

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
ITUC OnLine

TPP Trade Talks Must Stop

Brussels, 11 November 2014 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has called on governments to stop negotiations on the “Trans-Pacific Partnership” agreement, criticising the secrecy and corporate bias in the current negotiations.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said “This secretive trade deal is good for some multinational corporations, but deeply damaging to ordinary people and the very role of governments. Corporate interests are at the negotiating table, but national parliaments and other democratic actors are being kept in the dark. What we do know, much of it through leaks, is that this proposed deal is not about ensuring better livelihoods for people, but about giving multinational companies a big boost to profits. Governments should shut down the negotiations, and not re-open them unless they get genuine and transparent public mandates at home that put people’s interest in the centre.”

The current TPP proposals include provisions which would:

- Make governments submit to so-called investor to state dispute settlement (ISDS) procedures whereby investors can sue governments on a wide range of policies, including environmental and social policies ;
- Introduce patent protections that would boost pharmaceutical companies’ profits, but put vital medicines out of reach for millions of poorer people;
- Severely restrict governments’ ability to make national laws for public health, safety and general welfare with a ‘regulatory coherence’ chapter;
- Stop governments from giving priority to public policy aims when making decisions about public procurement;
- Impose a series of restrictions on governments’ abilities to regulate the financial sector, thus holding back efforts to reform damaging financial speculation and impeding governments from taking measures to maintain their balance of payment.

Proposals for protection of workers’ rights have met with heavy resistance from some countries, and appear to not cover all ILO Conventions that establish Fundamental Rights at Work or subnational (state and province) labour legislation. The proposals also contain no enforcement for environmental provisions, and fail to address the need for action to mitigate climate change.

“A fair and open global trading system is essential to prosperity, but this proposed TPP is nothing of the sort. Global and regional trade needs to create jobs and prosperity for the many, not just provide welfare for corporations and transfer more power from the parliaments to the boardroom,” said Burrow.

National trade union centers in the countries negotiating the TPP are today formally calling on their governments to stop the negotiations, and to seek a proper negotiation mandate if they are to engage in the negotiations again.

The national trade union centers that support this call are: Australia, ACTU; Canada, CSN y CSD; Japan, JTUC-RENGO; Mexico, UNT; New Zealand, NZCTU; Peru, CUT y CATP; United States, AFL-CIO. Some of these trade unions, as well as the unions of Chile (CUT-Chile) and Malaysia (MTUC) had asked for the negotiations to stop at an earlier stage.

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 161 countries and territories and has 324 national affiliates.

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For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on +32 2 224 02 04 or +32 476 621 018

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