



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

**Open letter by global civil society in solidarity with India and South Africa  
opposing the Investment Facilitation Agreement in WTO**

More than 30 civil society organisations from across Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Pacific, the United States and Europe have sent an open letter to the Chair of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference (MC13) in Abu Dhabi to reject the Investment Facilitation Agreement being promoted by some countries and efforts to portray it as a vehicle for development. The letter was coordinated by the Our World is Not for Sale Network and has been circulated to all WTO Members.

The signatories stand their in solidarity with South Africa and India who have opposed the adoption of the agreement at the MC13, and reiterated that position yesterday.

Sylvester Bagooro, on behalf of the Africa Trade Network, challenged attempts to portray this agreement as pro-development. “There are no genuine development provisions in the Agreement. In fact, it is the reverse of special and differential treatment. Rich countries already comply with most or all of the rules, so they don’t have to do anything to implement it. The burden of extensive implementation and notification requirements will fall on developing country governments.”

“This agreement is also a charter for foreign investors”, according to Ranja Sengupta of TWN India. “It provides rights for foreign investors, including to influence government’s decisions on new laws, but it imposes no new obligations on investors to behave responsibly. Nor is there any obligation on foreign states to ensure their investors comply with local or home country laws”.

Sofia Scasserra, from the Transnational Institute also highlights the risks that the agreement potentially covers all forms of investment at every stage of the investment process, and provides rights to corporations that do not exist in some International Investment Agreements (IIAs). These rules can be imported into investment agreements that then become enforceable through investor-state dispute settlement.

Civil society calls upon the Director General to respect the positions taken by India and South Africa and abandon attempts to push this agreement through during the Ministerial.

Sylvester Bagooro [sbagooro@twnafrica.org](mailto:sbagooro@twnafrica.org)

Ranja Sengupta [ranja.sengupta2@gmail.com](mailto:ranja.sengupta2@gmail.com)

Sofia Scasserra [sofia.scasserra@gmail.com](mailto:sofia.scasserra@gmail.com)