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# Developing Countries Propose WTO Study

By SAM CAGE, Associated Press Writer

GENEVA — A group of developing countries Friday proposed that the World Trade Organization study the global impact of phasing out a textiles and clothing quota system, saying many countries are losing out because of this trade liberalization.

"Some studies have suggested that the elimination of quotas and the further liberalization of the sector may be beneficial to developing countries as a whole," said Servan Singh, the Mauritius ambassador to the WTO, who is co-sponsoring the proposal at a meeting of the WTO's goods council in Geneva. "But they also clearly indicate that there will be more losers, along with the winners in the process."

The quota system that has governed international trade in textiles since the 1960s is being phased out next year under the Uruguay Round treaty on trade liberalization. Producers will be able to export as much as they can sell -- and they believe that is a lot more than they are selling now.

The United States and other industrial countries will have to remove their limits on imports of textiles and clothing, after which China and India are expected to dominate world trade, according to a WTO report published in August.

The most likely exporters to lose market share are those located further away from North America and Western Europe and which currently have either quota or tariff-free access to U.S. and EU markets, such as sub-Saharan African countries, the WTO report said. Local producers in the United States and EU will also lose out as they face long term structural decline.

Mauritius is sponsoring the proposal, along with Bangladesh; Dominican Republic; Fiji; Madagascar; Sri Lanka; and Uganda. There was no indication of whether the WTO will adopt it and commission a study.

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But richer countries say that developing countries are failing to open up their domestic textiles markets, and are not removing their quotas fast enough.

"We believe that the degree of market access provided by exporting countries in this sector has not matched their commitments," said William Tagliani, a U.S. trade official.

Tagliani added that the United States has abided by all of its commitments.

China's ambassador Sun Zhenyu said developing countries have been unable to enjoy their competitive advantage in textiles trade "because of over 40 years of discrimination and distortion."

Zhenyu also called on the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to step up their efforts to help developing countries to adjust to trade liberalization.

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