

GLOBAL

P O S I T I O N S[®]

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GBD, FAQ & YOU

A Portrait in Responses of The Global Business Dialogue

Introduction

From time to time it is good to check in, good to let people know who you are and what you're up to. This revival issue of *Global Positions* is our way of doing that. The format is twenty-three questions with relatively short answers and a few pictures. The purpose is to give everyone—GBD's members, the people who have helped this organization evolve and grow, and those who may be thinking about becoming members—a sense of who we are, what we do, what we are trying to accomplish.

Unquestionably and unabashedly, this issue has more to do with "about" than "thank you." It would be a cold and sterile exercise, though, if it did not acknowledge the debt GBD owes to the hundreds of people who have helped to turn the Global Business Dialogue from a concept into a reality. GBD Patrons and Sponsors are certainly in that category. So too are each of the interns and volunteers who have worked here, everyone who has spoken at or attended a GBD event, and everyone who has received a GBD visitor or read a GBD report. We thank them all. Now to the business at hand ...

1. What Is The Global Business Dialogue?

That is a large, philosophical question with lots of practical answers. We will deal with the philosophical part

here and answer the practical details in response to other questions.

GBD was conceived as a business organization for the 21st Century and launched in the spring of 2000. It is a membership organization that exists to serve the global business community.

At the heart of that community are the men and women around the world who produce the goods and services the world needs to thrive and grow. For GBD, however, the global business community also includes those officials, law firms, scholars, and citizens who are involved with the global economy, the companies that make it up, and the policies, laws, and regulations that frame and guide it.

2. Is There A GBD Focus? Yes.

All of the work of the Global Business Dialogue relates to global trade and investment, and almost all of it relates to the constantly evolving policies of governments that affect these economic activities. During the past five years, most of GBD's activities have dealt with: a) negotiations in the World Trade Organization; b) bilateral and regional trade agreements; or with c) other topics, from U.S. visa policy, to tsunami relief, to the evolution of China's legal system.

3. Who Belongs To GBD? Who Are Its Members?

Today, there about 85 members of the Global Business Dialogue. They include major business organizations from Canada, India, Japan, and the United States, global companies, embassies, law firms and others. They are listed on page 3.

4. What is the GBD Mission?

Specifically, GBD's mission is to bring to the public discussion of trade and investment the perspectives of GBD members and others who are involved in and affected by these processes. More broadly, GBD's mission is to serve the global business community and to help its members identify and respond to issues of concern to companies, governments and communities.

5. Does GBD Take Positions? No.

Neither the staff nor any member of the Global Business Dialogue is empowered to speak for the collective membership of the Global Business Dialogue. Rather GBD activities are founded on the belief that a rich public dialogue on economic issues is central to the development of policies that enhance business opportunities and improve the quality of life throughout the global economy.

6. Can The Staff Express Opinions? Yes.

The staff of the Global Business Dialogue is free to participate in the general public discussion of trade policy and the global economy. They do so primarily through letters and editorials in GBD publications and occasionally in speeches. Any opinion expressed in a GBD publication or by a member of the GBD staff is that of the author or others as attributed. *GBD is an organization in which both the members and the staff speak for themselves.* It has no collective views.

7. What Role Do GBD Events Play?

Public meetings—GBD Colloquiums—have been central to the GBD work program for the last five years and are likely to remain so. Most are 90-120 minute programs focusing on particular aspects of trade and investment, though occasionally GBD organizes much larger events. Recent programs have dealt with the tariff and services negotiations in the Doha Development Agenda; India and the WTO; and China's imports.

Former EU Trade Commissioner **Pascal Lamy**, India's Commerce Secretary **S.N. Menon**, and U.S. **Senators Charles Grassley** and **Max Baucus** have all been speakers at GBD events; so too have **Ambassador Peter Allgeier** and many of his colleagues from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Commerce Department and other agencies of the U.S. Government.

Not all GBD events are in Washington, and not all are public. GBD organized sessions for the global business community at the WTO Ministerials in Doha and in Cancún in 2001 and 2003 respectively. GBD hopes and expects to continue that tradition at the WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong in December 2005. In addition, GBD regularly organizes non-public discussions with key officials. These can take the form of meetings here in Washington or missions to other cities, such as our annual trip to Geneva.



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the GBD Board of Advisers.*

The Global Business



Above: India's Commerce Secretary S. N. Menon speaks on India and the WTO, April, 2005.
Below: Selina Jackson of UPS makes an introduction, March 2003.



Above: A discussion of NGO's and the WTO with Bernard Kuiten, WTO; Jeremy Hobbs, Oxfam International; Greg Rushford, The Center for International Environmental Policy; and Christopher P. O'Neill, Center for International Environmental Policy.



Dialogue in Pictures



Edward Kuiten of the WTO, Christopher Padilla, USTR; the Rushford Report, Alan Oxley, ITS Global; and Marcos Mental Law. Below: A GBD audience takes note.



Above: Merck's Tony Imler addresses the Global Business Dialogue. Below: Congressman William Jefferson of Louisiana talks trade policy, March 2003.



8. Is There a Web Site? Publications? Yes.

Today, GBD has one web site, www.gbdinc.org, and two publications. The publications are *The Global Positions Notebook* and *Global Positions*. Each has its own purpose and format, and all three are evolving.

9. What's On the Web Site (www.gbdinc.org)?

The first page of the GBD web site, the navigation page, is in the form of a compass with eight major navigation points. The **About** page, due north, gives essential contact information for GBD, and from the **Join** page, due south, visitors can become members of the Global Business Dialogue or renew their memberships. The **Events** page gives details of upcoming GBD events, including registration and payment options, and the **Trade Topics** page contains papers generated by GBD and others on various trade and investment issues.

The GBD web site, like GBD itself, is a work in progress. Within the next few months, members and others will find more interactive features, and easier access to key background information.

10. What is *The Global Positions Notebook*?

The Global Positions Notebook is in effect the diary of the Global Business Dialogue, with reports on GBD activities, opinion pieces, announcements and other housekeeping items. The frequency target, not yet achieved, is an almost-weekly forty issues a year. *The Notebook* is primarily an on-line publication, distributed by email and posted to the GBD website.

11. And *Global Positions*, What Is That?

Global Positions, a Policy Journal for Business and Governments, was the original newsletter of the Global Business Dialogue. It was first published in 2000 as a monthly, then discontinued. With this issue, it is being revived as a quarterly companion to *The Notebook*.

Though posted to the GBD web site, *Global Positions* is, primarily, a hard copy publication.

12. Is GBD a Non-Governmental Organization? Yes.

Though some GBD members are embassies or other government entities, GBD itself is not an arm of any government but a wholly independent organization.

13. Is GBD a Non-Profit for Tax Purposes? No.

Certainly GBD is a non-profit entity in the literal meaning of the term. Each GBD member pays a membership fee and receives in return the benefits of membership. Some also help with sponsorships for individual GBD programs. As with other associations, the members support the organization; they do not receive any direct financial benefits from it, nor are they responsible for any of the business relationships behind those benefits. They just pay dues. However, the entity to which those dues are paid is a for-profit company incorporated in the District of Columbia in the United States.

14. Who Manages GBD's Business Relationships?

Salaries, rent, telephone bills, printers, catering and much, much more—all of those relationships are managed by the Global Business Dialogue, Incorporated. GBD, Inc. is a for-profit company, the purpose of which is to provide the secretariat for the Global Business Dialogue. GBD Inc. has a small Board of Directors, concerned with the health of the corporation as such.

15. Does The Global Business Dialogue Have A Board? Yes.

GBD has a Board of Advisers, not a board of directors. Its members, chosen by the chairman of the board, provide advice on the full range of GBD activities and policies and on the business and political environments that GBD seeks to illuminate. The GBD Advisers are listed on page 7.

16. What Is The Governance Link Between GBD And GBD Inc.?

The chairman of the GBD Board of Advisers is the also the president of the Global Business Dialogue, Inc., and the chief executive officer for both entities.

17. What About Membership, Can Anyone Join? Yes.

Membership in the Global Business Dialogue is open to almost any organization in the world—any business, business association, embassy, government department, law firm, consulting firm, or NGO. The only restriction is that the entity must be one with which the Global Business Dialogue, Inc. can legally do business.

18. Are There Different Levels of Membership? Yes.

The five major levels of GBD membership are:

- i. Basic Member,**
- ii. Premium Member,**
- iii. Sponsoring Association,** a category reserved for major business organizations,
- iv. Sponsoring Member,** and
- v. Patron.**

19. What Does A Basic Member Get?

Companies, embassies or others who become Basic Members of the Global Business Dialogue get:

- **Free admission** to all GBD public programs—usually about 20 a year—for any employee of the

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member organization. (For some programs, GBD reserves the right to limit the number of participants to one or two per membership, but this restriction is rarely if ever imposed.)

- **Invitations** to Some Members-Only, non-public events. These tend to be fairly small affairs and not all members can be invited to all of them, but all are invited to some.
- **Notebook.** A subscription to *The Global Positions Notebook*, written for members and delivered by email.
- **Issues.** Participation in the development of GBD programs and publications, including helping in the selection of issues to highlight; and
- **Help** with questions of trade and investment policy where GBD staff can, as a practical matter, provide it.

20. What Do Members at the Higher Levels Get?

The benefits increase as one moves up the membership ladder. A full price list, complete with a discussion of benefits at each level, is available upon request. In a nutshell, there are some special benefits for GBD Patrons and Sponsors. However, because GBD is in the business of fostering the public discussion of trade and investment policies, there is relatively little of GBD's work that is not accessible in some fashion to all members.

21. What Does Membership Cost?

The price for one year's basic membership is \$700. After that, there are sponsorship opportunities for those who want them, but there are no added charges (see above). It's the best bargain in trade policy.

22. What Does GBD Look Like?

That's a hard one, but for a start please see "GBD In Pictures" on pages 4 and 5. Then put yourself in the picture.



ing them, inviting you, week after week and month after month, to share your views with us. Thanks for reading this. We look forward to hearing from you, and we look forward to seeing you at a GBD event soon.

—R K. Morris

Left: GBD's president waves from Doha, Qatar, November 2001. (Photo: Sam Gilston)

23. How can I join?

Lots of ways. You can:

- **Fill out and return the enclosed enrollment form;**
- Sign up on the web at www.gbdinc.org under Join GBD; or
- Call the Global Business Dialogue at (202) 463-5074 and let us take your order over the phone.

Letter & Coda

Even the shortest most parochial histories are filled with once obvious inevitabilities later shown to be fallacies. You cannot kill predictions, though, because we all live and work for the future, and that effort demands some concept of what the future will be or can be. For our part, we are confident (foolish) enough to predict three things.

The first is that the process of globalization—the knitting together of global communities that arise out of different geographies but are neither defined nor limited by geography—that that process will continue. The second is that the global business community—traders and investors especially—will continue to be globalization's dynamo. And the third prediction is that the process will be anything but smooth.

That's where GBD comes in. From Geneva to Dalian, from Washington to Hong Kong, we are going to follow that process. More than that, we are going to help the members of the global business community shape it. We will do that through the simple expedient of invit-