

India: Defending the Poor and Hungry is Non-Negotiable!

Tuesday 3 December 2013, by [Movements \(India\)](#) (Date first published: 2 December 2013).

On the occasion of the Ninth Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Bali, Indonesia, several farmers' organisations, trade unions, mass organisations and peoples' campaigns resolved to support the Indian Government's position to not trade away national food security.

The group welcomes the decision of the Indian Cabinet on 28th November to reject any peace clause that does not guarantee a permanent solution. The peace clause has been widely opposed by the Chairs of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce and Agriculture, several political parties including the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Left parties, and mass organisations.

However, the group cautioned the Indian negotiating team headed by Commerce Minister Mr. Anand Sharma, not to bow to any pressure to weaken India's position on defending and upholding national food security as a sovereign right. The group declared that the safeguarding and promotion of the country's food security, rural employment and livelihoods are non-negotiable, and that food security cannot be ensured without supporting agricultural production by small and marginal farmers

The group reminds the WTO members that no country needs to be on the defensive about protecting the right to food and fighting hunger in their countries. And that aggressively upholding the rights of its citizens is not tantamount to collapsing the ministerial talks. On the contrary, such pressure tactics must be exposed as a conspiracy to keep people hungry and poor.

It was decided that the group would closely monitor the negotiations during the ministerial meeting to ensure that the interests of the poor and hungry are not compromised in any way.

2 December 2013

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