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NO MORE DEREGULATION AND SURRENDERING SERVICES TO CORPORATE INTERESTS!

August 2013

Dear Trade Ministers,

We, the undersigned civil society organizations, representing hundreds of millions of members across the globe, are writing to express our strong opposition to the negotiations towards a proposed far-reaching plurilateral “International Trade in Services Agreement (TISA)”.

- For those countries of the so-called “Really Good Friends” (RGF) of services bloc participating in the talks – Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Pakistan, Peru, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, the United States, and the 27 member states of the European Union – we urge you to abandon the negotiations.
- For those countries not now participating in the talks, we urge you to register your strong opposition to the negotiations and to pledge never to join any potential TISA in the future.

The TISA negotiations largely follow the corporate agenda of using “trade” agreements to bind countries to extreme liberalization and deregulation in order to ensure greater corporate profits at the expense of workers, farmers, consumers and the environment. The proposed agreement is the direct result of systematic advocacy by transnational corporations in banking, energy, insurance, telecommunications, transportation, water, and other services sectors, working through lobby groups such as the US Coalition of Service Industries (USCSI) and the European Services Forum (ESF).

Notwithstanding several financial, economic, social and environmental crises, the services rules proposed for the TISA replicate and greatly expand upon the same rules that contributed to these crises. These rules, enshrined in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and free trade agreements (FTAs), “discipline” government measures and limit policy space for regulation.

For instance, the deregulation of the financial sector and capital which was encouraged in part through 1990s–era rules of GATS and FTAs led to the recent global financial crisis and the

ensuing worldwide wave of recessions. The continued suffering by millions from unemployment and austerity measures reminds us that financial sector re-regulation is essential to rebuild stability and forest all future financial and economic crises.

Strong regulation and oversight of services provided by the public and private sectors is crucial for democracy, the public interest and development, as well as for the orderly functioning of services markets. We fear that these values and goals would be seriously undermined by this proposed TISA.

Democracy is eroded when decision-making about important sectors – such as financial services (including banking, securities trading, accounting, and insurance), energy, education, healthcare, retail, shipping, telecommunications, legal services, transportation, and tourism – is transferred from those who live with the results. Domestic regulators and oversight boards on the national, provincial/state or local levels must determine domestic policies on such matters, not unaccountable “trade” negotiators who have shown a clear proclivity for curtailing regulation and prioritizing corporate profits over the public interest.

We strongly condemn the secretive nature of the TISA talks, in which the citizens, parliamentarians, trade unions, regulating agencies, services users and other interested parties have limited or no access to those who are setting negotiating mandates or to negotiations or negotiating documents, while corporations set the agenda and have easy access to the negotiations and documents. We insist that in such negotiations as for the proposed TISA, negotiating texts must be published, and input from regulatory agencies, public service providers and users, parliamentarians, state and local officials, and civil society organizations must be regularly invited. Parliaments must set binding terms for such negotiations, which must not go into effect without a full vote of elected officials.

The proposed TISA is an assault on the public interest as it fails to ensure that foreign investments in service sectors actually promote public goals and sustainable economies. We are particularly wary of further undermining of essential services such as health care and insurance, water and energy provision, postal distribution, education, public transportation, sanitation, and others if they are handed over to private and foreign corporations motivated only by profits and available only to those who can pay market rates. Therefore such essential services – including those that operate under a public/private mix, compete with private providers, or charge a fee –should not be subject to any closed-door, unaccountable trade negotiations, including the TISA.

We denounce the ambition of the RGF to bind further service sectors to the deregulatory GATS-like rules, such as those replicating GATS Article XVI on Market Access or Article VI on Domestic Regulation, while legislatures move toward re-regulation. We further reject any plans to adopt new cross-sector restrictions on licensing, technical standards and other domestic regulations (even regulations that affect domestic and foreign businesses alike) that would

surpass the existing GATS and FTA rules in restricting governments' and parliaments' right to regulate.

We denounce the intent within the proposed TISA to promote the liberalization of so-called temporary movement of natural persons, who are actually migrant workers, without guaranteeing legal protections for their human and labor rights. The movement of workers is outside the competence of trade agreements and must be dealt with as part of the normative tripartite framework of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The proposed TISA also poses a threat to countries that are not participating. The European Union and the United States have made clear that their intention is to "multilateralize" the negotiations. We call for vigilance against the determination of the EU and the United States to set the TISA's hyper-deregulation-and-privatization agenda as the global "norm," and to pressure other countries into joining, in particular countries that may accede to the WTO. Further, if a TISA is concluded, there is a significant prospect that signatory countries would try to circumvent the services negotiating guidelines that WTO members agreed upon by consensus and acting as a bloc in GATS negotiations to push other countries to meet the TISA level of liberalization and deregulation. We further denounce the TISA as an attempt to advance developed countries' corporate wish lists for services, while abandoning commitments made in the WTO's Doha Development Agenda to address developing country concerns, such as fixing existing asymmetries and unfair rules on agriculture.

The world is still recovering from the greatest global economic downturn in nearly a century, facilitated by the extreme deregulation of the financial services industry. It is clear that strong public oversight of services is necessary to ensure that the public interest is prioritized over private profit. We reject the TISA negotiations, which would move our countries in precisely the wrong direction.

Signed,

International and Regional organizations and Networks		
1	Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)	A regional migrant centre working in the Asia Pacific and Middle East region.
2	Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN)	APRN is a network of leading research NGOs in the Asia-Pacific. It is active in promoting exchange, coordination and capacity building support in research.
3	Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmer's Forum (ESAFF)	ESAFF is a network of small holder farmers that advocate for policy, practice and attitude change that reflects the needs, aspirations, and development of small-scale farmers in east and southern Africa. ESAFF operates in 13 countries.
4	IBON International	IBON initiates and implements international programs, develops and hosts international networks, initiates and participates in international advocacy campaigns, and establishes regional and country offices. IBON strengthens links between local campaigns and advocacies to international initiatives.
5	Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL)	The IPMSDL is comprised of indigenous leaders and advocates from different countries in Asia, Pacific, Australia, Africa, Europe and North America. The IPMSDL stands for the right of indigenous peoples to govern ourselves and for liberation from imperialism, state oppression and human rights violations.
6	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)	The IUF is currently composed of 385 trade unions in 123 countries representing a combined representational membership of over 12 million workers (including a financial membership of 2.6 million). It is based in Geneva, Switzerland.
7	Public Services International (PSI)	Public Services International (PSI) is a global trade union federation dedicated to promoting quality public services in every part of the world. PSI brings together more than 20 million workers, represented by 650 unions in 148 countries and territories.
8	Transnational Institute	The Transnational Institute (TNI) of Policy Studies carries out radical informed analysis on critical global issues builds alliances with social movements develops proposals for a more sustainable, just and democratic world.
9	UNI Europa	UNI Europa is a European trade union federation for services and communication. It represents 7 million workers in 330 European trade unions.

10	UNI Global Union	UNI Global Union is the voice of 20 million service sector workers around the world. Through 900 affiliated unions, in 150 countries UNI represents workers in the Cleaning & Security; Commerce; Finance; Gaming; Graphical & Packaging; Hair & Beauty; ICTS; Media, Entertainment & Arts; Post & Logistics; Social Insurance; Sport; Temp & Agency Workers and Tourism industries.
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	National Organizations	
11	11.11.11	Belgium
12	Alliance Sud	Switzerland
13	All Nepal Peasants Federation	Nepal
14	Argentine Federation Of Commerce And Services Workers (FAECyS)	Argentina
15	Australian Fair Trade and investment Network	Australia
16	Bharatiya Krishak Samaj	India
17	Bia'lii, Asesoría e Investigación, A.C.	Mexico
18	Center for Encounter and Active Non-Violence	Austria
19	Coalition Paysanne de Madagascar.	Madagascar
20	Confederation of Labor and Allied Social Services (CLASS)	Philippines
21	Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA)	Philippines
22	Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO)	Belgium
23	Council of Canadians	Canada
24	Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF- Uganda)	Uganda
25	Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF)	Zambia
26	Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF)	Burundi
27	Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF)	Rwanda
28	Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF)	Lesotho
29	Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF)	Mozambique
30	Federación de Trabajadores del agua Potable y Alcantarillado del Perú (FENTAP)	Peru
31	Food & Water Watch	USA
32	Friends of the Earth (FoE)	Uruguay
33	Indonesian People's Alliance (IPA)	Indonesia
34	Institute for National and Democracy Studies (INDIES)	Indonesia
35	Jóvenes frente al G20	Mexico
36	Kenya Small Scale Farmers Forum (KESSFF)	Kenya
37	Krisoker Sor (Farmers' Voice)	Bangladesh
38	Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania (MVIWATA)	Tanzania
39	National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi	Malawi
40	Public Citizen	USA
41	Seychelles Farmers' Association	Seychelles
42	South Africa - Small scale Farmers Networking Forum (SA-SFNF)	South Africa
43	Worldview	Gambia

44	Zimbabwe Smallholders Organics Forum (ZIMSOFF)	Zimbabwe
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