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Time for a new focus on corporate power

Peter O'Driscol

Any discussion of corporate power necessarily departs from a basic paradox of liberal capitalism: left to their own devices, competitive private firms generate tremendous wealth, while driving important organizational and technological innovation. But these achievements have historically been tempered by unacceptable levels of social exploitation, political manipulation and environmental degradation that follow from the tendency of unregulated companies to concentrate wealth and increase income disparity. Because this paradox

has been recognized since the days of Adam Smith, economic policy has tended to swing like a pendulum between the extremes of strict state regulation of business on the one hand and a more "laissez-faire" approach on the other. But the world is currently experiencing a degree of corporate power the likes of which have not been seen since the heady days of robber barons and imperial trading companies a century ago.

This state of affairs has been brought about by the past twenty years of macroeconomic policy management. From the Great Depression through the 1970s, the prevailing development paradigm sought to mitigate the

adverse consequences of business activity by redistributing the private sector's income through taxation, and by legislating limits on the social and environmental externalities produced by corporate activity. This balance between private and public interests was considered the best means for achieving economic growth and social improvement.

But by the early 1980s, a series of systemic shocks had profoundly shaken this vision of the relative roles of market and state. "Neo-liberal" economists contended that corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness made government an unworthy partner in the development process. They certainly saw no role for social movements in shaping development policy. As a result, followers of the neo-liberal model sought to dismantle the "welfare state," reduce the tax and regulatory burden on business, and establish the private sector as the motor of development, focusing on economic growth as if social improvement would inevitably follow.

Global South

For countries of the global south, this approach translated into controversial lending and aid programs conditioned on "structural adjustment," reduced government spending, reorientation towards production for export markets, and increased insertion into a global economy. The twin policies of structural adjustment and trade liberalisation enabled private companies to assume disproportionate power at the expense of state and civil society institutions in both northern and southern countries.

Popular movements that have sprung up around the world to protest neoliberal economic policies have

tended to focus their energies and reform proposals on the multilateral institutions responsible for implementing the fiscal and trade policies that have proven so devastating to the livelihoods of poor people. But while research and advocacy addressing the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization are clearly still important, it could also be argued that transnational corporations – the principal beneficiaries of structural adjustment and trade liberalization – have not received the attention they deserve from civil society. Social movements need to better understand how corporations shape global trade and investment policies if they are to more effectively counteract their anti-democratic influence.

Agriculture and Food Industry

While the impacts of corporate power are apparent in all major sectors of the world economy, the global food system offers a particularly important illustration. Thanks to the influence of a handful of transnational agro-food companies, food is now produced, processed and marketed using industrial techniques and inputs which raise serious concerns about food safety, nutrition, and availability, not to mention social and environmental sustainability. The single most important obstacle to reform of this system is corporate power – the oligopoly of transnational agro-food companies that has won control over all major input, processing and retail markets through a rapid process of concentration in the industry.

That control is not good news for more than half of the world's population that still depends on agriculture as its principal source of income, or for consumers who need safe, nutritious

and accessible food to survive. Through a complex web of mergers, acquisitions and partnership agreements, firms at different points on the value chain work together to ensure vertical integration of the food system—an arrangement that allows clusters of firms to set prices throughout the production process. Corporate market power squeezes farmers, both when they buy expensive inputs like fertilizers and again when they sell their outputs for less than their cost of production, and ultimately drives too many of them off the land.

The food industry defends the egregious level of corporate concentration in the sector (for example, most major US input and processing markets have four-firm concentration ratios ranging from 60-80%) by suggesting that consumers benefit from economies of scale and new technologies that companies can only harness by consolidating. But the true price of "cheap" food includes taxpayer subsidies to agro-food companies, and the long-term cost to society of unsustainable farm practices employed by corporate industrial agriculture. Oligopoly price-fixing and other market distortions also add to the cost of food. Moreover, an increasingly concentrated food industry uses campaign contributions, lobbyists and government appointments to shape public policy on everything from regulatory reform to international trade agreements. There are thus important social, environmental and political reasons for reforming the structure of the food system.

Challenging the system

Far from going unnoticed, the dangers of corporate concentration in the food system have been documented by academics and experts, by farmers and

workers, by environmentalists and anti-trust lawyers, by policy analysts and nutritionists, by investors and consumer groups. Each of these constituencies has developed important public education and advocacy strategies that promise necessary systemic reform, despite the level of political and economic power wielded by food industry interest groups. Yet, as impressive as existing efforts to challenge control of the food system have been, key constituencies are sometimes unaware of each other's efforts, of ways in which their strategies could be mutually reinforcing, and of new opportunities for reform advocacy that are not currently being exploited.

The Agribusiness Accountability Initiative (AAI) sees in that circumstance an opportunity to build a "whole" response to corporate power in the food system that is "greater than the sum of its parts." AAI (www.agribusinessaccountability.org) is conceived as an open and ongoing forum for sharing research, advocacy ideas, networks and public education strategies to challenge the disproportionate impact of transnational agro-food corporations on the livelihoods and food security of producers, workers, consumers, and communities around the world. AAI is an explicit effort to build on the work of groups that have identified corporate concentration in the food system as a priority concern. We would be very interested to hear from African organizations who wish to collaborate on these issues with their colleagues around the world.

**Peter O'Driscoll is the Coordinator of the Agribusiness Accountability Initiative*

Monsanto pushes GM wheat to secure future access to lucrative African Markets

Mariam Mayet

On the 19th January 2004, Monsanto SA (Pty) Ltd stunned South Africans when it announced that it was seeking a food and feed safety clearance for its genetically modified (GM) Roundup Ready wheat to expedite future imports. This application must be seen against the backdrop to the fact that GM wheat is not grown commercially in any part of the world and is years away from regulatory approval in Canada and the United States of America (US) where research and experiments are still continuing and no approval has yet been granted.

Once Monsanto obtains such approval, the legislative weakness in the South African biosafety law expressly excludes future importers of Roundup Ready wheat from the need to obtain import permits. Biosafety oversight will in that event, effectively cease to exist. Such future importers of the Roundup Ready wheat would then have carte blanche to import the Roundup Ready wheat into South Africa, and thereby not have to comply with the biosafety oversight procedures in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Biosafety Protocol). Crucially, approval from the South African authorities will provide Monsanto with an enormous political coup to convince other African countries that its Roundup Ready GM wheat is "safe". It will also go a long way towards laying the groundwork for control over the very lucrative wheat market in Africa.

In this context it is worth noting that Africa imports approximately 30 million tons of wheat per year. The US government has targeted Africa as a major market for its wheat, especially

since competition from the European Union (EU) and Russia is not as fierce owing to dwindling wheat exports from these countries. The US expects its exports to climb to 30 million tons during 2004, an 8-year high, and "sales to Africa will be a major reason."

Monsanto's Difficulties with obtaining approval in Canada and the US Monsanto Canada and Monsanto Corporate have applied for regulatory approval for its Roundup Ready GM wheat in both the USA and Canada. However, to date, neither the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, nor Health Canada, have granted approvals for general cultivation and human safety respectively. Monsanto Canada's failure to obtain such approval is partly due to the groundswell of resistance from farmers and farmer organisations in Canada. Two years ago, the organic farmers of Saskatchewan filed a class action lawsuit to stop Roundup Ready wheat. On 27th May 2003, the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), a farmer-controlled grain marketing agency called on Monsanto Canada to withdraw its environmental safety assessment. Recently, Agriculture Canada announced that it was abandoning its long running project involving GM wheat it had been developing in partnership with Monsanto. Jim Bole from the government Department of Agriculture Canada said that this decision reflected the concerns of Canada's wheat customers.

In the US, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is still in the throes of conducting a voluntary safety review of Monsanto Corporation's Roundup Ready wheat for human and animal consumption. Monsanto Corporation is still awaiting approval from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA.) The FDA, USDA and EPA share regulatory oversight for GM crops in the US where there is no overarching comprehensive biosafety legislation.

Paying Lip Service to Biosafety

The central question that the South African government must answer, is what data exactly, will it use to consider, assess and evaluate Monsanto's application, particularly since the field trials and safety evaluations are still taking place in the US and Canada? Why is it that Monsanto is so confident so as to seek a food and feed safety clearance from the South African government? South Africa's bias in favour of GMOs is well documented. Its biosafety laws pay lip service to the notion public biosafety concerns. It has long since been described by environmental and development lawyers as showing "a cynical disregard for contemporary international and national environmental principles, as well as for the development imperatives of South Africa". Monsanto's application also has implications for the integrity of the Biosafety Protocol. The First Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol will take place in Malaysia from 23rd to 27th February, a momentous event in global genetic engineering regulation since the Protocol entered into force only on 11th September 2003.

South Africa is a Party to the Biosafety Protocol but it has not yet revised its GMO Act, to give effect to the Biosafety Protocol. South Africa's Constitution does, however, make it clear that the Biosafety Protocol is binding on South Africa.

However, the safety approval sought by Monsanto is in respect of non-

existent GM wheat, whereas the Biosafety Protocol applies to real situations of cross border trade in genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and not to speculative trade in respect of non-existent GMOs. An early decision now in favour of the import of Monsanto's GM wheat relieves South Africa of the obligation later, to abide by the regulatory requirements of the Biosafety Protocol, including its critically important Precautionary Principle. Such a pre-emptive move by Monsanto is clearly calculated to undermine the spirit, intention, principles and objectives of the Biosafety Protocol.

Pre-emptive Bid For Control Over Lucrative African Wheat Market

Monsanto Corporation needs the lucrative African wheat market. Its loss widened to \$97 million in its fiscal first quarter in 2003, and this excludes its \$69 million goodwill write off related to its global wheat business. North Africa imports approximately 18 million tons of wheat per year, and Sub-Saharan Africa approximately 10 million tons. South Africa itself is a net wheat importer, having imported 1.2 million tons of wheat during 2003, owing to the worst crop in a decade. The provision of wheat as food aid is also an important factor for the push for the African wheat market. For instance, Ethiopia, the centre of diversity of wheat, imported 600,000 of wheat last year as food aid from the US and EU.

Safety clearance will greatly assist Monsanto to convince key African importers who have already voiced concern over GM wheat, to accept it as being safe. Consider for example the following statements:

"On January 5, Algeria, which imports large amounts of durum wheat from

the United States, announced that it would not import any genetically modified wheat. Egypt and Saudi Arabia are taking a similar tack with respect to wheat”

“If you have just one grain in a thousand which is genetically modified, the consumer is going to refuse it.”

Thus, it is evident from the above that the granting of the application sought by Monsanto will greatly assist it to capture the African wheat market. South Africa is hence, the entry point for the export of GE wheat into the rest of Africa that will be forced to succumb in a domino effect.

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Bottom Bananas: Noboa, Del Monte, Walmart, Tesco
Alistair Smith

Alistair Smith traces some of the current developments in the international banana industry and argues that Latin America's plantation workers and their trade unions are the first losers in an accelerating 'race to the bottom' now being led by the supermarkets.

Although the banana sector has had a higher level of trade union organisation than any other private industry in Latin America, unions and their members are under attack in every country, as both national and multinational banana companies seek to cut costs in the race to produce a 'cheap' banana. This is especially the case in Ecuador, where the country's biggest company continues to flout national and international law; and where even a progressive government has failed to

bring the Noboa Corporation to book over flagrant violations of basic union rights.

But two new factors are speeding up this 'race to the bottom', and even Ecuador's appalling wages and conditions may be undercut by others: one is the fast-growing buying power of the handful of supermarket buyers who sell a high proportion of all bananas to consumers; the other is that the world's most profitable banana market, the European Union, is set to undergo changes which are already leading to a restructuring of production.

Noboa: market leader in union-busting

Three years into a concerted organising campaign in the world's leading banana exporting country, Ecuadorian unions have come up against a man who is determined to quash all attempts by his workers' to organise for better conditions. As this article goes to press, Alvaro Noboa, owner of the giant Noboa Group, which includes Ecuador's biggest banana producing and exporting company, has sacked 333 workers from four plantations in Los Ríos province for having participated in a training workshop organised by the federation of small farmers, indigenous peoples and rural workers' unions, (FENACLE). Unlike their colleagues at Los Alamos in Guayas province, they had not even got as far as forming unions!

The struggle at Noboa's Los Alamos plantation makes grim reading. Since reaching the attention of the international media in May 2002 when several hundred paramilitaries hired by Noboa stormed the plantation in the middle of the night to break a ten-day old strike, the company has excelled

itself in its use of union-busting tactics. Not only have there been three successive waves of sackings of union leaders since the strike, but the company has met none of its promises to improve even some of the most basic provisions like toilets and lunches, and the company's legal representatives have consistently failed to turn up to meetings convened by the Labour Ministry. Following the presentation of a collective bargaining agreement by the three unions in June, 70 more union leaders were sacked. A hunger strike by workers outside the Labour Ministry offices in July did succeed in getting bigger severance packages than ever before, but it didn't get them their jobs back. To prevent any unfortunate recurrence of union organising in Los Alamos, Noboa increased the number of phantom subcontracting companies operating inside the plantation from three to 25! Conveniently, each one employs a few less than the 30 needed to register a new trade union in Ecuador.

Immunity from the law?

The government had even threatened to get the police to bring Noboa's lawyer to the negotiating table, but the company's immunity prevailed. Indeed, it is rumoured that the last Minister of Agriculture, who resigned in October just before a producers' strike, was pushed by Noboa. It is likely that the company was worried by threats of real sanctions by the government against exporters who failed to pay the legal minimum price fixed by government to growers. The new incumbent sells his bananas to Noboa, so may be less likely to give them trouble.

Although the government has committed itself – both to the ILO and the US government – to complete

criminal proceedings against those who attacked workers on their peaceful and legal strike in May 2002, there have been no convictions to date. Even a President who beat Alvaro Noboa to the job in last November's elections has proved unable to deal with the power of a man who told US Congressmen that "*I don't like unions; I will fight them!*." FENACLE is now pinning its hopes on the Bush administration deciding to withdraw Ecuador's trade preferences under the labour rights clause of the Andean Trade Preferences and Drug Eradication Act.

British supermarkets driving the 'race to the bottom'

Britain is one of the food retail markets most heavily dominated by big chains of supermarkets. Five bananas out of every six sold nationally are traded by one of a dozen retail companies. Tesco, the biggest and most international player, sells one in every four bananas in Britain, making an estimated £1 million pounds per week (over US\$1.5 million) from the sale of its single biggest contributor to annual profits.

In August 2002, the third biggest chain Asda, now owned by US giant WalMart, started a banana retail price war in a bid to get new customers through its doors. Consumer prices for loose bananas have since come down in all the big five chains by over 25%. Asda is exclusively supplied since just before the first price cut by Del Monte. This exclusive supply deal with Del Monte, renewed for a further 2 years in May 2003, was initially contracted at a 'ridiculously low price', according to industry sources; the new price is thought to be 10% lower. Del Monte now supplies Asda with bananas from the world's cheapest sources: over half

of them come from Cameroon, where wages, labour and environmental conditions are very poor, and prices are one third cheaper than Ecuador. Much of the rest come from Del Monte's new plantations in Northeast Brazil, where wages are also rock bottom.

Cut the double-speak on labour rights!

The price Tesco pay their suppliers has fallen by 30% since the beginning of 2002, to the point where only very cheap bananas from unsustainable sources can be supplied at a profit. Independent growers in countries like Costa Rica – Britain's leading source of bananas (23% of imports in 2002) – cannot now sell to Tesco or Asda unless they are prepared to make a loss or flout the legal minimum price! Imagine what this means for wages in the plantations. Or ask the workers in the Bribri plantation in Costa Rica who supply Tesco about the current attempts to quash trade union organisation there and get the leaders deported back across the border to Panama. The El Ceibo consortium which owns Bribri threatened in November to close the plantation if workers didn't give up their union membership.

The time has come for the supermarkets to acknowledge that they are taking the lion's share of the profits along the chain and driving a 'race to the bottom' which directly damages the hardest-working and worst-remunerated players in the chain... and which directly goes against the spirit and the letter of the commitments they have made – and the good public relations they seek - by being members of the Ethical Trading Initiative. No company can continue to pretend to be promoting ethical trade along its supply chains when it slashes supplier

prices to the point where growers who pay a living wage, treat their workforce with respect and make environmental improvements are cut out of the market. It is time these highly profitable retail giants incorporated the economic dimension into their much-vaunted ethical policymaking.

The European Union: doing the WTO's bidding

The other factor which is already having the effect of accelerating the 'race to the bottom' in the banana industry is the proposed elimination of the quota and licence system controlling banana imports to the EU. The Council of Ministers, as a result of the eight-year long dispute in the GATT/WTO agreed to change its banana import regime from January 2006 at the latest. The proposal to do away with quotas will inevitably mean a collapse in prices in the EU market, unless the tariff which replaces the quota and licence arrangements is quite high. This is however politically unlikely, given the pressure from the US and Ecuador to keep it as low as possible. Banana companies have therefore started preparing for this change by shifting their sourcing – and in some cases their own production – to countries with the lowest costs of production. By definition, this means production from countries where wages and benefits are lowest and where unions have not been able to organise. Del Monte has moved to Brazil, and others like Dole are rumoured to be following; all three big multinationals are shifting from the unionised Atlantic region of Guatemala to the low-wage, non-union Pacific coast. The future for Panama, Colombia and Costa Rica looks bleak as companies relocate to low-cost Ecuador. Dole, for example, appears to see Ecuador as a good long-term bet,

as it has invested heavily in a private port facility and 2000 hectares of land there.

All this flies in the face of the EU's commitments to sustainable development and support for international labour standards. Ideas for social clauses in trade agreements do not even get a look-in in this brave new world where everything has to be compatible with WTO rules. The Latin American trade unions, with an eye to the potentially disastrous effects of the end of quotas in 2006, are not however sitting on the sidelines. But they and their allies will have our work cut out if we are to convince the EU to implement a policy which does not further encourage the current unsustainable trends.

Unions feeling the cold wind of unfettered markets

Across Latin America, workers are feeling the effects of this race to the bottom. In Nicaragua, wages have fallen to the lowest anywhere in the banana world – at an incredible \$1.20 a day and unions have been driven out of the majority of plantations - in a country with a banana industry which once boasted 100% union membership. In Guatemala and Honduras, collective agreements with the multinational banana companies are under serious pressure as Dole, Chiquita and Del Monte try to negotiate away clauses which have been won over recent decades. In Colombia, home of the world's biggest banana trade union, workers are facing a tough negotiation next year now that a new law has been passed preventing any worker from earning double the minimum wage; banana workers are currently paid above that as a result of an industry-wide collective agreement.

Meanwhile, in Cameroon, where a trade union and collective bargaining agreement are in place in Del Monte plantations, even the above-average wages paid to workers amount to less than US\$2 a day. In future, it is only countries like Cameroon, Brazil – maybe even India, if it decides to start exporting - that will be able to *afford* to supply the world market... unless the trade unions and their allies can put a stop to this suicidal race started by the big banana companies, but now being driven by the WalMarts of this world.

**Alistair Smith is the International Co-ordinator of Banana Link*

Fighting corporate power in agriculture should be a priority

Rangarirai Machedmedze

“Only when the last tree has died and the last river been poisoned and the last fish been caught will we realise we cannot eat money,” famous comment of the Cree Chief Seattle.

The power of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) must never be underestimated. Corporate power has increased poverty and reduced many people to mere spectators in the development processes of their countries. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have been presented as the multilateral institutions designed to shape the financial and economic policies of the world “for a better life for everyone”. But they are the main architects of policies that have impoverished the third world.

Corporate power has long been a global phenomenon where there is no

global government accountable to the people of every country to oversee the globalisation process in a mode comparable to the national governments' guided nationalisation processes.

Indeed the IMF and the WB, through forcing recipient nations to adopt a wide range of neo-liberal policies including reduction of trade regulations, privatization, tariff reductions and export-led growth are promoting the exploitative nature of TNCs.

In the mid 1990s, trade and investment agreements like those of the WTO have been signed codifying new corporate rights. At the WTO, for example, trade agreements have been negotiated that enforces and raise commercial interests above governments' rights to set their own policies relating to trade, regulation, investment, purchasing and other areas, regardless of social or environmental considerations. For example, the WTO Agreement on Agriculture removes barriers to agricultural markets, generally favouring industrial countries rather than the developing world. Not surprisingly, huge, market-distorting agribusinesses themselves are not seen as barriers to free markets.

Globalization has been offered as the solution to poverty. However, its processes such as privatization of water, patenting of seeds and alienation of land, contradicts the above assertion.

On the other hand the United Nations, which many thought was a more democratic institution and sensitive to the needs of the people came up with its own strategy of poverty reduction. However, there are concerns about

MDGs being an effective poverty reduction strategy. MDGs rely heavily on neo-liberal policies of promoting foreign direct investments (FDIs). FDIs are corporate led investments where a few TNCs play the leading role. Whether they bring development is a contentious issue. It is known that they compromise the rights of workers, damage the environment and usurp the power of nation states.

TNCs are driving the economic agenda of multilateral institutions, hence the globalization process. For instance, industrial agriculture has become the dominant model for producing food. This has the danger of marginalising small family oriented agricultural production.

Economic concentration and biotechnology

A key aspect of the industrial food system is that it is an outgrowth of a long and on-going process of economic concentration that allows the agribusiness corporations to define and control the modern food system. Worldwide, the top ten seed firms now control 30% of the multi billion dollar seed market, with the top three being DuPont, Monsanto and Syngenta. The top ten agrochemical corporations control 84% of the \$30 billion agrochemical market with the top three being Syngenta, Monsanto and Bayer (Skip Spitzer).

Agribusiness corporations are now commercialising genetically engineered crops. Unlike conventionally bred plants, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) contain DNA in which bioengineers have inserted one or more genes selected from the pool of all known life.

Mariam Mayet in the second article of this Bulletin explains how Monsanto is seeking an approval of commercially producing genetically modified wheat in South Africa despite the fact that some experiments are still being carried out in the US and Canada to determine whether it should be produced on a commercial scale.

The advent of GMOs has tightened corporate control of food by increasing economic concentration and strengthening patent rights around seeds. The development and marketing of agricultural biotechnology prompted new rounds of mergers and acquisitions of seed, agrochemical and biotechnology companies. The latest being the move by Cargill to combine its fertilizer business with Lake Forest, Ill.-based IMC Global. The deal would bolster Cargill's ability to tap the capital markets significantly, and fund future growth.

The top seven agricultural biotechnology companies are now also the top agrochemical corporations and rank among the top ten seed corporations. Using new intellectual property rights, these companies are patenting "new forms of life" and licensing biotech seeds rather than selling them. Licensing agreements typically outlaw the farmers' use and breeding of second generation seeds and pose other requirements.

Concentration in the inputs sectors exposes farmers to artificially-high cost of seed, chemicals and other farming products, while concentration in commodity markets artificially lowers farm-gate prices, thereby squeezing farmer profits. As a result, small farms are disappearing. In the Third World, agribusiness development and the opening of markets to heavily subsidised, foreign

farm products is causing even more extensive displacement of small farmers.

Fighting the system

As the problems of industrial agriculture become clearer, farmers in many countries should build on the rich heritage of traditional and indigenous farming systems. For example, small farms, which generally exhibit many of the features of sustainable farming, are extremely productive when considering total food production, rather than how much of a single crop can be produced. During the land reform process in Zimbabwe, it was demonstrated that smaller farms can produce 200 to 1000% more in maize output than larger ones, per unit of capital input.

A transition to genuinely sustainable alternatives, however, must confront the problem of corporate power. The growth of the corporate sector and the accumulation of extraordinary amounts of private wealth have radically transformed the role of corporations. They have become more powerful than national governments and their influence transcends most sectors of the society.

This fight should not be left to farmers alone. Other stakeholders such as civil society and governments should join the fight against corporate power in agriculture and the food industry. TNCs should be held accountable of their actions and governments should put in place laws and policies that regulate their operations.

Alistair Smith in the third article of this Bulletin, traces some of the current developments in the international banana industry and argues that Latin America's plantation workers and their

trade unions are the first losers in an accelerating 'race to the bottom' now being led by the supermarkets. The companies are using their power at the top of global supply chains to put pressure on workers, particularly women who work longer hours in poor conditions.

The Agribusiness Accountability Initiative (AAI) that Peter refers to in the first article of this Bulletin should be a good starting point in fighting corporate power in the agriculture and food industry. From January 27 – 31 2004 a number of civil society representatives from across the world met in Brussels to find ways and means of fighting corporate power in the agriculture and food industries under the banner of AAI. AAI is reaching out to activists around the world to consolidate a **global research and action network**, capable of educating the public about the impact

of the agribusiness oligopoly, as well as launching global campaigns that seek to promote accountability in the companies themselves.

In order to have a more balanced, sustainable and democratically controlled food system, the promotion of mechanisms for effective regulation of food companies must be coordinated with efforts to scale up alternative, sustainable systems for the production, trade and distribution of food.

This is where corporate - led globalisation is failing to lift people out of poverty and support development. There should be a stop to corporate power.

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