



Statement of the IUF Dairy Division Coordinating Group on the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP)

Our unions are affiliates of the International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations (IUF), the global trade union federation representing workers employed in agriculture, the preparation and manufacture of food and beverages and in hotels restaurants and catering services. IUF affiliates represent workers in 9 of the 12 countries at the table in the secretive Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade talks.

The TPP and other proposed trade and investment agreements have been the subject of discussion within the Executive Committee of the IUF, and within the various national forums of our respective unions. We have regularly raised serious concerns about the few public statements and more regular leaked texts emanating from negotiations to conclude the TPP.

On August 26, 2015, unions representing workers in the dairy sector met in San Francisco, California and evaluated the status of TPP negotiations, guided by the 2014 IUF Global Dairy Conference resolution on trade and investment agreements(attached)

IUF affiliates resolved that such agreements should be negotiated through an open and democratic process which allows input and monitoring by citizens and their democratically elected representatives and other representatives of civil society including trade unions.

Agreements must not grant foreign investors the right to sue Governments when Governments prioritize workers interests and citizen's rights over the profit of transnational companies and investors.

We are concerned that agreements can restrict the access of people to the necessities of life including food and medicines.

We oppose trade deals which impact by reducing wages and working conditions and destroy the livelihoods of workers and small producers in the dairy sector.

Working families around the world have been harmed by environmental degradation brought on by low-standard 20th Century globalization and bad trade deals. The entire TPP environment Chapter clearly fails to uphold and indeed threatens domestic environmental laws and commitments in multi-lateral environmental agreements.

Finally we condemn proposals which undermine or remove democratic rights, including trade union rights, food security and economic sovereignty.

On all counts we are extremely alarmed that when negotiators left the table in Hawaii at the end of July all of our concerns are 'live' and human rights, food security and livelihoods would be seriously eroded by the conclusion of the TPP negotiations in anything like their current form.

Furthermore we note that access to dairy markets is one of the unresolved issues between nations.

As noted above, we believe that sovereign democratic nations have the right to protect jobs and livelihoods in the interests of their peoples. For example, the supply management system in Canada provides price stability for producers and income stability for workers and has widespread democratic support within Canada. Its retention or otherwise, should solely be for the people of Canada to decide, free from any intimidation or blackmail by corporate interests or by other nations.

The dairy workforce and their unions in the TPP countries have an interest in protecting their communities and keeping dairy prices and wages stable. Unions strive throughout the dairy supply chain to ensure workers make living wages and enjoy the benefits of collective bargaining. The debate on the sensitive issue of dairy market access has become intractable. It may be time to drop that issue and confront the other problems with the TPP.

The negotiations for the TPP are publicly focused on access to markets but the much more critical issue of unrestricted access for investors to acquire land and processing facilities to control milk supply is buried in the secrecy of the talks.

If the negotiations for the TPP are concluded, while some restricted access to markets are likely to remain, we are deeply concerned that legitimate restrictions on investment and the resulting corporate control of the milk supply, will be removed or significantly reduced.

This is a major threat to national food security and sovereign food rights and through the provisions of ISDS, a serious economic and legal restriction on the rights to legislate in the public interest.

The IUF is working with our national affiliates in these countries where a range of democratic rights are threatened to ensure they receive all the support they need to mount effective domestic opposition to acts by their Governments which threaten democracy and citizens' rights.