

MEDIA RELEASE
For Immediate Release

June 19, 2012

Canada's entry to Trans-Pacific Partnership trade talks a "coup" for Big Business, not Harper: Council of Canadians

Ottawa – The Council of Canadians, Canada's largest grassroots social justice organization, is fundamentally opposed to Canada's participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) talks. According to media reports, an official announcement confirming Canada's inclusion in the TPP will take place today during the G20 summit in Los Cabos, Mexico.

The organization views the TPP and other "next generation" free trade deals such as the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) as part of a faulty global trade and investment regime that does not create jobs but does put truly sustainable development and important public policies at risk for short-term profits by a small corporate elite.

"Once again the Harper government is forcing Canada into a major trade negotiation that will only benefit the 1 per cent. Like the Canada-EU deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership could force Canada to change its drug policies, its copyright policies, its environmental and public health rules – all without going through the normal parliamentary process," says Maude Barlow, national chairperson with the Council of Canadians.

"This is public policy via trade deal. It's completely undemocratic; it will only benefit big business, and Canada will have less say than Brunei in what the final deal looks like. We commit to fighting this deal and Harper's other economic pacts that have nothing to do with jobs or trade and everything to do with limiting what we can do as a society to live sustainably and equitably."

In February, the Council of Canadians submitted a report to the Government of Canada on its potential entry into TPP talks, which include the United States, Australia, Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam, and now Canada and Mexico. The report emphasized that the organization is not opposed to trade or efforts to expand it through balanced trade agreements.

"We do however join the many international voices calling for transparency in the TPP negotiations, and the creation of a new international trade and investment framework that treats quality of life, the creation of good jobs, poverty eradication and ecological sustainability as first principles – not potential barriers to trade as they are considered under the current regime," it said.

The Council noted in its report to the Government of Canada that entry into TPP negotiations could mean up-front concessions in a number of areas, including intellectual property rights, where the U.S. is making considerable demands on TPP member countries that will undermine access to essential medicines so that its multinational drug firms can increase profits. The Harper government would also have to pass new copyright legislation that goes further than Bill C-11 in protecting the profits of Hollywood and other big U.S. entertainment firms to the detriment of consumers.

Canada may also be required over the course of the negotiations to lower protections for non-exporting agricultural producers such as dairy, egg and poultry farmers. This is in a context of heightened attacks in the media on Canada's respected and non-trade distorting supply management systems for farmers in these sectors.

"Supply management, which guarantees fair wages and stable prices for farmers in non-exporting sectors, is too valuable to Canada to sacrifice on a negotiating table with little to offer on the other side," said the Council of Canadians in its February report, which explains "the value of the TPP to all participating countries is meagre, amounting to an average one-shot boost to national GDPs of about one per cent."

The organization insists the TPP is by and large a NAFTA renegotiation but on U.S. President Obama's terms. It urges the federal government to stop negotiating the same faulty trade and investment deals over and over again until it has done a comprehensive assessment of the impact of existing deals like NAFTA on jobs, public services, environmental and social policy.

Read the Council of Canadians' TPP report [here](http://canadians.org/trade/documents/Submission-TPP-consultation-0212.pdf)
<<http://canadians.org/trade/documents/Submission-TPP-consultation-0212.pdf>> .

For more information on the Council of Canadians' campaign against the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement: www.canadians.org/CETA
<<http://www.canadians.org/CETA>> .

– 30 –

For more information, please contact:

Dylan Penner, Media Officer, Council of Canadians, dpenner@canadians.org, 613-795-8685
Twitter: [@CouncilOfCDNs](https://twitter.com/CouncilOfCDNs) <<http://www.twitter.com/CouncilOfCDNs>>