

WTO Conference, Nairobi: Civil Society Slams Exclusionary Process at the MC10

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Today, a group of civil society working together through the global Our World Is Not for Sale (OWINFS) network, present in Nairobi for the 10th Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO), protested the non-transparent and exclusive nature of the negotiations. A small group of five countries, known as the G5, is meeting behind closed doors to draft the text. The protestors pointed out that at the first WTO Ministerial on the continent of Africa, no African countries are present at these secret negotiations. Also no Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are present in the talks. Civil society pointed out the outrageousness of rich countries pushing to abandon the so-called “Development Round” while excluding LDCs and Africans from the discussions. Protestors stood at the entrance of the Kenya International Conference Center (KICC) holding signs and chanting “Where is Africa in G5?”, “Where are LDCs in G5?”, “Reject G5 Texts!”, “Reject backroom deals!”, and “No Take it or Leave it Text!”

“The negotiations have now been restricted to the G5 – US, EU, Brazil, India, China – leaving out the rest of the 162 members, killing a process of inclusiveness and transparency. It’s a slap in the face to Africa and the LDCs when the ministerial is taking place in Africa. We are now calling for rejection of the G5 text since it will most probably be an imposed take-it-or-leave-it text,” said Prerna Bomzan, Advocacy Co-ordinator of LDC Watch. LDC Watch is a civil society platform of civil society organisations based in the 48 UN-defined least developed countries (LDCs).

Over 80 civil society experts – trade unionists, farmers, development advocates, and consumer activists – from at least 25 countries have traveled to Nairobi for the 10th Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Working through the global Our World Is Not for Sale (OWINFS) network and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Civil society delegates will be participating in OWINFS/ITUC activities from: Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, France, Canada, Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, the UK, and the U.S.

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* OWINFS is a global network of NGOs and social movements working for a sustainable, socially just, and democratic multilateral trading system. www.ourworldisnotforsale.org.