[Name of MP]

Houses of Commons

House of Parliament Westminster

[DATE]

Dear [name],

As your constituent, I am writing to you to share my concerns about the disproportionate investor protections included in international trading and investment agreements. These Agreements have been shown to have had a “regulatory chill” on policy changes to protect human rights and to address commitments made under the Paris Agreement.

International investor protections, like the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism, place enforceable obligations on states and are used by multinational corporations to sue democratically elected governments. Particularly concerning is the fact that investors can win cases even if they have violated domestic law or other international norms. The awards are disproportionate, amounting to millions of dollars, all carried out in secret tribunals.

Recent years have seen states take a decisive shift away from ISDS. The Governments of Australia and New Zealand have pledged not to include ISDS in their future trade agreements, and in April 2024, the USA indicated that it is actively reviewing options to remove ISDS from its existing trade deals, after already committing to exclude it from future agreements. Many European governments pulled out of the Energy Charter on the basis that remaining a member could penalise them in their efforts to deliver net zero.

One of these investment agreements is the Colombia-UK Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), which contains the ISDS mechanism. From 10 October 2024, the provisions of this BIT can be changed or the Treaty itself can be terminated. Colombia has been particularly impacted by ISDS, having 23 claims in International Tribunal – many of which have been raised by mining companies in direct response to measures taken by the Colombian Government to protect the natural environment and the rights of Indigenous peoples.

I am therefore asking that the UK government obtains agreement of the Colombian Government and bilaterally terminates this BIT. The Treaty’s 'sunset clause' means that the provisions of the Agreement persist for a further fifteen years, unless a mutual termination of that clause is agreed.

I am also asking that you to write to the Minister of State for Trade Policy of the United Kingdom, Douglas Alexander, asking that he talks to his Colombian counterpart and ends the Colombia-UK BIT.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name, Address and postcode]