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Senior legislators in seven countries call for release of Trans-Pacific Trade Text

“Senior legislators in seven TPP countries have released a [statement](#) calling for the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement text to be released before it is signed by governments,” Dr Patricia Ranald, Convener of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network, said today.

The statement calls on governments to publish the draft text of the Agreement before any final agreement is signed, with sufficient time to enable effective legislative scrutiny and public debate.

The statement involves senior politicians from Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand and Peru who have expressed concern about the lack of transparency in the TPPA negotiations. Calls for the release of the text from politicians in the US and Chile are also attached.

“The statement includes the motion from Senator Penny Wong, the Opposition ALP Shadow Trade Minister, which was passed in the Senate last December calling for the release of text of the TPPA and all other trade agreements before they are signed. The statement is also endorsed by Australian Greens Trade spokesperson Senator Peter Whish-Wilson,” said Dr Ranald.

“The current Australian process is that Cabinet signs off on the text of the agreement before it is released for public and Parliamentary scrutiny. The subsequent Parliamentary committee review cannot change the text. Parliament can only vote on legislation to implement the agreement,” explained Dr. Ranald.

“The Australian government has refused to comply with the Senate motion to release the text before it is signed. But thousands of Australians have signed [petitions](#) for release of the text and [surveys](#) show a majority (87%) support this call,” said Dr Ranald.

“This statement reflects the widespread community calls in many countries that the text of the agreement should be released before it is signed. Other signatories include the Vice-President of Peru, the leader and trade spokesperson for Canada’s two main opposition parties, and several former Cabinet ministers from Japan. Attached to the statement is a letter from 34 Chilean deputies and 15 senators made in December, calling for release of the text. Many belong to the party that will become the government in March. Also attached are letters from numerous members of the US Congress seeking release of the text”, said Dr Ranald.

“We call on the Government to release the text of the TPP and other trade agreements before they are signed off by Cabinet,” said Dr Ranald.

The statement and supporting documents can be found on www.tppmpsfortransparency.org, a website hosted by development agency Oxfam International and Article 19, an international NGO that campaigns for freedom of expression and transparency.

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