NEW GLOBAL GOVERNANCE FOR
AGRICULTURE, CLIMATE CHANGE,
sUSTAINABILITY, AND FOOD SECURITY*

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Key Words
World Agriculture Organization (WAO), global public goods, climate change, sustainable agriculture, food security, WTO, agricultural trade

Abstract
This article questions whether the WTO regime is the most appropriate institution for governing the global agriculture and trade in the wake of the problems that our world faces today. Specifically, climate change, potentially unsustainable agricultural practices, food insecurity in less developed countries (LDC), and expected imbalance in the global food demand and supply by 2050 are emerging as major challenges to humanity and the WTO while it is still struggling to resolve issues (related to agricultural protectionism that arises from the special facets of agriculture) of the 20th century while completely lacking the capacity to tackle such new global issues of the 21st century. Given this outmoded institution, the primary objective of this article is to propose that a new structure of governance is needed so as to exclusively and effectively deal with problems arising from the interactions of the problems related to climate change, agricultural sustainability, food security, and trade. Four broad rationales are offered in this article that support the creation of a new system of governance for the global agriculture: (i) inability of the WTO in resolving

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agricultural protectionism of the 20th century; (ii) potential adverse effects of liberalized agricultural trade on the environment (climate change and sustainability of food production) and hunger/poverty in LDCs; (iii) global public good properties associated with the problems of climate change, sustainability, and food security and consequent need for collective action (transnational cooperation) at the global level, and (iv) the need to address the interactions among climate change, sustainability, and food security holistically in a concerted manner. We suggest the World Agriculture Organization (WAO) as a possible form of global institution that will play a central role in the new system of governance for the global agriculture.

I. Introduction

It is increasingly questionable whether the WTO regime is the most appropriate institution for addressing global problems associated with agricultural trade, the environment, and food insecurity in least developed countries (Gonzalez, 2002; Clapp, 2006; Rao, 2009). In particular, climate change, deteriorating land/water resources which may cause unsustainable agricultural production, hunger/poverty in LDCs, and expected imbalance in food demand-supply by 2050 pose grave challenges to humanity (Godfray et al, 2010; Foresight, 2011). Yet, the WTO is still struggling to resolve issues (related to the multifunctional roles of agriculture and agricultural protectionism) of the 20th century while grossly lacking the capacity to tackle global issues of the 21st century.

In consideration of the apparently ineffective institution, this article pursues two objectives: (i) propose that a new system of governance is needed so as to exclusively and effectively deal with agricultural issues of importance at the global scale, and (ii) propose the creation of the World Agriculture Organization (WAO) as a global institution playing a central role for the new system of governance. Four broad rationales will be presented in this article in support of the need for a new governance of the global agriculture including (i) inability of the WTO in resolving agricultural protectionism of the 20th century (ii) potential adverse effects of liberalized agricultural trade on the environment (climate change and sustainability of food production) and hunger/poverty in LDCs; (iii) global public good properties associated with the problems of cli-