



The Estey Centre Journal of
**International Law
and Trade Policy**

Abstract

Eight Years of Doha Trade Talks: Where Do We Stand?

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In 2001 the World Trade Organization launched a highly ambitious program of multilateral liberalization. Eight years later, concluding the negotiations is uncertain, though an opportunity still exists. Since 2001, many proposals on market access have been brought to the negotiating table by the European Union, the United States, and the G20. Because it is politically and economically acceptable to many parties, the final December 2008 package could be the basis of an agreement. An evaluation of these various proposals shows how trade negotiations have been following countries' strategic interests. In eight years, the ambition of the formula in agricultural market access tariff reduction has increased, but additional flexibilities designed to accommodate domestic political constraints have offset delivered market access. The various scenarios imply losses for least-developed countries, reflecting eroded preferences and rising terms of trade for imported commodities, including food products. We study how this trade reform can be more development-friendly.

Keywords: computable general equilibrium modeling, least developed countries, trade negotiations