



Media release

27 February 2024

## **What adopting the JSI SDR is and is not, and what civil society says needs to happen next**

The WTO Secretariat and sponsors of the Reference Paper on Services Domestic Regulation will attempt to spin on the announcement that India and South Africa have withdrawn their objections to its adoption through schedules to the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) as an outcome of this MC13.

This is not an outcome of the ministerial. This issue was addressed in Geneva. It is still being addressed in the correct forum mandated to address this issue, the Working Party on Domestic Regulation.

There are several legal and procedural issues that remain outstanding and still need to be addressed, including how to ensure that procedural rules that relate to amending schedules of commitments do not get abused to circumvent the rules of amendment under the Marrakesh Agreement.

Civil Society call on the Members, as the next step, to discuss long-standing concerns with this reference paper in that proper forum.

In addition, we call on them to ensure that schedules of commitments are not abused in order to undermine the rules of the Marrakesh Agreement. This should be done, in part, through a review of the procedures for amending schedules set out in the relevant WTO documents. Under the rules for amending schedules, any Member has the right to request a review of the operation of these procedures.

We also stress that the potential adoption of the SDR is totally different from the adoption of the Investment Facilitation Agreement (IF). That has no mandate in the WTO, and is required explicitly to be adopted by a consensus of the members in plenary.

The illegality of the IF remains an absolutely critical issue at this ministerial and we are deeply concerned that this outcome on the SDR will be spun as somehow opening the door to its adoption.

Our World Is Not for Sale

contact: Deborah James (*email address redacted in this online version*) facilitator

More information on Services DR is available <https://ourworldisnotforsale.net/services>

A directory of civil society experts present in Abu Dhabi for the WTO's MC13 is *available, but redacted in this online version*.

OWINFS is a network of organizations and social movements worldwide fighting the current model of corporate globalization embodied in the global trading system of the WTO.

[www.ourworldisnotforsale.net](http://www.ourworldisnotforsale.net) #