

## The battle of **Bali**

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lack of trust has also been fed by developments in the international governance system, with the role of the WTO seen as having sidelined Rio. Trade liberalisation and corporate led globalisation are seen to be increasingly sidelining the role of UN agencies in global governance.

Failure to reach agreement on all issues in Bali means there are crucial areas outstanding for the Johannesburg Summit. In addition the United States' shift to a unilateralist agenda risks derailing the Summit unless text dealing with unilateral coercive measures is agreed on.

Partnerships between the private sector and governments to implement agreements are also an area of contention. While the United States sees them as a major outcome of the Summit, developing countries in the G-77/China bloc are wary that developed countries may use them to impose conditionalities on developing countries and to avoid government commitments.

Key to meeting the developing countries' demands will be the transformation of the Monterrey Consensus into an action agenda, and the delivery of political commitments set out in the Doha Declaration.

### Conclusion

While the WSSD will be the biggest international event ever staged in Southern Africa, it is only one in a complex and highly political set of international interactions and is unlikely to deliver definitive answers to many of the fundamental issues that remain unresolved. As far as the trade and finance issues go, the WTO takes precedence over all other international agreements. The way different stakeholders engage with the issues will influence poverty eradication. For those who live with poverty it will not be soon enough. LB

## Is there a power struggle going on between **NGOs and labour?**

*Tensions within the SA civil society grouping was evident in the build up to the summit.*

*The **Labour Bulletin** attempts to explore the origins of this tension.*

The management or rather mismanagement that has bedeviled the South African Civil Society Secretariat has been relatively well documented. What were the reasons for these problems? Is it simply a case of control over a process where there was little leadership to start off with? Was it really about Cosatu attempting to take over political leadership and lead civil society as argued by the Rural Development Services Network (RDSN) and the Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBS), think-tank associated with the German Green party? Is it simply about a fundamental clash of political cultures between traditional type NGOs and mass based movements? Or is it about a grouping to the left of Cosatu attempting to find space in the political terrain in order to ensure relevance?

A political observer says the summit process has exposed far more clearly than ever before the dilemmas over how civil society is constituted, who is civil society and what its role is in relation to a 'progressive state'. It also raises the question around the role of political organisations such as the ANC.

The summit process brought to the fore the differing cultures between the international NGO community and the SA union tradition of tripartism. Labour is a dominant force in civil society. At

the same time, however, organised labour is possibly not used to operating in a mind frame where NGOs felt they should be treated equally.

Whilst Cosatu might have been sceptical about some of the NGOs involved. Many traditional NGOs do not trust the state or big organisations in civil society such as Cosatu. They claim organisations such as Cosatu are part of the problem. Cosatu has argued however, that some of the tension was sparked by 'scepticism over control'. On the one hand, there was a perception that NGOs felt threatened by mass-based movements while labour was concerned about claims that NGOs speak on behalf of 'the people'. This raised issues around representivity and the mandate of NGOs.

The RDSN believes the alliance attempted to intervene in the summit process to reclaim political ground within civil society. This approach takes the view that the ANC and Cosatu wanted to control civil society to ensure issues such as Nepad would not be discussed.

Within Cosatu there is concern that elements within the NGO community might wish to cause chaos during the upcoming summit - but whom do they account for and who are they answerable to. LB