



AFTINET
Australian Fair Trade
& Investment Network Ltd

128 Chalmers Street
Surry Hills, NSW, 2010
Phone: 02 9699 3686
Fax: 02 9699 3717
Email: campaign@aftinet.org.au
ACN 097 603 131
ABN 83 659 681 462
www.aftinet.org.au

Media Release

April 22, 2014

Failed US-Japan bilateral talks show Trans-Pacific Deal offers nothing to Australia ahead of Obama's Asian visit

"President Obama's visit to Japan tomorrow, Wednesday, April 23 will focus on regional security issues rather than trade after Japan and the US last week failed to agree on access for agricultural and motor vehicle products in the stalled Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations," Dr Patricia Ranald, Convener of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network, said today.

"The stalemate between Japan and the US is further delaying the TPP negotiations which have now dragged on into their fifth year. It is clear that the two most powerful players are running the agenda and that there is no benefit for Australia from the TPP," said Dr Ranald.

"The Australian government has claimed the Japan-Australia FTA is a precedent for the TPP but the text remains secret, although it was announced two weeks ago. We will not see the text of the Japan FTA until after Cabinet has made the decision to sign it," said Dr Ranald.

"However, from the few details provided we do know that it appears to be very lopsided, with Australia reducing many of its vehicle tariffs levels to zero from next year, which will hasten the demise of employment in the vehicle industry. In contrast, Japan has provided very limited access only to selected agricultural products. For example, the tariffs on frozen beef products will only be reduced to 19% over 18 years, and there is no additional access to rice and many other agricultural products. This recalls the lop-sided deal in the US FTA in 2004," said Dr Ranald.

"We know from leaked documents that the US is persisting in its outrageous demands in the TPP for stronger medicine patents and higher prices for medicines, rights for foreign investors to sue governments over domestic legislation, and stronger copyright laws, which would reduce access to information on the internet," said Dr Ranald.

"It is unacceptable for the Australian government to trade away in secret its right to regulate medicines and copyright, or agree to foreign investor rights to sue over domestic legislation, as the Philip Morris tobacco company is doing over plain packaging legislation. These issues should not be on the table at all, and should certainly not be traded away for dubious promises on agricultural market access," said Dr Ranald.

"The Government should release the text of the TPP for public and parliamentary debate before any Cabinet decision to sign it. Such public debate would reveal that the TPP is not in the national interest, and should lead to withdrawal from the negotiations," said Dr Ranald.

Contact Dr Patricia Ranald 0419 695 841