

Comrades, join the fight for more affordable medicines!!

On 17th October, join the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), Doctors Without Borders (MSF) and SECTION 27 to tell the Department for Trade and Industry to once and for all, **Fix our Patent Laws!!**

When: Thursday 17th October, 10h30 – 13h00

Where: Meet at Burger Park, Pretoria at 10h30
(Some transport will be arranged by the TAC - please contact your local branch organiser)

What: March to the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) to support them in their efforts to improve access to medicines in South Africa through amending the Patents Act, and other legislation concerning intellectual property.

Why are we marching?

Patents are rewards given to companies for inventing new drugs. South Africa has signed an international agreement that commits us to having certain patent laws in the country. This is called the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

One of the requirements of TRIPS is to provide 20 years of patent protection. During this period no-one else can make or sell that drug. This means pharmaceutical companies can charge whatever price they like for them – and that's usually a lot.

However, the TRIPS agreement also contains flexibilities that we can use to make sure people get the medicines they need. The problem is that these life-saving flexibilities haven't been implemented in South Africa yet.

We are campaigning because South Africa's current patent laws put the rights of the patent-holder before the rights of patients. Our law includes all the worst parts from the TRIPS agreement, but does not include the parts that we can use to make medicines more affordable. Because of this many medicines are not available to the majority of the population because of their high costs, while the company that has received a patent is able to make massive profits from charging such high prices.

Right now, the DTI is looking to change these laws to protect the rights of people to access medicines. They have held a consultation since September 4th, 2013, asking organisations, experts, and members of the public to submit their comments on a policy aimed at improving this situation. We are marching to the DTI to deliver our recommendations for how the laws can be changed and show that there is widespread support across South Africa to do just that.

These reforms have the potential to increase access to many important medicines, saving the lives of millions of people across South Africa. Fix the Patent Laws NOW!

@FixPatentLaw
www.fixthepatentlaws.org