

This is a joint statement to clarify the position stated by some of the farmer organisations in the consultation with the DIPP secretary on the 13th of Friday 2012.

- Several of the groups that were represented in yesterday's discussions are actually OPPOSED to FDI in Retail and this is not just a matter of safeguards for farmers. To name a few, they include: OFAI, Navdanya, Jagriti Agro Tech, ASHA (Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture),
- While it is unclear whether the PTI story emerged from any press release put out by DIPP/Ministry of Commerce or from the wire service network itself, it is apparent that the views and stand of these organisations has been misrepresented.
- The fact that we hold a particular view, which is contrary to what the said news articles are implying, is apparent from the fact-based rational arguments put forward by several groups through position papers, media articles and media bytes in the past one month and more.
- It was clearly presented to the DIPP secretary that the Indian agricultural sector has been in deep crisis since the liberalisation and the industrialisation of the agricultural sector began in the 1990s. Since 1997, 250000 farmers have committed suicide and the advent of FDI in retail would only propagate industrialisation of agriculture resulting in a worsening of this crisis.
- It was also mentioned that the monopolistic buying powers of the large retailers would further weaken the marginal farmers position thereby resulting in a lower share of the value to them, dictating of the production techniques and output by the larger retailers and destruction of bio-diversity in Indian agriculture.
- This in addition to points relating to loss of employment, increased risk exposure to the farmers, increase in risk of purchase price manipulation, and total lack of level playing field for the farming sector were brought out during the discussions.
- Three papers to this end were submitted by the OFAI, ASHA and Navdanya to the officials of DIPP. All of these papers actually rejected the idea of FDI in retail and the same was discussed in the meeting as well. (Copies of some of the papers attached for the press)
- The PTI news story now appearing in several media channels is misleading and representing our views in a wrong fashion. Hence, we demand a rejoinder to be put out by PTI and published by those media houses which have put out the PTI story.
- We also would like to inform DIPP, if the faulty representation emerged from there, that such strategies from the Ministry to make FDI in Retail more acceptable, will not work because the reality is that this policy is unacceptable to many organisations, affiliations, political parties and intellectuals in India, based on sound reasoning. The Ministry and therefore, the Government of India has to acknowledge this expressly and drop the proposals fully.

The undersigned farmer organisations who work food sovereignty rejected the need for FDI in retail and strongly opposed the premise that FDI in retail would benefit the farmers.

Navdanya, Network of 5,00,000 Farmers

OFAI

Jagriti Agro Tech