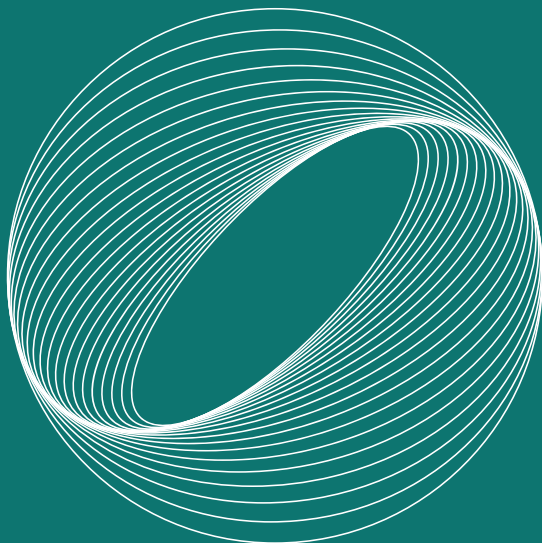




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LOWER-MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES' LIMITATION IN COMBATING THE RISING PREVALENCE OF DIABETES

Diabetes has been a prevalent health issue in Lower Middle Income Countries (LMICs). It has come to the point where out of the 463 million adults worldwide with diabetes, 80% of the adults can be found living in Low to Middle-Income Countries, and this is expected to continue rising in the future (Flood et al., 2021). The increase in diabetes prevalence posed a severe economic threat, especially for LMICs; according to the International Diabetes Forum (IDF), global diabetes-related expenditures reached USD 996 Billion in 2021. This is a worrying situation knowing that most of the people that have diabetes live in LMICs, the IDF provides multiple fact sheets regarding diabetes in numerous regions, and every fact sheet shows that the countries with the highest prevalence of diabetes in their respective region are Lower Middle Income Countries. This is a significant problem since the growing prevalence of diabetes and its consequences threaten to undo emerging countries' economic gains because of their limited infrastructure in dealing with Diabetes (Hu, 2011). The socioeconomic situation in LMICs plays a significant role in why diabetes prevalence is high and is one of the reasons why LMICs are having a hard time combating it. This can be seen from Ong et al. (2023) research, where the majority of LMICs have limited spending on dealing with diabetes itself and insufficient coverage for pharmaceutical therapy. The former is vital because it also means actions that try to prevent diabetes itself are not getting sufficient funding, which leads to the latter, where the government fails to cover pharmaceutical therapy for people who have diabetes. A study case could be drawn from the Country of Sri Lanka where they are experiencing a national medical crisis, especially when it comes to diabetes. The diabetes situation in Sri Lanka has reached its boiling point, government hospitals are running out of medicines thus forcing patient to buy from private sector that set a high cost/head (Rasalingam, 2022). (Paramasatya Rakha Abiyoga, HI UGM 2022).

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THE WTO MC13 AND PUBLIC STOCKHOLDING ISSUE: THE CONTINUED STAGNATION OF MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATION ON AGRICULTURE

The WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (WTO MC13) ended on March 2, 2024, leaving the negotiation table with unresolved agricultural issues and a protracted stagnation in the multilateral trading regime. While WTO members have committed to ensuring food supply and security, one of the most pressing issues is Public Stockholding (PSH), which has lacked clarity for nearly a decade. PSH refers to the policy enabling government to procure, store, and release food stocks through public agencies. However, it remains unclear how they will meet this objective.

The G-33, a coalition of developing nations, was fervently promoting the necessity of government intervention for underprivileged populations via PSH. This means that without limitations or any lawsuits brought before a dispute settlement body, the government should be able to implement government-administered pricing to support stockpiles (WTO, n.d.).

Yet, several developed and developing exporting countries are still at a crossroads. Due to PSH's tendency to distort prices, this policy may hurt producers, jeopardising other countries' food security. Furthermore, concern remains over whether large developing countries may violate this agreement by giving excessive support and exporting subsidised food (Suneja, 2023).

Fundamental reforms to WTO agricultural regulations are required to resolve the long-lasting stalemate. Sinha and Glauber (2021) noted that reforming the Aggregate Measure of Support (AMS) is essential to measuring market distortion accurately. It is also important to provide flexibility to LDCs and small economies and to thoroughly analyse the permitted quantity for PSH policy (Sinha & Glauber, 2021). In conclusion, it demonstrates that government support through PSH is essential, especially amidst the growing impacts of climate crises and geopolitical tensions, which likely impede the development goals of impacted communities. (Ari Camila Puspa Devi, HI UGM 2019).

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THE DIVIDED GLOBAL SOUTH

Verily, the resemblance in perspective does not necessarily imply a unified action. Though many amongst them waged war against colonial dominion, convened within the G-77, and joined hands in the Non-Aligned Movement, the lands of the Global South find themselves fractured now more than ever. The genesis of the Global South movement was primarily aimed at dismantling the dominance of European and American spheres in knowledge production and the global order's structuring (Hakim et al., 2021). However, one must ponder upon the cohesion of these burgeoning states of the Global South, for it would be a grievous error to disregard the palpable divergence in their respective interests.

The dynamics unfold thus: within the UN, a faction within the G-77 marshaled by Cuba and Pakistan advocates for assertive reforms in the international financial structure, castigating the US and EU for unfulfilled aid promises, but murmurs of concern echo privately among other G-77 constituents, as they fear such a stance may undercut negotiations for debt relief with the US and EU; Brazil and India vigorously pursue permanent seats on the Security Council, yet they encounter staunch opposition from regional adversaries such as Argentina and Pakistan; China has solidified its bonds with Russia, while India deepens its relationship with the West (Ero, 2024). While larger powers share similar perspectives, they often prioritize their own national interests over collective solidarity when required. In contrast, poorer impoverished countries fear being marginalized to the position of the "south of the Global South." The schism within the Global South, stoked by egotistical national agendas, shall erode the unity of the movement, prompting inquiries as to whether the Global South possesses the requisite cohesion to present an alternative course. (Alwan Basil Ramadhan, HI UGM 2021).

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