



Public Services International
Inter-American Regional Conference

22 April 2015

TRADE STATEMENT

Alarmed by the proliferation of a new wave of trade agreements such as the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), Trade In Services Agreement (TISA) and the Canada Europe Trade Agreement (CETA) that enshrine rights for multinational corporations;

Concerned by the increasing attempts to negotiate trade deals between the European Union and Latin American countries that destroy jobs, increase privatization of public services and undermine the policy space required for genuine economic development;

Noting that these agreements include a wide range of content only incidentally related to trade;

Concerned by the ability of these agreements to bind sovereign governments and circumvent national and local legal institutions;

And dismayed at the unequal access to the negotiations by co-ordinated corporate interests, made worse by the unnecessary secrecy of the negotiations,

Trade union leaders representing workers in public services across the Americas have met to discuss the growing threats.

Having discussed the effects of trade agreements across the globe and having been informed of the available content of these agreements, the meeting determined that the new wave of agreements:

- Create an aggressive web of interlocking trade deals that fundamentally shift power to corporations and away from democratic institutions.
- Pose a serious threat to public services, workers' rights and democracy.
- Lock in liberalisation, promote privatisation, and restrict government's right to regulate.
- Shift private sector risk to public authorities through so called "public-private partnerships".
- Undermine economic development when negotiated between countries with unequal economic power by serving only to further the interests of large transnational corporations.
- Undermine workers' safety, environmental regulation, the ability to deal with climate change, financial regulation, privacy measures, consumer protections and migrant workers' rights and drive up the costs of medicines.

The meeting determined that:

- The secrecy surrounding the negotiation of these agreements is unacceptable and precludes citizens, experts and trade unions from exercising their democratic right to consult with and scrutinise their lawmakers as they negotiate agreements.

- The texts and supporting documents must be immediately released.
- Quality public services, designed to ensure fundamental social and economic necessities are provided to the public affordably, universally and on the basis of need are fundamentally incompatible with the new wave of trade agreements.
- Public services, defined in the broadest possible terms, must be carved out of trade agreements.
- Future services must not be automatically covered. There should be no negative lists.
- No trade agreement should restrict the rights of democratically elected governments to pass laws to protect and further their citizens' well-being.
- There should be no standstill or ratchet clauses.
- Investor state dispute resolution clauses are unacceptable

ACTION

The meeting determined that URGENT action must be taken to oppose these agreements and committed to leading the fight by:

- **Explaining the harmful effects of these agreements to our members and why defending workers' rights in a globalised world requires looking beyond bread and butter issues**
 - **Reaching out to our friends in the private sector unions to build a united front against these agreements**
 - **Combining to ensure that our national centres advocate public sector concerns and take strong positions in opposition to the new wave of agreements**
 - **Working with our allies including civil society, faith organisations and small business to counter the pressure on our governments from the global corporate lobby**
 - **Mobilising public support**
 - **Lobbying our domestic political parties in government and opposition to influence government policy**
 - **Co-ordinating our actions across the globe**
 - **Committing resources to achieve these actions.**
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