

Race to sign TPPA highlights growing public anger:

Time to mobilise public opinion against the deal!

Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) advocates are racing to have the deal signed in New Zealand on February 4th, before growing public opposition makes the agreement a political liability.

After seven years of secret negotiations and corporate lobbying, governments are racing to sign the deal less than three months after making public the 5,000 page text – making full public debate impossible before signing. The deal is an undemocratic corporate wish-list designed to shift power to large corporations and remove the ability of governments and parliaments to regulate corporate interests.

The TPPA undermines democracy. The so-called right to regulate is seriously curtailed, requiring democratically-elected sovereign governments to only regulate according to markets disciplines, in ways that do not upset investors' expectations of profit and in ways that do not discriminate against large foreign firms entering the country.

The TPPA gives corporations the right to sue governments for democratic actions taken in the public interest through its Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) clause, if governments act or legislate in a way which could impede profits. This undermines democracy and state sovereignty and will actively discourage governments from pursuing legitimate public policy and regulatory objectives. UN Special Expert, Alfred de Zayas, has described how ISDS is “devastating for developing countries” and has called for its outright abolishment. Under similar trade and investment treaties, ISDS has been successfully used by corporations to contest the power of governments to ban or restrict the production, transport and waste management of toxic chemicals, license the management of land and water resources, promote alternative energy, set rates for water and electricity services, restructure sovereign debt, eliminate toxic pesticides, maintain food safety standards and require companies to properly label the products they market.

The TPPA will limit access to affordable medicines. *Médecins Sans Frontières* has described the deal as “the most harmful trade pact ever for access to medicines in developing countries”. The patent clause, extensively lobbied for by US pharmaceutical corporations, means that drugs will only be accessible at a vast cost to taxpayers or individuals for years after they are first released. Even New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key, a strong promoter of the deal, has admitted that the TPPA will see a rise in the costs of medicine for the general public. Access to affordable medicines and the ability for governments to decide which medicines they subsidise are important components of universal healthcare. The TPP threatens healthcare as a human right by putting profits before people.

Rising medicine costs will place pressure on public finances and raise debt, which the private sector will use as justification for further privatization and austerity.

The TPPA will undermine public health legislation. The deal requires governments to create a formal mechanism to give the tobacco industry input whenever legislation is revised or changed. This stands in contrast to the WHO tobacco treaty, which urges governments to protect their legislation from corporate influence. This agreement clearly prioritizes trade over health and will make the role of governments in legislating on health in the public interest more difficult.

The TPPA will effect municipal and subnational governments. Unless specifically exempted the services and investment chapters are strictly binding on these levels of government and will prohibit

the reversal of privatisations and make illegal the placement of restrictions on the numbers of services in the jurisdiction, such as wanting to limit the number of gambling and alcohol shops. Other chapters will have indirect effects such as the 20 year extension above the WTO provisions on copyright, for some countries, that will increase the price of books and force up costs in municipal libraries.

Public procurement is under threat. The agreement contains provisions obliging signatories to begin negotiations on expanded coverage within three years. Such provisions in other agreements enable corporations to make profits from public services provided in the public interest, by prohibiting the use of public procurement to achieve social and economic goals such as local job creation and encouraging local and regional economic growth.

The TPPA is bad for developing countries. The openly-stated objective of the proponents is to create new standards in these agreements that can then be forced onto other smaller and developing countries without negotiation, when they are forced to join in order to gain market access. The effects of these agreements when forced on developing countries is particularly severe as it undermines the ability to protect emerging industries from large foreign firms in order to create jobs and growth.

The deal is bad for jobs and workers. Contrary to the claims of the proponents, a recent independent study published by Tufts University (USA) showed that the agreement would cause employment losses in all TPP countries totalling over 771,000 lost jobs. The study showed that the TPPA would increase inequality and create pressure to drive down wages. Astonishingly, it would actually create GDP losses for countries such as Japan and the USA.

Even business interests oppose the deal. Former Blackberry Chief, Jim Balsillie, said “10 years from now, we'll call that signature the worst thing in policy that Canada's ever done.... It's a treaty that structures everything forever – and we can't get out of it”. A coalition of over 250 small and medium size technical companies recently came out against the deal because of the excessive power it gives to corporations.

But the fight is not over. The signing will start a process where each country must ratify the agreement at national level, in many cases via a vote of parliament. The agreement does not bind a country unless that country ratifies it and there are many agreements that have been signed but never ratified.

Now is the time to work with our allies to raise awareness and pressure parliaments and governments NOT to ratify.

The agreement will come into force for ratified countries when at least six signatories representing 85% of the combined GDP of the original signatories have ratified it. This means ratification by the USA is very important and it has been the topic of debate in the USA primaries, with many candidates currently speaking against the deal, including Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump. PSI affiliates in the USA are fighting to ensure that a Congress vote later this year does not ratify the deal but they need your support now.

Actions and protests in the coming weeks will send a clear signal to government leaders that ratifying this deal is bad for democracy, bad for public services, bad for workers and will be a bad political move for them.

PSI's Steering Committee passed a resolution in November urging affiliates to work with other groups and mobilize in order to prevent the deal from being endorsed at national level.

I urge you to join the world-wide protests against the signing and let politicians know that they do not want to have a hand in ratifying this dirty deal.

Protests, actions and movements worldwide

Please contact us with information on non-listed events and protests (leo.hyde@world-psi.org)

Online

Auto Letter-Form to Trade Ministers: <https://donsignthetpp.net/>

Stop TPP Petition: <http://www.stop-tpp.org/en/>

Argentina

Buenos Aires: <http://www.participacion.org/node/162>

Canada

Vancouver: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/vancouver-bc-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Chile

Santiago: <http://www.participacion.org/node/23>

New Zealand

Auckland: <https://www.facebook.com/events/772157016222072/> (Feb 4th It's Our Future, Peaceful)

Auckland: <https://www.facebook.com/events/164280047278090/> (Feb 4th, Real Choice, Blockade)

Auckland: <https://www.facebook.com/events/523348644519442/> (Jan 30th, Protestival)

Christchurch: <https://www.facebook.com/events/874337319352722/> (Jan 30th)

HakaFlashMobs - <https://www.facebook.com/events/448482608676696/permalink/448919808632976/>

Peru

Lima: <http://www.participacion.org/node/160>

Trujillo: <http://www.participacion.org/node/163>

Cusco: <http://www.participacion.org/node/164>

USA

AFL-CIO campaign

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/trade-deals-must-work-for-working-people>

Arizona:

Phoenix: <https://www.facebook.com/events/901569946617780/>

Arkansas Hot Springs: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1667698606827981/>

California:

Los Angeles: <https://www.facebook.com/events/962072853875329/>

Sacramento: <https://www.facebook.com/events/426867517502976/>

San Francisco: <https://www.facebook.com/events/461850570682429/>

Santa Rosa: <https://www.facebook.com/events/138815999829481/>

Colorado:

Denver: <https://www.facebook.com/events/218799335121782/>

Connecticut

Hartford: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/hartford-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Florida

Delray Beach: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/delray-beach-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Tampa <https://www.facebook.com/events/1649766831957066/>

Illinois

Chicago: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/chicago-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1653765451552642/>

Iowa

Iowa City: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/iowa-city-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1531203330541591/>

Maryland

Baltimore: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/baltimore-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/755474161224961/>

Massachusetts

Boston: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/boston-tpp-is-betrayal-rally/>

Northampton: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/northampton-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1544950212483044/>

Michigan

Detroit: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/detroit-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/641940655948117/>

Mississippi

Oxford (Ole Miss): <http://www.flushthetpp.org/oxford-ms-say-no-to-tpp-rally/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/557861141035626/>

Missouri

St Louis: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/998326790205575/>

New York

Albany: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/albany-protest-the-tpp/>

New York City: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/new-york-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Plattsburgh: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/plattsburgh-town-hall-meeting-on-tpp/>

Poughkeepsie: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/poughkeepsie-flush-the-tpp-rally/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1730894283813520/>

Pennsylvania

Harrisburg: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/harrisburg-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Texas

Dallas: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/dallas-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Utah

Salt Lake City: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/salt-lake-city-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

White House: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/washington-dc-tpp-is-betrayal-rally/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/102599070123349/>

Washington DC - NOTE THAT THIS IS ON FEB. 3rd

White House: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/washington-dc-tpp-is-betrayal-rally/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/102599070123349/>

Washington State

Bellingham: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/bellingham-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>

Seattle: <http://www.flushthetpp.org/seattle-tpp-is-betrayal-rally/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1687203501565118/>
Spokane: <http://www.flushtetpp.org/spokane-tpp-is-betrayal-action/>