

sanctions, and they have been used. In fact, I can tell you that I gave a presentation in Hong Kong in mid-May, and I addressed the open food system concept. I had a Japanese gentleman come to me, and he said, "Well, this is all very good, Mr. Micek, but we remember back in 1973 when the United States put an embargo on soybeans, and cut across contracts, and stopped shipping soybeans to Japan." He said, "You know, this is food [we can't do without]. We had to go elsewhere. We ended up having to go to South America." Now, if the people you talk to say we have a monopoly because we now can ship from Brazil to Japan, I think they are totally missing the point.

The other part of the food chain, and I don't want to get into this—I think that to pick on a link in the chain is unfair. We have customers, and those customers of ours have customers. The ultimate customer is the consumer. The facts are that, today, the United States, the margins that we get, or the farmer gets for the work, the value that we put into food, is very marginal. I suggest that the people who you are referring to need to start at the front end of the chain, and that is, say, with the retailer, and then go through and see where the margin is.

## Not another 'period of colonization'

*On Dec. 2, the evening before the WTO summit ended in failure, an impromptu briefing was held in the Convention Center media room, by African, Caribbean, and South American spokesmen, denouncing the way the conference had been proceeding.*

**Tetteh Hormeku**, *Third World Network, Africa Secretariat, Ghana:*

We did a lot of preparation for these meetings, on the basis of an organization which we've established for the regional negotiating agenda, and I think, after having prepared ourselves and come to Seattle, we are now very much disappointed, over the fact that coming from small economies, small developing states, we end up with a situation where we are now marginalized from the process, which has been virtually hijacked by the wealthier developed countries. I would not wish to name names, but you probably know who I am speaking about. I would like to say that many of our colleagues, at least two of our colleagues, have attempted to participate in what is called the "Green Room" process, which is a process which we are very much opposed to, because it smacks of the lack of transparency. And you know that a lot of people are talking about transparency, but when you ask them to practice transparency, it's another

matter. And this Green Room that's been established is creating tremendous problems of frustration and isolation. There is a lack of information. We don't know what's going on.

**Clement Rohee**, *Guyana Foreign Minister:*

There is a need for special and differentiated treatment for our countries. We have vulnerable economies; they are always battered by hurricanes and all kind of different natural disasters. Sections of our countries are not highly developed. We are still faced with one-crop economies, and we depend a lot on preferential market access to countries, especially in Europe. So now trade liberalization is moving, [but] we need time. We want to participate as equal partners in this process. We don't want another period of colonization to take place.

**Dr. Shridath Ramphal**, *Caribbean Community negotiator, and former Secretary of the British Commonwealth:*

I am a member of an organization [that represents many countries], and I am not consulted. I am not even invited to participate in the process by which a conclusion is reached. How can I be asked to concur? And if I do not concur, there is no consensus. And that is what will happen tomorrow.

**Q:** So you will vote everything down?

**Ramphal:** There is no question of voting everything down. One doesn't even know what there is to be voted down, yet! The participation is so flawed, that it is impossible to say at this stage, what Charlene Barshefsky will put before the meeting tomorrow as her conclusion for which she seeks consensus. Now, it is only then that one can say whether what is before us is so minimalist and so ineffectual that one can go along with it, or whether it is an attempt to force a view of others, which they do not share. If it is the latter, then, obviously, countries from the Caribbean, from Latin America, from Africa, from the Pacific, will say, "No."

**Q:** Labor and environmental issues?

**Ramphal:** Well, I am concerned, of course, about that. [But] I have a deeper concern. I am concerned that the real tragedy is being played out in Seattle in a very important area of internationalism. This should not be a game about enhancing corporate profits. This should not be a time when big countries, strong countries, the world's wealthiest countries are setting about a process designed to enrich themselves. The WTO was designed to create fair trading conditions for the whole world.

... I was at a meeting this morning of the central committee where the bangs on the table were so loud that they went all around the room. It wasn't even banging from one quarter. My colleague spoke just now. His was one of the voices raised in protest. And what he received was the applause of the entire room. Now, if that doesn't convey a message to the person who is sitting in the chair [the chairman], it is difficult to say what will reach the ears of the authorities of the United States.