

# Health, Development & Human Rights

---

## Background on Global Institutions

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the readings:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

### Readings

- Bretton Woods Project, "Introduction to the Structure and Operations of the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund".
- World Trade Organization, "Understanding the WTO".
- Sara Anderson and John Cavanagh, "World Trade Organization".
- William Easterly, "Foreign Aid for Scoundrels".
- Global Exchange, "Top Ten Reasons to Oppose the World Trade Organization".
- World Trade Organization, "Top 10 Reasons to Oppose the World Trade Organization? Criticism, Yes . . . Misinformation, No!"

### Questions

1. The reading focuses on the Bretton Woods Institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). What are these organizations? What do they do?
2. Taking each organization's claims at face value (so without cynicism), why do they do what they do?
3. Several of these readings are critical of these organizations. What is thought to be wrong with them? Do you think these are valid concerns, or can the World Bank, IMF, and WTO address them?