

PRESS RELEASE

AFRICAN AND INDIAN CIVIL SOCIETY REMINDS AFRICAN AND INDIAN LEADERS OF THE ISSUES AT STAKE AND THE NEED FOR A CREDIBLE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME AT THE FORTHCOMING TENTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (MC10) OF THE WTO

In a joint statement released and endorsed by nearly 200 organisations across Africa and India on the occasion of the Third India-Africa Forum Summit taking place in New Delhi this week, African and Indian civil society reminds their governments of the key issues at stake at the forthcoming WTO Ministerial which will take place in Nairobi in December. They call upon their leaders to ensure *“a balanced and development friendly outcome at the Ministerial. The “success” of the Ministerial will only be a success if it delivers on key development objectives of the South that includes the interests of the people in Africa and India and benefits all people in the developing world. If it can't, it is of no interest to us”*.

Justus Lavi Mwololo, from Kenya Small Scale Farmers Forum (KESSFF), said *“it is time the WTO delivers on its promises to developing and least developed countries. African leaders must ensure that the Nairobi Ministerial does not conclude without having met this objective. In particular it must take into account the interests of the poor, the small producer and marginalized groups”*.

The letter reminds the leaders that *“even the WTO's **Doha Development Round**, launched in 2001 and mandated to address core development issues faced by the South, continues to see stiff opposition by the developed countries to any concessions for developing countries and to removal of barriers, which could actually enable them to provide better economic and social opportunities to their people.”*

Dr. Yash Tandon, Chairman of Southern and Eastern African Trade, Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI), Uganda, Zimbabwe and Kenya, said *“there is real fear that the developed countries will try to end the Doha Round in Nairobi without a credible development outcome and launch a new round that casts aside developing country concerns. This must not be allowed to happen”*.

African and Indian civil society expresses deep disappointment with the way things have been moving at the WTO and key developing country concerns remain unaddressed and development policy remains blocked. *“One of the main objectives of the WTO was to create more opportunities for the developing world, and even more so for least developed countries (LDCs), so they could advance their development progress. However, after twenty years of the WTO, we do not see any materialisation of those promises from global trade rules. In spite of some strengthening of developing country voices, the developed countries and the transnational corporations within them have grown more powerful, strident and aggressive”*.

Biraj Patnaik, from the Right to Food Campaign, India said *“agriculture across developing countries including in Africa and India face a stiff challenge in the current negotiations from the USA and the EU who refuse to grant a permanent solution to the food security proposal and a development-oriented outcome in agriculture, including on cotton subsidies and market access”*.

Supporting the statement made by the Kenyan Foreign Minister, Hon'ble Ms Amina Mohamed on July 1 that the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations cannot be concluded without "credible" developmental outcomes, the letter points out that the *“current WTO situation presents grave contradictions. Instead of creating spaces to foster growth and development, we*

see more and more aggressive demands are made of developing countries to prize open their economies on very unfair terms, which would threaten livelihoods, food security, locally beneficial industrialization and beneficiation (local value addition)”.

Dr. Biswajit Dhar, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi said that *“India and the African countries must coordinate and support each other to ensure that all developmental issues including concerns of the LDCs and the Cotton 4 (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali) are adequately addressed in Nairobi.”*

The letter is signed by 119 organisations and individuals in India and 71 organisations from across Africa. The letter makes some key recommendations;

- *“Ensure a strong development outcome at the Nairobi MC10 of WTO with significant gains for developing and least developed countries. The “success” of the Ministerial should not be valued in terms of reaching the low hanging fruits, which favours developed countries but one that actually equips developing countries to address key economic, social and environmental needs”;*
- *“The Doha Development Round should not be concluded in Nairobi or later without a meaningful development package and no other round should be launched without addressing the core development issues that the DDR was mandated to address...”;*
- *Specific deliverables of a development package should include but not be limited to; a permanent solution on the food security proposal ..; discussions on domestic subsidies including on cotton subsidies by the advanced countries like the USA and the EU; an agreement on export competition, special and differential treatment (S&DT) for developing countries in all aspects of agricultural and NAMA negotiations including on tariff cuts and safeguard mechanisms; ‘Biodiversity Amendment’ to the TRIPS Agreement to prevent ‘biopiracy’, and a strong LDC package. On the other hand, further advances in and weakening of the flexibilities of the TRIPS Agreement, the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and further talks on plurilaterals and mega regional FTAs should be blocked; and,*
- *“Conduct the negotiations in a transparent, inclusive and fair manner that truly reflects the multilateral nature of the WTO...”.*

Civil society in Africa and India pointed out that *“India and Africa have played a key role in WTO negotiations, most often supporting strong developing country positions. They have a crucial role to play in this Ministerial”.* But their leaders must ensure *“their people have access to diversified opportunities for livelihoods, jobs and incomes, healthy food to eat and the ability to produce it locally, have access to adequate services, such as drinking water, health and sanitation, natural resources, and live in a safe and sustainable environment. No trade rules should come in the way of attaining these objectives. The WTO in particular must be allowed only to forward and not to hinder these objectives”.*

For More Information Please Contact:

Prof. Biswajit Dhar, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India bisjit@gmail.com, Mob: +91-9811197839

Biraj Patnaik, Right to Food Campaign, biraj.patnai@gmail.com, Mob: +91-9868828474

Dr. Yash Tandon, Chairman, SEATINI, Tandonmail@yahoo.com,

Justus Lavi Mwololo, Kenya Small Scale Farmers Forum (KESSFF), kkessff@yahoo.com, Mob: +254-711-754515

Coordination: Ranja Sengupta, Third World Network, India, ranja.sengupta1@gmail.com; Mob: +91-9811368168 and Stefano Prato, Managing Director, Society for International Development (SID), Nairobi, Kenya, stefanop@sidint.org ; Mob: +254 (706) 665314 or +39 (348) 8347899 (roaming number).