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**DEVELOPMENT AID AND THE HYPOCRISY OF THE WTO FREE TRADE  
AGREEMENTS**

**Annamaria La Chimia  
School of Law, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK**

This paper discusses the importance and relevance of development aid within the context of international economic law. In particular it focuses on the case of tied aid - aid granted on condition that goods and services for the aid financed projects are purchased from the donor country - to highlight the contradictions inherent within the international trade system. While the principle of free trade and market liberalisation are at the core of the WTO trade agreements, these agreements do not apply in an aid context because of a series of specific exceptions and endnotes that effectively deny the potential benefits of free trade and market liberalisation in the development aid sector. In other words exactly where the best allocation of resources is most important. The paper concludes by explaining how this state of affairs allows donors to maintain 'their grip' on recipient countries and argues that tying aid offers an(other) example of the power imbalances within the WTO legal framework.