been addressed in trade agreements since the first global rules of the GATT in 1947. Unlike the situation with labor rights, however, as we have noted, no effort has been undertaken to identify core environmental rights so closely linked to trade and so important that they should be included in trade agreements. The result has been that trade agreements have not been as useful to environmental protection as trade has been harmful to the environment. Trade liberalization has unintentionally led to abuses in the spheres of environmental protection and human rights. Generally, when experts analyze the intersection between trade and the environment, they do not consider a healthy environment a human right.<sup>494</sup> These experts tend to address environmental protection as a separate issue from human rights, although some concede that it has links to human rights.<sup>495</sup> The intersection of environmental protection with trade and with human rights reflects the collision of competing forces and raises the question of how we may bring these forces into equilibrium.<sup>496</sup>

Human rights and a healthy environment are closely linked because an unhealthy environment threatens the existence of human life on earth. For example, drinking contaminated water and inhaling toxic fumes cause illness, and pregnant women can even pass the contaminants on to their unborn babies. The right to life can be rendered useless if the environment is so degraded that people are deprived of this right.

Like democratic governance, the right to a healthy environment is an emerging human right. Some environmental scholars believe a healthy environment is part of other, more established, human rights, such as the rights to life and health.<sup>497</sup> In our view, clean air,

---

<sup>494</sup> JUST TRADE, *supra* note 2, at 86.

<sup>495</sup> *Id.*

<sup>496</sup> David Barnhizer, *The Trade, Environment and Human Rights: The Paradigm Case of Industrial Aquaculture and the Exploitation of Traditional Communities*, MANGROVE ACTION PROJECT, available at <http://mangroveactionproject.org/issues/shrimp-farming/the-trade-environment-and-human-rights/> (last visited Feb. 16, 2012).

<sup>497</sup> See Jeffrey Atik, *Commentary*, HUM. RTS. DIALOGUE 26 (2004).

172 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

clean water, and an adequate supply of safe food, the necessities that are guaranteed by a healthy environment, qualify it as a separate human right. Other environmental scholars see a healthy environment as a right belonging to the environment itself.<sup>498</sup> With respect to this view, a healthy environment is only a human right in so much as a human is needed to enforce the right.<sup>499</sup> This paper will focus on a healthy environment as a separate human right. As international Court of Justice Judge Weeramantry observed, “The protection of the environment is a vital part of contemporary human rights doctrine, for it is a *sine qua non* for numerous human rights such as the right to health and the right to life itself.”<sup>500</sup>

The San Salvador Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>501</sup> recognizes that every person has the right to “live in a healthy environment.”<sup>502</sup> Additionally, Article 24 of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights recognizes that “all peoples shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favorable to their development.”<sup>503</sup> In a case involving a complaint by Nigeria’s Ogoni peoples of human rights violations caused by oil development, this Article was interpreted by the African Commission on Human Rights as a right to a healthy environment.<sup>504</sup>

Further proof that a healthy environment is an emerging human right is found in a number of national constitutions in the Americas that provide for some version of a right to live in a healthy environment independent of other rights.<sup>505</sup> The European Union has proposed an amendment to its Human Rights Charter that would add the human right to a healthy environment:

<sup>498</sup> *See id.*

<sup>499</sup> *Id.*

<sup>500</sup> JUST TRADE, *supra* note 2, at 87.

<sup>501</sup> Org. of Am. States [OAS], *Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* “Protocol of San Salvador”, art. 11, O.A.S.T.S. No. 69 (1988), available at <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-52.html>.

<sup>502</sup> *Id.* art. 11(1).

<sup>503</sup> African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, June 27, 1981, available at [http://www.africa-union.org/official\\_documents/treaties\\_%20conventions\\_%20protocols/banjul%20charter.pdf](http://www.africa-union.org/official_documents/treaties_%20conventions_%20protocols/banjul%20charter.pdf).

<sup>504</sup> African Commission on Human Rights, Comm. No. 155/96, Social & Econ. Rts. Action Center & Center for Econ. & Social Rts. Nigeria, ACHPR/COMM/A044/1, para. 55-56 (May 27, 2002).

<sup>505</sup> Environmental Rights Report, EARTHJUSTICE (2005), available at [http://earthjustice.org/sites/default/files/library/references/2005\\_ENVIRONMENTAL\\_RIGHTS\\_REPORTrev.pdf](http://earthjustice.org/sites/default/files/library/references/2005_ENVIRONMENTAL_RIGHTS_REPORTrev.pdf).

The Parliamentary Assembly notes the close relationship that exists between human rights and quality of the environment and observes that enjoyment of these rights is often jeopardised by degradation of the environment. This interconnection between the environment and human rights clearly highlights their interdependence and indivisibility and so requires us to recognise that people have a right to a healthy environment. The Assembly points out that . . . the European Court of Human Rights has itself indirectly upheld the right to a healthy environment through its case law.<sup>506</sup>

### B. *International Conventions Addressing a Healthy Environment*

According to Article 3 of the Universal Declaration, everyone has the right to life<sup>507</sup> and “the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care. . . .”<sup>508</sup> This right to life can only be accomplished through the provision of clean water, clean air, and adequate shelter and food, which are directly linked to a healthy environment.

The Organization of American States and the African Union have adopted it as a separate human right and the EU is in the process of adopting a similar amendment to its Human Rights Charter, following precedent from the EU Human Rights Court, which has upheld the human right to a healthy environment. According to Article 11 of the OAS Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, “Every person has the right to the preservation of his health through sanitary and social measures relating to food, clothing, housing and medical care, to the extent permitted by public and community resources.”<sup>509</sup>

The relationship between human rights and a healthy environment has been on the global agenda since the 1972 Stockholm Conference where Principle 1 of the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment stated that man has the fundamental right to “adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and he bears a

<sup>506</sup> Drafting an Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights Concerning the Right to a Healthy Environment, EUR. PARL. DOC. (COM 12003) 1 (2009), available at <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc09/EDOC12003.pdf>.

<sup>507</sup> Universal Declaration *supra* note 25.

<sup>508</sup> *Id.* art. 25.

<sup>509</sup> OAS, *Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man*, art. XI, OEA/Ser.L.V/II.82, doc. 6, rev.1, at 17 (1948), available at [http://www.hrcr.org/docs/OAS\\_Declaration/oasrights3.html](http://www.hrcr.org/docs/OAS_Declaration/oasrights3.html).

174 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations.”<sup>510</sup> The proclamation section noted that man has to continue advancing in order to achieve economic development.<sup>511</sup>

However, when these advancements are improperly implemented, it can cause “dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings; major and undesirable disturbances to the ecological balance of the biosphere; destruction and depletion of irreplaceable resources; and gross deficiencies, harmful to the physical, mental and social health of man, in the man-made environment, particularly in the living and working environment.”<sup>512</sup> Despite these strong statements, the link between human rights and the environment have not been followed up in subsequent environmental conventions such as the 1992 Rio Declaration.<sup>513</sup> These declarations linked human well-being to the state of the environment with no reference to human rights.<sup>514</sup>

In 2009, the UNEP and the OHCHR organized a high level meeting on the topic.<sup>515</sup> A series of resolutions drew attention to the relationship between a healthy and safe environment and the enjoyment of human rights.<sup>516</sup> Although these resolutions have drawn attention to how fundamental the environment is to the enjoyment of human rights, all of this language has proven to be merely aspirational at best.

The most recent development in furthering the linkage between a healthy environment and human rights was the Rio+20 U.N. Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) which took place in June 2012. Rio+20 focused on two major themes with respect to sustainable development: a green economy and an institutional framework.<sup>517</sup> The objective of Rio+20 directly concerned environmental and

<sup>510</sup> U.N. Environment Programme, Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Principle 1 (June 5-16, 1972), <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?documentid=97&articleid=1503>.

<sup>511</sup> *Id.* at Proclamation 3.

<sup>512</sup> *Id.*

<sup>513</sup> Christopher Holmes, *The New Future of Human Rights and Environment: Moving the Global Agenda Forward – High Level Experts Meeting*, LINKAGES (Mar. 4, 2010), <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-1/guestarticle87.html>.

<sup>514</sup> *Id.*

<sup>515</sup> U.N. Environment Programme, High Level Experts Meeting on the New Future of Human Rights and Environment: Moving the Global Agenda Forward (Nov. 30 – Dec. 1, 2009), <http://www.unep.org/environmentalgovernance/Events/HumanRightsandEnvironment/tabid/2046/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

<sup>516</sup> *Id.*

<sup>517</sup> United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio de Janeiro, Braz., June 20-22, 2012, *Report of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*, p. 3, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.216/XX (2012).

2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

175

human rights issues.<sup>518</sup> With respect to the theme of a green economy, Achim Steiner, the Executive Director of the U.N. Environment Programme, stated before the conference that it was to involve elaborating on the “growing recognition of a fundamental link between ecosystem services and human rights.”<sup>519</sup>

Establishing an institutional framework for sustainable development presents the opportunity to define the linkages between governance and the procedural rights necessary to attain progress in the area. The link between human rights and the environment requires effective compliance with environmental laws, together with the need for institutional mechanisms designed to hold public authorities accountable for their decisions. This establishes the important linkage among the environment, human rights, and governance. Rio+20 reinforced this powerful and profound link between the environment and human rights.<sup>520</sup>

The Rio+20 outcome document needs specifically to recognize the right to a healthy and sustainable environment<sup>521</sup> and the responsibility of every nation to ensure such an environment, while emphasizing the importance of accountability mechanisms and institutional frameworks to enhance sustainable development outcomes.<sup>522</sup> Additionally, Rio+20 reinforced the need for future trade agreements to address issues such as “access rights,” including the right to information, with respect to environmental governance.<sup>523</sup>

### C. *Link Between Trade and a Healthy Environment*

We need not dwell on proving the link between international trade and the environment. There is a direct relationship between human rights, a healthy environment, and economic development.<sup>524</sup> They are so intertwined that problems with the environment can give rise to human rights abuses, while economic development can, and often does, cause environmental problems.<sup>525</sup> As we all know, trade often results in the use of limited natural resources at a rate that cannot be sustained, and pollution of our air and water at levels that can-

<sup>518</sup> *Id.*, at 2,7.

<sup>519</sup> CTR. FOR INT’L ENVTL. LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS & ENVIRONMENT IN THE RIO+20 CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (2012), available at [http://ciel.org/Publications/Rio+20\\_IssueBrief\\_Feb2012.pdf](http://ciel.org/Publications/Rio+20_IssueBrief_Feb2012.pdf).

<sup>520</sup> *Id.*

<sup>521</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>522</sup> *Id.* at 15.

<sup>523</sup> *Id.*

<sup>524</sup> Sumudu Atapattu, *The Right to a Healthy Life or the Right To Die Polluted?: The Emergence of a Human Right to a Healthy Environment Under International Law*, 16 TUL. ENVTL. L.J. 65, 70 (2002).

<sup>525</sup> *Id.* at 70-71.

176 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

not be corrected. Trade in certain products often leads to environmental destruction through abuses in logging, mining, and drilling.

On the other hand, trade liberalization can increase economic development, leading to higher national incomes and potentially giving rise to better environmental and human rights protections. Additionally, trade liberalization can have the unintended consequence of the dissemination of good environmental practices through the transfer of cleaner technology from countries with high environmental standards.

The key to economic productivity and development is a healthy population. People are needed at every stage in the institution of trade: from production to distribution to sales and beyond. Thus, it is important to balance trade with a healthy economy to ensure both global economic growth and the well-being of global civil society.

Additionally, the rules of international trade are based on the fundamental principle that countries may not discriminate in their trading patterns. For example, steel oil field pipes from Brazil must be regulated by an importing country in the same manner as the country regulates steel oil field pipes from China.

The problem with this principle is that most environmental treaties and national environmental laws rely for their enforcement on discriminating against products that are produced in a manner that is environmentally unfriendly. For example, a country trying to prevent air pollution might want to import steel pipe from countries that make steel with low carbon and sulfur emissions, and not trade with countries whose steel was manufactured in a high-polluting factory. That discrimination is very difficult under trade rules, which makes environmental protection more complicated.

How can we alleviate these two aspects of the link between trade and the environment?

#### *D. Core Rights with Respect to a Healthy Environment*

We propose five fundamental rights to a healthy environment so intertwined with trade that agreements to liberalize trade must address their implementation: 1) the right to safe food and water; 2) the right to participate in decision-making; 3) the right to sustainable development; 4) the right to the application of the polluter pays principle; and 5) the right to the application of the precautionary principle.

##### *1. Right to Safe Food and Water*

While even the healthiest environments contain some harm, setting thresholds will allow for the identification of violations of

2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

177

human rights.<sup>526</sup> As noted, a healthy environment consists of the right to clean water and air, and more generally, the right to a safe environment.<sup>527</sup> Quite often, development projects provide an example where states fail to respect the right to water, especially if the projects render the water undrinkable through pollution or deprive the population of its water resources.<sup>528</sup> It is inconsistent with human rights law to deprive people of access to water that they have enjoyed, without finding alternatives or compensating them.<sup>529</sup> Because water is an essential ingredient of human life, RTAs must help prevent economic activities that render water undrinkable or that deprive the population of its water resources.<sup>530</sup>

The right to a healthy environment is inconsistent with degradation of natural resources as demonstrated by the *Ecuador* case. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights conducted a comprehensive study in Ecuador after receiving complaints in 2002 of extensive pollution caused by oil exploration.<sup>531</sup> The inhabitants claimed the exploration was polluting the air, soil, and water, which put individuals in the region at greater risk of becoming seriously ill.<sup>532</sup> The inhabitants and the government agreed that the oil was polluting the environment and exposing the people to toxic byproducts of oil exploitation.<sup>533</sup> These toxins were absorbed into the soil, the air, and their water supplies.<sup>534</sup> Many claimed that water pollution contaminated fish and drove away wildlife, thereby threatening their food supplies.<sup>535</sup>

The Commission found serious human rights violations in this disastrous situation, holding that the rights to life, physical integrity, and security are closely related to one's physical environment.<sup>536</sup>

---

<sup>526</sup> Atik, *supra* note 497, at 26.

<sup>527</sup> *Id.*

<sup>528</sup> *Water Sanitation and Health: State Obligations Regarding the Human Right to Water*, World Health Org., available at [http://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/humanrights/en/index3.html](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/humanrights/en/index3.html) (last visited Feb. 21, 2012).

<sup>529</sup> *Id.*

<sup>530</sup> *See id.*

<sup>531</sup> DINAH SHELTON, HUMAN RIGHTS, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: LINKAGES IN LAW AND PRACTICE – A BACKGROUND PAPER FOR THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION 17 (2002), available at [http://www.who.int/hhr/information/en/Series\\_1%20%20Human\\_Rights\\_Health\\_Environmental%20Protection\\_Shelton.pdf](http://www.who.int/hhr/information/en/Series_1%20%20Human_Rights_Health_Environmental%20Protection_Shelton.pdf) [hereinafter LINKAGES IN LAW AND PRACTICE].

<sup>532</sup> *Id.* (The inhabitants claimed the byproducts of oil exploitation caused them to have rashes, gastrointestinal problems, skin diseases, and chronic infections.)

<sup>533</sup> *Id.*

<sup>534</sup> *Id.*

<sup>535</sup> *Id.*

<sup>536</sup> *Id.*



178 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

When environmental degradation poses a persistent threat to life and health, those rights are implicated.<sup>537</sup> Oil, the main revenue earner of the country, plays an extremely valuable role in Ecuador's economic development as its economy is largely dependent on foreign exchange earnings from oil.<sup>538</sup> Therefore, trying to eradicate all of the effects of the oil facilities would stunt the nation's economic development. This situation is by no means uncommon because oil exploration, copper and diamond mining, and other investment activities are vital to the economic development of many countries. The lesson is that RTAs, which encourage and facilitate these economic activities that have adverse effects on a healthy environment, must take responsibility for these human rights violations<sup>539</sup> by requiring transnational companies and the host government to put into effect systems that will prevent these long-term threats to clean water, clean air, and a safe food supply. We believe that the emerging right to a healthy environment and trade are so closely linked, and that safe food and water are so important, that RTAs must balance a healthy environment with economic development.<sup>540</sup>

## 2. *Right to Participate in Decision-Making*

One feature of the interrelationship between trade and a healthy environment that necessitates special attention is the procedural right of participation and consultation.<sup>541</sup> Procedural environmental rights need to be guaranteed through participation in environmental decision-making, provision of access to environmental information, and remedies for environmental harm.<sup>542</sup> Underpinning these rights is the notion that a healthy environment cannot be achieved by governments alone; instead, it requires an open society which allows citizens access to decision-making institutions and processes.<sup>543</sup> Citizens need to be able to both influence decisions affecting the environment and to correct, and obtain redress for, environmental harm.<sup>544</sup>

For example, in 2007, the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Foundation, the ILO, and the WHO, launched a project aimed at

<sup>537</sup> LINKAGES IN LAW AND PRACTICE, *supra* note 531, at 17.

<sup>538</sup> INTER-AMERICAN COMM'N ON HUMAN RIGHTS, ECUADOR, para. 5 (2000), available at <http://www.cidh.org/annualrep/99eng/Chapter4a.htm>.

<sup>539</sup> See LINKAGES IN LAW AND PRACTICE, *supra* note 531.

<sup>540</sup> *Water Sanitation and Health*, *supra* note 528.

<sup>541</sup> David Kinley & Junko Tadaki, *From Walk to Talk: The Emergence of Human Rights Responsibilities for Corporations at International Law*, 44 VA. J. INT'L L. 931, 985 (2004).

<sup>542</sup> *Id.*

<sup>543</sup> *Id.*

<sup>544</sup> *Id.*

strengthening participation in international environmental processes.<sup>545</sup> The goal was to improve the engagement of trade unions and workers in developing and implementing environmental policy.<sup>546</sup> In Latin America and the Caribbean, Project “Sustainlabour” works with trade unions to promote a search for sustainable development options that ensure decent living conditions for all.<sup>547</sup>

Access to information is a crucial prerequisite to meaningful decision-making in the environmental sector by the community.<sup>548</sup> As we mentioned with respect to democratic governance, governmental organizations have an obligation to disclose all records they hold that will be used to make the decision.<sup>549</sup> The right also needs to reasonably guarantee access to information by all bodies with public responsibilities for the environment.<sup>550</sup> Environmental issues need to be addressed by all concerned citizens to ensure that all views are presented.

The case of *Maya Indigenous Communities v. Belize* is instructive in this regard. There, the IAHCR found that Belize violated the rights of the Maya Indigenous Communities by “granting logging and oil concessions to third parties to utilize the property and resources that could fall within [lands traditionally used and occupied by the Maya people]. . . in the absence of effective consultations with and the informed consent of the Maya people.”<sup>551</sup> The loss of their land would have devastating effects on the community.

We believe it is clear that participation in civil society in environmental decisions is a core right to a healthy environment that is both basic and closely linked to international trade.

### 3. *Right to Sustainable Development*

A healthy environment and sustainable development are symbiotically related and should be pursued in tandem. The concept of sustainable development reconciles the right to a healthy environment with economic development, including for future generations.<sup>552</sup>

<sup>545</sup> SUSTAINLABOUR PROJECT, [http://www.unep.org/labour\\_environment/features/trade-unions-project.asp](http://www.unep.org/labour_environment/features/trade-unions-project.asp) (last visited July 15, 2012).

<sup>546</sup> *Id.*

<sup>547</sup> *Id.*

<sup>548</sup> Kinley & Tadaki, *supra* note 541.

<sup>549</sup> INT’L COUNCIL ON HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY, BEYOND VOLUNTARISM: HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL LEGAL OBLIGATIONS OF COMPANIES 40 (2002), available at [http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/7/107\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/7/107_report_en.pdf).

<sup>550</sup> Kinley & Tadaki, *supra* note 541.

<sup>551</sup> *Maya Indigenous Communities of the Toledo District v. Belize*, Merits, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. C) No. 40, ¶ 153 (Oct. 12, 2004), available at <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/cases/40-04.html>.

<sup>552</sup> See Atapattu, *supra* note 524, at 70.

180 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

The term “sustainable development” is not easily defined. It encompasses a variety of concepts, such as promotion of socially and environmentally sustainable economic growth, respect for human rights, and protection of the natural environment.<sup>553</sup> While dozens of competing definitions have been offered, that proposed by a Commission created by the UN General Assembly, headed by Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Brundtland, has been the most influential. The Report craftily defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>554</sup> Two key concepts are incorporated in this definition. First, economic development cannot stop as long as people live in poverty.<sup>555</sup> Second, such development cannot outpace the ability of our ecosystem, aided by our technology, to sustain itself.<sup>556</sup>

We know that trade can accomplish the first part, by increasing economic development through the use of its natural resources. We also know, however, that such use promotes pollution and introduces the danger of over-exploitation of natural resources. For this reason, we identify sustainable development as a core environmental right so closely linked to trade that RTAs must address its implementation.

For some countries, shrimp aquaculture is extremely lucrative. However, large-scale shrimping destroys fragile coastlines and ecosystems because they were not designed to sustain such heavy burdens. In many places, including Thailand, the shrimp ponds are placed side-to-side and end-to-end in ways that alter the coastlines and prevent local communities from accessing coastal resources.<sup>557</sup> Before shrimp aquaculture, the coasts used to be filled with mangrove forests, upon which the local communities depended.<sup>558</sup> Because the ponds have changed, they pollute the water, deplete the ecosystem, introduce salt into freshwater supplies, destroy the mangrove forests together with their productive capacity, reduce the quality of fishing, and generally harm local agriculture.<sup>559</sup>

However, while many of these ocean fisheries are already fully exploited or over-exploited, aquaculture is still increasing rapidly to

<sup>553</sup> CTR. FOR INT’L ENVTL. LAW, ONE SPECIES, ONE PLANET: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2 (2002), available at [http://www.ciel.org/Publications/OneSpecies\\_OnePlanet.pdf](http://www.ciel.org/Publications/OneSpecies_OnePlanet.pdf) (last visited Feb. 20, 2012).

<sup>554</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*, Chapter 2: *Towards Sustainable Development*, ¶ 1, U.N. Doc., A/42/427 (1987), available at <http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm#I>.

<sup>555</sup> See *id.*

<sup>556</sup> See *id.*

<sup>557</sup> *Id.*

<sup>558</sup> *Id.*

<sup>559</sup> Barnhizer, *supra* note 496.

keep up with the demand.<sup>560</sup> Future use will have to consider the competing demands for limited resources, the protection of these water resources, and the management of the destruction of the environment.<sup>561</sup> RTAs must play their part, even if it is small and difficult, to accomplish sustainable development.

Trade agreements can help in this respect by ensuring oversight of resource use facilitated by the agreement by agencies operating under the sustainable development principle. For this reason, we identify sustainable development as a core environmental right so closely linked to trade that RTAs must address its implementation.

#### 4. *Right to Application of Polluter Pays Principle*

We all know that pollution is an unavoidable byproduct of both production and consumption.<sup>562</sup> It is also obvious that controlling pollution requires restraints on polluting activities.<sup>563</sup> The question is how best to apportion the responsibility for minimizing and remediating this pollution. The most widely-accepted, though politically difficult, economic principle for this purpose is the “polluter pays principle” (PPP). It is an economic rule of cost allocation or internalization that requires the polluter to take responsibility for the external costs, or costs to society in general, of its polluting activity.<sup>564</sup> By shifting the economic burden of, for example, a stream poisoned by chemical runoff, or the Gulf of Mexico imperiled by a huge oil spill, to the company that caused the problem, the company is given a strong economic incentive to prevent the polluting activity in the first place.<sup>565</sup> The premise for the PPP is that the production of goods and services produces not only a monetary value, but also inflicts social and environmental costs on society.<sup>566</sup> The liability placed by the PPP includes the costs of preventing future damage that the polluter’s actions may cause.<sup>567</sup>

<sup>560</sup> U.N. DEP’T OF ECON. & SOC. AFFAIRS, GLOBAL CHALLENGE, GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY: TRENDS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 11 (2002), available at [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/critical\\_trends\\_report\\_2002.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/critical_trends_report_2002.pdf).

<sup>561</sup> *Id.*

<sup>562</sup> Kurt A. Strasser, *Pollution Control in an Era of Economic Redevelopment: An Overview*, 8 CONN. J. INT’L L. 425, 427 (1993).

<sup>563</sup> *Id.*

<sup>564</sup> Margaret Rosso Grossman, *Agriculture and the Polluter Pays Principle: An Introduction*, 59 OKLA. L. REV. 1, 3 (2006).

<sup>565</sup> Michael R. Parker, *Two Sides of the Same Coin: Considering Human Rights When Designing Environmental Policy*, 25 J. LAND USE & ENVTL. L. 109, 126 (2009).

<sup>566</sup> *Id.*

<sup>567</sup> *Id.*

182 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

The PPP appears in several international agreements,<sup>568</sup> the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,<sup>569</sup> and the Council of Europe's 1993 Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Resulting from Activities Dangerous to the Environment.<sup>570</sup> The Rio Declaration introduces two important warnings or conditions – first, that due regard must be taken of the public interest.<sup>571</sup> For example, BP Oil Company has paid many billions of dollars to clean up and to compensate fisherman and others from economic losses caused by the Gulf Oil Spill.

However, many billions more have been spent by governments in safety net and research activities where it is not considered to be in the public interest to charge the company. This condition also implicates the political difficulty previously mentioned. At some point, it becomes politically impossible to place all of the social and future environmental costs onto one company.

The second condition is that trade and investment must not be “distorted” by the cost internalization. This is similar to the first condition in that it introduces a limit to charging producers for their pollution.<sup>572</sup>

The PPP also operates to prevent transnational companies from seeking pollution havens – countries that are willing to allow the company to cause pollution without controlling their pollution.<sup>573</sup> Under the PPP, any pollution the company causes will be factored into the costs no matter where it operates.<sup>574</sup>

The PPP is closely tied to trade and is critically important to environmental protection. Additionally, preventing pollution havens likely will require international agreements such as RTAs that encourage companies to enforce environmental laws if they want access to larger export markets. For these reasons, we believe that RTAs must hold transnational companies responsible for internalizing pollution costs consistently with the PPP.

<sup>568</sup> See Jonathan Remy Nash, *Too Much Market? Conflict Between Tradable Pollution Allowances and the “Polluter Pays” Principle*, 24 HARV. ENVTL. L. REV. 465, 469 n.8 (2000).

<sup>569</sup> United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Braz., June 3-14, 1992, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.151/26/Rev. 1 (Aug. 12, 1992) [hereinafter *Rio Declaration*].

<sup>570</sup> Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Resulting from Activities Dangerous to the Environment, June 21, 1993, 32 I.L.M. 1228 (1993).

<sup>571</sup> *Rio Declaration*, *supra* note 569, at 879.

<sup>572</sup> *Id.*

<sup>573</sup> Parker, *supra* note 565, at 127.

<sup>574</sup> *Id.*

### 5. *Right to Application of Precautionary Principle*

According to Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration “where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.”<sup>575</sup> This is known as the precautionary principle and involves assessing the risk and determining how to manage it.<sup>576</sup> At the core of the precautionary principle is the notion that the lack of scientific certainty as to potential damage should not be invoked in the decision-making process because avoiding risk is the main concern.<sup>577</sup>

However, this principle is extremely controversial not only because it requires a country to act first and ask questions later to prevent serious environmental harm,<sup>578</sup> but also because no one really knows what the terms of the definition mean.<sup>579</sup> Global climate change is a good example, where the scientific community in general has one view and political leaders have quite another.

Although treaties such as the WTO and others are intended to promote trade liberalization, it is improper to assume that such trade is to be at the expense of fundamental human rights. Many of these conventions contain exceptions for the protection of the environment, health, and human life, including Article XX(b) of the GATT<sup>580</sup> and Article 30 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community (“EC Treaty”),<sup>581</sup> while attempting to prevent the application of the principle in an arbitrary way. Article XX of the GATT provides standards of determination of the exceptions with components such as ‘necessary’ or ‘related to.’<sup>582</sup>

In addition, the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) enumerates a series of requirements that must be satisfied to utilize an exception and to qualify as WTO-

<sup>575</sup> *Rio Declaration*, *supra* note 569, at 879.

<sup>576</sup> Global Compact Principle U.N. GLOBAL COMPACT, 7 (Feb. 12, 2009), *available at* <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/aboutthegc/thetenprinciples/principle7.html>.

<sup>577</sup> Miguel A. Recuerda, *Dangerous Interpretations of the Precautionary Principle and the Foundational Values of European Union Food Law: Risk Versus Risk*, 4 J. FOOD L. & POL’Y 1, 3 (2008).

<sup>578</sup> *Id.* at 42.

<sup>579</sup> *Id.* at 41-42.

<sup>580</sup> General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, 61 Stat. A-11, 55 U.N.T.S. 194, art. XX(b), *available at* [http://www.wto.org/english/docs\\_e/legal\\_e/gatt47\\_e.pdf](http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/gatt47_e.pdf) [hereinafter GATT].

<sup>581</sup> Hans-Joachim Priess & Christian Pitschas, *Protection of Public Health and the Role of the Precautionary Principle Under WTO Law: A Trojan Horse Before Geneva’s Walls?*, 24 FORDHAM INT’L L.J. 519, 519 (2000).

<sup>582</sup> GATT, *supra* note 580, art. XX.

184 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

compatible.<sup>583</sup> Technological advancements have provided important benefits by providing Member States access to information they would not have had access to otherwise.<sup>584</sup> The SPS Agreement allows Member states to provisionally adopt phytosanitary or sanitary measures on the basis of available pertinent information, where relevant scientific evidence is insufficient. This includes information from international organizations as well as from measures applied by other Member states. In those circumstances, the Member states still have a responsibility to try to obtain relevant information for a more objective assessment of risk and to review the measures taken within a reasonable period of time.<sup>585</sup>

One example of a case in which Article XX(b) of the GATT was at issue is what has become known as the *Brazil-Tyres* case. In 2005, the European Communities filed a complaint against Brazil because of its import restrictions on refurbished tires.<sup>586</sup> The EC also challenged several of Brazil's measures related to retreaded tires including: 1) prohibiting issuing import licenses for used tires, which sometimes applied against imports of retreaded tires, even though they were not used tires; 2) imposing fines on the importation, marketing, transportation, storage, keeping, or keeping in deposit or warehouses of imported, but not of domestic retreaded tires; and 3) exempting retreaded tires from other MERCOSUR countries, in response to the ruling of a MERCOSUR panel established at the request of Uruguay.<sup>587</sup> The Panel issued its opinion in June 2007, and in September 2007, the European Communities filed an appeal.<sup>588</sup>

<sup>583</sup> *Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures*, Apr. 15, 1994, Final Act Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, available at [http://www.wto.org/english/docs\\_e/legal\\_e/15-sps.pdf](http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/15-sps.pdf) [hereinafter SPS Agreement].

<sup>584</sup> See WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, *THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE: PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH, THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN* 1 (2004), available at [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/91173/E83079.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/91173/E83079.pdf).

<sup>585</sup> SPS Agreement, *supra* note 582, at art. 5(7).

<sup>586</sup> Appellate Body Report, *Brazil – Measures Affecting Imports of Retreaded Tyres*, WT/DS332/AB/R (Dec. 3, 2007), DS332 (Sept. 25, 2009) (*adopted* Dec. 17, 2007), available at [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dispu\\_e/cases\\_e/ds332\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/cases_e/ds332_e.htm); see also MARCEL VAILLANT, *HOW TO ENCOURAGE THE NETWORK TRADE RULES INTERCONNECTIONS? AN APPLICATION TO THE CASE OF NON TARIFF BARRIERS 5* (2011), available at <http://ictsd.org/downloads/2012/02/marcel-vaillant-how-to-encourage-the-network-trade-rules-interconnections-an-application-to-the-case-of-non-tariff-barriers.pdf> (last visited July 23, 2012).

<sup>587</sup> *Brazil – Measures Affecting Imports of Retreaded Tyres*, *supra* note 586, at 2.

<sup>588</sup> *Id.* at 3.

Brazil claimed the tires polluted the environment because they were highly combustible and the toxic gases released from tire incineration contaminated its air, soil, and water.<sup>589</sup> The accumulation of the tires also resulted in the propagation of mosquitoes, resulting in the transmission of yellow fever, dengue fever, and malaria.<sup>590</sup> The EC claimed violations under the GATT and Brazil counterclaimed that Article XX of the GATT justified measures otherwise inconsistent with GATT principles to protect health and the environment. When determining whether or not a GATT-inconsistent provision can be saved under the Art. XX(b) exception, panels must determine whether the measure is “necessary” to fulfill the objectives of protecting human, animal, or plant life or health.<sup>591</sup>

The Appellate Body had to determine whether Brazil could achieve the same level of health and environmental protection by using other reasonably available measures that could be less restrictive to trade.<sup>592</sup> The Appellate Body determined that the import ban consisted of a comprehensive strategy to deal with waste tires and likely would achieve Brazil’s objective of reducing exposure to risks from waste tires.<sup>593</sup> The Appellate Body also had to determine whether the measure was “necessary” within the meaning of Art. XX(b) and found that prevention of the accumulation of waste tires would be more apt to achieve Brazil’s objective of reducing the “exposure to the risks to human, animal, or plant life or health arising from the accumulation of waste tyres” to the maximum extent possible.<sup>594</sup>

After determining that the import ban was provisionally justified under Art XX(b) of the GATT, the Appellate Body examined whether the provisionally justified measure met the requirements of the chapeau of Art. XX.<sup>595</sup> The requirements are two-fold: 1) a measure provisionally justified under Article XX must not be applied in a manner that would constitute “arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination” between countries where the same conditions prevail; and 2) the measure must not be applied in a manner that would constitute “a disguised restriction on international trade.”<sup>596</sup> These exceptions must be exercised in good faith to protect legitimate interests under Article

<sup>589</sup> CTR. FOR INT’L ENVTL. LAW, THE BRAZIL-RETREADED TIRES CASE: BACKGROUND PAPER 1 (2006), available at [http://www.ciel.org/Publications/Brazil\\_Tires\\_3Apr06.pdf](http://www.ciel.org/Publications/Brazil_Tires_3Apr06.pdf).

<sup>590</sup> *Id.*

<sup>591</sup> *Id.* at 4.

<sup>592</sup> *Id.*

<sup>593</sup> See Brazil – Measures Affecting Imports of Retreaded Tyres, *supra* note 586, para. 210.

<sup>594</sup> *Id.* ¶ 136.

<sup>595</sup> *Id.* ¶ 213.

<sup>596</sup> *Id.* ¶ 215.



186 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

XX, and not as a means to circumvent one Member's obligations toward other WTO Members.<sup>597</sup> Thus, the Appellate Body had to determine whether the MERCOSUR exemption fell within the chapeau.

Brazil's justification for the MERCOSUR exemption was that it was following the ruling of the MERCOSUR tribunal, and therefore, it provided a rationale for the exemption. The Appellate Body found that the MERCOSUR exemption constituted an abuse and was applied in a manner that constituted arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination.<sup>598</sup> Even though the Court noted that Brazil's decision to comply with the MERCOSUR tribunal ruling was rational, it noted that a rational decision could still be arbitrary or unjustifiable if the rationale bears no relationship to the objective of a measure provisionally justified under Article XX, or if it goes against that objective.<sup>599</sup> The Appellate Body determined that the MERCOSUR exemption resulted in the import ban being applied in a manner that constituted arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination.<sup>600</sup> It also found that the exemption resulted in a disguised restriction on international trade.<sup>601</sup>

The Appellate Body then examined the issue of whether imports of used tires through court injunctions fell within the chapeau of Art. XX. It found that this resulted in the import ban being applied in a manner that constituted unjustifiable or arbitrary discrimination, and was applied in a manner that constituted a disguised restriction on international trade only to the extent that these imports took place in such quantities that they significantly undermined the objective of the import ban. Because of these findings, the Appellate Body determined that the import ban was not justified under Art. XX of the GATT.<sup>602</sup>

Nonetheless, we believe that a version of the Precautionary Principle should become an essential element of RTAs. The version we would adopt is that of the WTO's Food Safety or SPS Agreement. Article 5.7 of that Agreement permits action in the absence of the full scientific justification normally required by the Agreement, but with important safeguards.<sup>603</sup> The measures taken can only be temporary. The country must continue to search for full scientific justification within a reasonable period of time. We believe that, with these limitations, the most controversial aspects of the Precautionary Principle are

---

<sup>597</sup> *Id.*

<sup>598</sup> *Id.* ¶ 228.

<sup>599</sup> *Id.* ¶ 232.

<sup>600</sup> *Id.* ¶ 233.

<sup>601</sup> *Id.* ¶ 239.

<sup>602</sup> *Id.* ¶ 228.

<sup>603</sup> See SPS Agreement, *supra* note 583, art. 5(7).

2012]

## BEYOND LABOR RIGHTS

187

eliminated, while the important requirement to act quickly to prevent serious environmental harm is preserved.

### E. Conclusion

The intersection between trade and the emerging human right to a healthy environment presents one of the most dynamic conflicts in international law. Managing these potential conflicts, and exploiting their potential synergies, will pose a continuing challenge in the international community.

RTAs need to be drafted in such a way that they do not conflict with human rights. Moreover, nations must recognize their obligation to regulate international trade in a way that promotes the human right to a healthy environment.<sup>604</sup> RTAs can accomplish this task in part by following the lead of NAFTA article 104, which contains a hierarchy of norms clause that puts environmental treaties signed by the Parties above the trade rules contained in NAFTA.<sup>605</sup> Because the protection of water, air, and other natural resources is necessary to the realization of human rights, environmental rights and obligations should also receive hierarchical priority.<sup>606</sup> The status of human rights norms can be acknowledged by including in the RTA a hierarchy specifying that human rights norms will prevail in the event of a conflict between human rights and trade norms.<sup>607</sup>

In addition, we maintain that an exceptionally strong case can be made for including in RTAs the five core environmental rights that we have identified. Their link to trade is undeniable and their reliance on the power of trade's enforceable rules is patently clear.

## IX. OVERALL CONCLUSION

The field of international human rights law contains challenging complexities. It often must operate without positive enforcement mechanisms, even though its tenets describe the very standards of right and wrong conduct for human society. Human rights advocates increasingly recognize the power of international trade instruments both to counter human rights implementation through its adverse effects and to advance human rights implementation through its positive enforcement mechanisms.

<sup>604</sup> Carmen G. Gonzalez, *An Environmental Justice Critique of Comparative Advantage: Indigenous Peoples, Trade Policy, and the Mexican Neoliberal Economic Reforms*, 32 U. PA. J. INT'L L. 723, 776 (2011).

<sup>605</sup> *Id.* at 779.

<sup>606</sup> See JUST TRADE, *supra* note 2, at 86-87.

<sup>607</sup> See Carmen G. Gonzalez, *Genetically Modified Organisms and Justice: The International Environmental Justice Implications of Biotechnology*, 19 GEO. INT'L ENVTL. L. REV. 583, 627-28 (2007).

188 *RICHMOND JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LAW & BUSINESS* [Vol. 12:1

We have proceeded in this paper from the assumption, gained through years as trade negotiators and students of the intersections of trade and human rights, that reducing the complexity of human rights law for trade negotiators will yield greater integration of these two great social policies. In identifying a limited and manageable body of fundamental human rights standards in those human rights fields most closely affected by trade, we believe that trade negotiators may more successfully use RTAs to accomplish the symbiosis of trade and human rights that is inherent in their basic objectives.

We trust that this study will assist trade negotiators in accomplishing the goal of increased economic growth while at the same time increasing the standard of well-being of civil society.