Developing countries make up the majority of the membership of the World Trade Organization. Many developing countries believe that the welfare gains that were supposed to ensue from the establishment of the WTO and the results of the Uruguay Round remain largely unachieved. Though they are often clumped together under the ubiquitous banner “developing countries,” their multilateral trade objectives, particularly the policy interests and the concerns they face, vary considerably from country to country and are by no means homogeneous. Coming on the heels of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the ongoing Doha Development Round, launched in that Middle Eastern city in the fall of 2001, is now on “life support.” It was inaugurated with much fanfare as a means of addressing the difficulties faced by developing countries within the multilateral trading system. Special and differential treatment provisions in the WTO agreement in particular are the focus of much discussion in the ongoing round, and voices for change have been multiplying because of widespread dissatisfaction with the effectiveness, enforceability, and implementation of those special treatment provisions.

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WTO Law and Developing Countries

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