

World backs India against 'bully' US Petition Asks 'Pharmacy Of Developing World' To Hold Its Ground On Patent Law

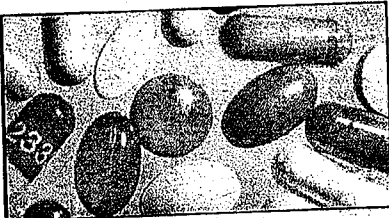
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Aprehensive of the US exerting pressure on India to dilute the public health safeguards in its patent laws, organizations from across the world have signed a global petition supporting India's patent law and urged India to stand strong in the face of "US bullying".

Along with over 77,000 individuals and 10 organizations working on public health issues in India, the signatories of the petition initiated by the non-profit Oxfam India include 11 organizations from Thailand, where there is strong civil society mobilization on public health issues, two from Malaysia and several coalitions from South Asia and the Asia Pacific. Yet another petition initiated by the non-profit Avaz,

was targeted specifically at the Obama visit stating that his India tour could spell life or death for millions of poor people in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This petition has gathered over 870,000 signatures from across the world both from developing and developed countries.

The Avaz petition urged people to move fast to ensure the poor could still get the medicines they needed. "India produces cheap HIV, malaria and cancer drugs, but American drug companies want to stop this, to sell their products at higher prices. Their fierce lobby has got the US to push their line hard, even threatening trade sanctions if India doesn't change patent laws which put people before profits. Now pressure is rising, with talks set to begin on an investment treaty," warned the



GENERIC SUPPORT

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It said, "President Obama boldly faced down critics to expand healthcare for the poor in the US. Let's call on him to do the same for global medicine and open up the trade talks, consider our people's trade plan and put the poorest patients' lives before Big Pharma's profits." The Oxfam petition sig-

natories also included some US-based organisations, mostly coalitions or networks of community-based movements, consumer groups, researchers and activists in the field of HIV treatment which work in various developing countries in Africa, South Asia and the Asia Pacific. Other signa-

ries included Consumer Association the Quality of Life (EKPIZO), Greece, Health Innovation in Practice (HIP), Switzerland and Medecins du Monde (Doctors of the World), France.

The petition stated: "India is the pharmacy of the developing world. It is a critical global supplier of low priced medicines to treat diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, cancer and diabetes, which are among the biggest causes of death and suffering." According to the petition, there were signs that the US pressure was working. It urged people to "stand strong with the Indian government and reject US pressure to change India's IP system and protect access to life-saving medicines."

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