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## **Human rights must be central component of multilateral investment rules**

There is a worrying absence of any meaningful discussion on human rights safeguards at the World Trade Organization's negotiations in Seattle, Amnesty International said today.

"No agreement on further investment liberalisation -- such as the Multilateral Agreement on Investment or its successors -- should be formalised until a comprehensive analysis of its impact on human rights protection has been carried out," the human rights organization said. "In the absence of such analysis, any negotiations are premature"

"Multinational investors -- wherever they choose to operate -- have a responsibility to protect human rights," the organization added. "This includes protecting the human rights of their own employees and the rights of the members of the communities where they have economic interests."

The human rights organization takes no position on further trade liberalisation or the creation of an international framework and set of regulations to govern foreign investments. However, it does believe that any such negotiations should include a central component concerned with the worldwide protection of human rights.

### **Background**

Amnesty International is concerned that the ongoing global negotiations aimed at liberalizing trade and investment rules -- including the now discontinued draft Multilateral Agreement on Investment -- may conflict with the obligations of states to enforce crucial provisions of international treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Conventions of the International Labour Organization.

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