



BULLETIN

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Introduction

As this is our last bulletin for 2017, we want to thank everyone for your support this year. Many of you have shared our updates, written letters to the Trade Minister, rallied with us and participated in our social media campaigns. Together we have fought back against some dangerous trade agendas and nasty trade deals like the TPP. Negotiations on both the TPP and the RCEP will continue into 2018, and so will our campaign work.

Thanks also to those you have contributed to our Christmas appeal for donations – your generosity will help us to continue our work next year. If you haven't already donated but would like to, you can do that [here](#).

After 10 years at Chalmers Street in Surry Hills, we will be moving to a new office in the new year. Our new address will be Level 8, 321 Pitt Street Sydney. We will send more information in the coming weeks.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a restful holiday.

No TPP campaign continues

Australia and Japan are doing their best to clinch a deal on the TPP (now rebranded the Comprehensive Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership or CPTTP), with minimal changes. Some of its most controversial clauses have been suspended, pending the US re-joining

the agreement, but ISDS remains. There are still major [differences](#) between governments, with Canada, Malaysia and others wanting further changes, and negotiations will continue in 2018.

This is not a done deal, and we will continue our campaign. You can write to the Trade Minister and urge him not to revive the zombie TPP [here](#).

Former UN Assistant Secretary-General [Professor Jomo Kwame Sundaram](#), who wrote this [critical study](#) measuring the employment costs of the original TPP text, recently [debunked](#) some of the main myths about the new, so-called 'progressive' deal. Professor Sundaram explains that the CPTTP is really about the promotion of corporate-friendly rules for foreign investors, not trade gains (as is often claimed). He says increased intellectual property monopolies for transnational corporations would 'undoubtedly' increase prices – not generate more goods and services.

'PACER Minus' tabled in the Senate: JSCOT submissions due January 31

The PACER-plus trade deal with the Pacific Islands, which AFTINET has dubbed 'PACER-Minus', was [quietly tabled in the Australian Senate](#) last month. Fiji and Papua New Guinea, the two largest Pacific Island economies representing over 80% of GDP, have not signed the deal.

The main purpose of the deal is to reduce tariffs on Pacific Island imports from Australia and New Zealand. This will affect the Pacific Island nations' local industries, and the ability of their governments to regulate foreign investment in services and other sectors. As the Pacific Network on Globalisation's report [Defending Pacific Ways of Life](#) shows – the deal simply does not meet the development needs of Pacific Island Countries. Pacific Island civil society groups have called for independent social and economic impact assessments and we support those calls.

There will be an [inquiry](#) by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties and submissions are open until January 31, 2018. We will be making a submission and we encourage our members and supporters to do so as well. Please share our [Facebook graphic](#) on PACER-Minus with your networks.

Outcomes of the 11th Ministerial meeting of the WTO

The 11th Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (MC11) finished in Buenos Aires this week without a formal Ministerial statement. Thanks to strong campaigning by civil society groups and resistance from developing country governments, the push by technology corporations to expand their control via WTO rules under the rubric of 'e-commerce' was not supported by the majority of WTO members, and new negotiations on e-commerce and investment facilitation were not approved.

Despite some pushback from the US, the moratorium for non-violation cases under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) has been extended for another two years. This will ensure millions of people can continue to access lifesaving medicines. Rules that allow public stockholding of food to increase food security for developing countries have also been extended, but not made permanent. Disappointingly, no progress was made on removing other WTO constraints to development.

Just days before the MC11, the Argentine government [revoked](#) the accreditation of 63 civil society experts, preventing them from entering the country to participate in the meeting. The banned individuals were representatives of development organisations, trade unions, digital

rights groups and environmental organisations, and many worked under the global Our World Is Not For Sale (OWINFS) network.

This was an unprecedented, draconian and illogical decision. AFTINET sent a letter to the Australian government, urging them to advocate for the ban to be lifted. We did not receive a response. Civil society groups who were allowed in to the country [protested](#) outside the MC11 meeting, and demanded a transparent, democratic and sustainable multilateral trade system.

Women's rights groups slam WTO's 'pink herring' Declaration on Women's Economic Empowerment

This [letter to the WTO](#), signed by over 160 women's rights groups and allied organisations, is worth reading. It was written in response to the WTO's [Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment](#), to which 118 WTO members and observers have agreed. The letter describes the Declaration as a 'pink herring', intended to 'mask the failures of the WTO and its role in deepening inequality and exploitation.'

They wrote that the WTO's commitment to trade liberalisation and deregulation continues to exacerbate gendered inequality by extending corporate power and control over women's lives and livelihoods. New WTO proposals on e-commerce and services provisions will hand more rights to corporations, not women.

They said that if WTO members want to get serious about addressing gendered inequality they should, at the very least, allow public stockholding of food for developing countries, ensure intellectual property provisions do not prevent access to medicine, and prevent trade agreements from restricting domestic regulation that supports human rights.

New government white paper a missed opportunity

The Australian government's [Foreign Policy White Paper](#), published on November 23, 2017, misses an opportunity to support a more democratic trade process and address concerns from many community organisations about the use of secretive trade deals for domestic policy decisions.

The White Paper argues in favour of global free trade and against protectionism, and reinforces a [TPP-like trade agenda](#) that includes stronger medicine monopolies. It supports the reduction of trade barriers like bio security, environmental regulation, labelling standards and 'regulatory burdens' for services. It also appears to support foreign investor rights to sue governments!

Although the government's white paper [acknowledges that climate change is a global threat](#), it does not emphasise combatting climate change or reducing inequality as key priorities.

AFTINET rejects both the aggressive nationalism of the Trump administration, and neoliberal trade policies that have not delivered on [exaggerated promises](#) of employment growth. As we explained in our [White Paper submission](#), we support trade being expanded under fair global rules. But we will never support the use of trade agreements to reduce public interest regulation or to expand medicine monopolies.

Indonesia Australia free trade agreement likely to miss another deadline

[Fairfax Media has reported](#) that there is 'growing doubt' that the Indonesia Australia free trade agreement (Indonesia Australia Comprehensive Economic Agreement or IA CEPA) will be finalised by the end of the year, as intended.

The IA CEPA is meant to be the [jewel in the trade agreement crown](#) for the Australian government, and Prime Minister Turnbull said it would be finalised '[by the end of \(the\) year](#)'. But Australian and Indonesian trade ministers failed to conclude negotiations last month in Jakarta.

In the background of Australian-Indonesian trade negotiations this year, Indonesia [filed a complaint](#) to the World Trade Organisation over the Australian government's decision to [impose dumping duties](#) on A4 paper from Indonesia, and signalled its concern over Australia's investigation into the [alleged dumping of steel rods](#) exported from Indonesia.

Why the European Commission's ISDS model is a wolf in sheep's clothing

A [new report](#) by European community and environment organisations has warned that the European Commission's Multilateral Investment Court (MIC) model will entrench corporate power on a global scale via a parallel legal system.

The MIC model has been proposed as an alternative to the widely unpopular ISDS model. Although it improves the system of arbitration via some procedural adjustments, it preserves the investment law framework which places corporate rights above both domestic and international human rights laws. The report's authors call for ISDS to be excluded from past and future trade agreements, and for governments to negotiate a legally binding [United Nations treaty](#) to regulate transnational corporations and other business enterprises instead.