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Pakistan

LPP organises 5000 strong anti-WTO rally

- News from around the world -

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Thousands of Labour Party Pakistan activists demonstrated today (Tuesday 6 December) in Lahore against the imperialist onslaught of privatization and the WTO.

The rally participated in by trade union activists and political workers, started from Shimla Hill and culminated at Lahore Station.

The charged participants were raising slogans against US imperialism, military dictatorship, privatization, brick kiln bosses and WTO.

In a statement on the occasion, the LPP chairperson Nisar Shah and general secretary Farooq Tariq said that the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations are dominated by rich countries and their corporate lobbying groups thus the process of negotiations is not producing any fruitful results for developing countries. The process is also un-democratic and non-transparent; all the key decisions are being taken in small group meetings influenced by rich countries like USA and European Union. Thus looking into the experience of ten years of WTO negotiations, we demand from developing countries and civil society to derail the sixth WTO ministerial conference in Hong Kong.

The rally was also addressed by Furrukh Sohail Goindi, information secretary PPP (SB), Mehmood Butt of Pakistan Bhatta Mazdoor Union, Azra Shad of Women Workers Helpline, Mian Qayyum of Labour Qoumi Movement, and a number of other trade union leaders.

The rally was supported by the National Trade Union Federation, Women Workers Helpline, Pakistan Bhatta Mazdoor Union and Progressive Youth Front.

Addressing the rally, LPP leaders said that LPP considers the WTO as an unbalanced agreement as it favours rich countries and trans-national corporations.

Earlier, a press statement, jointly issued by LPP executive committee, stated:

“This institution has been created to protect the expanded interests of global capitalism rather than poor people. In line with World Bank, IMF and Asian Development Bank, WTO is also a global institute of capitalism. The very fundamentals of capitalism are based on exploitation of labour and poor, so there is no chance that these institutions can be reformed in favour of poor. There is urgent need to seriously think for dismantling the institutions of global capitalism, among which WTO is one. “The Labour Party Pakistan leaders said that looking into the history of WTO negotiations, the Doha round provided an opportunity to change the rules of game, which seems so far, has been wasted. Rich countries promised practical measures to achieve a fairer distribution of benefits of the increasing global trade. Four years later, nothing substantial has been achieved. Trade barriers remained intact, agriculture subsidies have been increased and protected under several heads, and rich countries have progressively pursued rules on investment, services and intellectual property that threaten to reinforce global inequalities.

All the agreements which countries have to abide during the Uruguay round of negotiations were unbalanced and tilted toward rich countries. During the period of Uruguay round the developing countries either don't have much technical capacity or they were unaware from the tools of imperialism and they were forced to sign the WTO deal in 1994 as a single undertaking. Thus it is evident that all those were made by the rich countries to penetrate in the markets of development countries and exploit their resources.

“The current round offers nothing to poor countries and especially the poor segments of the society. The elite of the poor countries has been co-opted with the agents of the international capitalism and both are exploiting the poor for the benefit of few rich people. It will be waste of time to expect the good from these institutions, thus the social movements and people from all over the world have to forge an alliance against these institutions and put pressure on their government to protect the rights of poor.

“We appeal to all the civil society groups, political parties, parliament and developing countries to reject the ministerial declaration which has been produced and demand the demolition of the domes of capitalism. The LPP leaders said that the Sixth Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization marks the completion of a decade of the neo-liberal global trade regime. This meeting is being organized at Hong Kong, China, as it is a “safe haven” for imperialist capital so that the mobilization of any opposition as happened during the previous ministerial conferences can be effectively prevented.

According the WTO secretariat, the main items in the agenda of this meet are, “Agreements on modalities for trade in agriculture and industrial products and further market opening of trade in services,” It calls for setting a date in this meet for the elimination of export subsidies; trade distorting farm support and a package of ‘equivalent ambition’ for market access. Thus trying open markets in accordance with neo-liberal imperatives is the clear-cut agenda while the vast majority of WTO members, the undeveloped countries under neo-colonial plunder will be put under further pressure in this meet by US and EU measures, these imperialist powers who even now spend about 7 billion dollars on agricultural subsidies have unequivocally declared their unwillingness to reduce same before 2012.

They often resort to a number of tariff and non-tariff barriers against the products of poor countries such as the US; the entire trade in services is a monopoly of imperialist finance capital... The opening of trade in services in the undeveloped countries means bringing it under the hegemony of imperialist capital.

Thus the Hong Kong meet of WTO is going to be yet another onslaught on the people of undeveloped countries as well as the proletariat and the oppressed masses of imperialist countries. The US and EU measures have succeeded to break down any resistance, so far shown by the governments of most of the undeveloped countries through intrigues and manoeuvrings so that the WTO dictates sponsored in their interests can get approved this time.

In order to hoodwink the undeveloped countries, this time the WTO secretariat has proposed the formation of an ‘Aid-for-Trade’ initiative envisaging close co-ordination and synchronization of operations between WTO and the World Bank- IMF combine. Besides, unlike previous meets, rhetoric on “poverty-reduction through trade”, “level playing field for developing countries” etc. will also become propaganda themes this time. Thus the Hong Kong meet is going to be an occasion for an all out offensive by imperialist powers for further advancing of the imperialist globalization agenda of neo-colonisation. The balance sheet of three decades of imperialist globalization reveals that consequences of this onslaught through the IMF-WB-WTO trio along with the multi-national companies shall be frightening for the world proletariat and oppressed people around the world. It shall further intensify their unemployment, pauperization, devastation and thereby their alienation.

Labour Party Pakistan call for uncompromising struggle against the globalization, liberalization, and privatization agenda ruthlessly pursued by the imperialist powers, especially by US imperialism and other imperialist measures through IMF-WB-WTO and MNCs, other imperialist agencies and lackeys by putting forward the revolutionary goal of democratic socialism as the only alternative before mankind.

“With this world view, we are in hands in hands with all those who are struggling to build and international movement against WTO. We are not in favour of a reformed WTO. The only solution is the derailment of the whole WTO process. We hope that the anti globalization movement at the time of the ministerial meeting would be able to halt the meeting. We show our solidarity with all those who would be in Hong Kong or outside Hong Kong to oppose

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the WTO unjust agreement. Let us unite to launch a mighty international movement opposing the Hong Kong ministerial conference of the WTO with the orientation of throwing WTO, like other imperialist agencies and institutions along with the imperialist system itself, to the dust-bin of history'.