



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Release

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Ahead of Chile Meeting, 200+ Civil Society Groups Tell Their Trade Ministers: Do Not Resuscitate the TPP

As trade ministers from across the Pacific rim prepare to discuss the future of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in Chile next week, more than 200 organizations representing citizens across the Pacific Rim urged their governments to accept that the TPP model has failed and to engage in a more open and democratic process to develop genuine alternatives that confront the economic, social and environmental challenges of the 21st century.

When Donald Trump gave official notice of the U.S. withdrawal from the TPP process, he acknowledged the obvious: that the deal died under the weight of its own terms and could not achieve sufficient support in the U.S. Congress to be ratified. Civil society organizations united across the TPP countries had campaigned for years against the deal – delaying its conclusion past its 2012 deadline and ultimately leading to its demise.

Now that the TPP is dead, the 200 organizations – including international organizations such as the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and Friends of the Earth International, as well scores of national organizations from Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, South Korea, United States, and Vietnam – believe that citizens are better off without the TPP. The groups urged their trade ministers to resist any attempt to revive the TPP itself or insert its rules into future trade negotiations, whether bilateral, regional or multilateral.

“As we have stated previously, the TPP violated fundamental rights in a variety of ways, including intellectual property rights, the right to health, the environment, and the rights of indigenous peoples, among others. It also granted rights to investors that impaired states' ability to guarantee the public interest and effectively enforce these rights,” said **José Aylwin, a lawyer and director of the Citizens' Observatory in Chile**. “We therefore reject any attempt to recreate similar initiatives after the TPP's demise in the wake of the Trump administration's withdrawal, which would have similarly adverse consequences for human rights. We regret that the government of Chile has taken the initiative to convene a Pacific trade ministers' meeting with such an objective.”

“The TPP was in any case a lop-sided agreement that did not favour Malaysia, so there would not be any net loss to Malaysia by not joining the TPP,” said **S.M. Mohamed Idris, President of the Consumers' Association of Penang**. “The withdrawal of the US from the TPP is a good opportunity for Malaysia to rethink its approach to trade and investment agreements. While trade is an important part of the Malaysian economy, free trade agreements are not automatically good for the country and we need to take part only in agreements that are in the interests of the public”.

“Dead or not, we will keep watching TPP and any economic partnership agreements (EPAs) based on TPP, and will fight against any expansion of corporate globalization,” said **Yasuo Kondo from the People’s Action Against TPP in Japan**.

“These ministers are in a state of denial. Instead of plotting to resuscitate their failed model in new forms, they should be engaging with their people to develop real alternatives that can meet their nations’ needs and claim some genuine legitimacy,” said **Professor Jane Kelsey from the University of Auckland in New Zealand**.

“The TPP failed because it put corporate rights ahead of people’s rights and generated so much opposition that the Australian Parliament has not endorsed it,” said **Dr Patricia Ranald, Convener of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network**. “Unfortunately some governments – including Australia – are trying to revive it. We urge trade ministers not to repeat the TPP’s failed agenda in future trade agreements.”

“Broad public opposition across borders defeated the TPP corporate power grab. Any similar trade proposals designed to benefit corporate elites at the expense of majorities will meet the same fate,” said **Arthur Stamoulis, executive director of the U.S.-based Citizens Trade Campaign**. “It’s time for trade agreements to actually support good-paying jobs, access to medicine, a healthy environment and human rights around the globe. A vital first step is bringing trade policymaking into the light of day and involving the public in a transparent process from start to finish.”

“The TPP constituted a threat to the human rights for the people living in the negotiating countries and also for the rest of the world, as it was designed as an exemplary model for the global growth, when in fact it contained very dangerous provisions in areas such as health, education, access to knowledge and the environment, among others,” said **Andrea Carolina Reyes Rojas of Misión Salud from Colombia**. “We welcome the fall of this toxic model and urge the countries of the Pacific region to ensure that any proposed trade negotiations prioritize the protection of human rights over the profit of private actors.”

S. M. Mohamed Idris
President
Consumers Association of Penang

Note to the Editor

The full letter and list of organizational signatories can be viewed at:
<http://www.citizen.org/documents/Chile-Ministerial-Letter.pdf>