

100+ U.S. Civil Society Organizations Call for a Transparent and Participatory Negotiating Process for the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and Future Trade Negotiations

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

July 22, 2022

Dear President Biden:

We share your goal of creating a new model for U.S. trade policy that prioritizes the interests of working people, communities of color, the environment, consumers and family farmers instead of just big corporations. The launch of your administration's Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) may be a test case for what this model looks like and what it can achieve. A transparent and participatory negotiating process is critical to ensuring the best possible outcomes from IPEF or any other future trade negotiations, such as the recently announced Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity.

The novel "a la carte" nature of the four-pillared IPEF negotiations raises particular concerns around process. Given the abysmal labor rights conditions and practices in many recently announced IPEF countries, it is especially critical that strong, enforceable labor standards be both established in law and implemented in practice before an agreement is allowed to go into effect. This is likewise true on issues of climate, data privacy, consumer safety and other public interest provisions.

Ensuring that constituencies and civil society organizations working on these issues have ongoing access to any IPEF texts in a timely manner and opportunities for ongoing input with negotiators is crucial.

Toward this end, we ask that, if the U.S. moves forward with IPEF or other trade negotiations, the U.S. publish draft versions of its proposals and solicit public comment upon them prior to tabling them. IPEF negotiations should be announced in advance and include broad public stakeholder engagement and interactions with negotiators from each nation. U.S. proposals, other countries' proposals, related materials and any consolidated texts must also be quickly published after each negotiating round so that the public can review and comment on the latest proposals while there is still opportunity to make real changes.

We greatly appreciate your administration's insistence that IPEF will not become another Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). One of the fundamental reasons why the TPP became so unpopular was that it was negotiated under the influence of hundreds of corporate advisors while the public and Congress were locked out. Terms needed for the deal to benefit most Americans were traded away in favor of special protections for the corporate interests that had access. Any successful IPEF negotiation must replace the corporate advisory system with an on-the-record public process, including public hearings, to formulate U.S. positions and obtain comment on draft and final U.S. text proposals, as well as robust consultation and engagement with Congress throughout the process.

In sum, to achieve a needed overhaul of existing U.S. trade policy in IPEF and other international economic frameworks, the processes for negotiating a potential agreement must be transparent and participatory — the complete opposite of the opaque and corporate-dominated processes that produced trade agreements under previous administrations. Civil society organizations, Congress and the public must be invited to help formulate U.S. positions and comment on draft U.S. proposals throughout the entire course of the negotiations.

Sincerely,

1. A Well-Fed World
2. Action on Smoking and Health
3. American Federation of Teachers
4. American Friends Service Committee
5. American Indian Mothers Inc
6. Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
7. Amnesty International USA
8. Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
9. Association of Flight Attendants-CWA
10. Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers
11. Backbone Campaign
12. Black AIDS Institute
13. California Trade Justice Coalition
14. Campaign for America's Future
15. Center for Biological Diversity
16. Center for Digital Democracy
17. Center for Economic and Policy Research
18. Center for Food Safety
19. Center for Justice & Democracy
20. Citizens Trade Campaign
21. Climate Crisis Policy
22. CODEPINK
23. Communications Workers of America
24. Debs-Jones-Douglass Institute
25. Earth Action, Inc.
26. Environmentalists Against War
27. Equal Exchange
28. Fair World Project
29. Family Farm Defenders
30. Fight for the Future
31. Florida Alliance for Retired Americans
32. Food & Water Watch
33. Food for Maine's Future
34. Foundation for Integrative AIDS Research (FIAR)
35. Friends of the Earth US
36. Global Action to Prevent War (GAPW)
37. Global Exchange
38. Global Justice Institute Metropolitan Community Churches
39. Government Accountability Project
40. Government Information Watch
41. Greenpeace USA
42. Holy Cross International Justice Office
43. Hope Border Institute
44. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
45. Institute for Policy Studies - Global Economy Project
46. International Association Machinists and Aerospace Workers
47. International Brotherhood of Boilermakers
48. International Brotherhood of Teamsters
49. International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers
50. IP Justice
51. Justice is Global
52. Knowledge Ecology International
53. Legacy of Equality Leadership and Organizing (LELO)
54. Maine Fair Trade Campaign
55. Migrant Clinicians Network
56. National Association of Consumer Advocates
57. National Family Farm Coalition
58. National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)

59. National Organization for Women
60. Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
61. New Jersey Tenants Organization
62. New York Trade Justice Coalition
63. Nicaragua Center for Community Action
64. NJ State Industrial Union Council
65. Office & Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU)
66. Other98
67. Our Revolution
68. Our Revolution Maryland
69. Partners In Health
70. Pax Christi USA
71. Peace Action
72. Pennsylvania Council of Churches
73. Pesticide Action Network North America
74. Popular Resistance
75. Pride at Work
76. Professional Fire Fighters of Maine
77. Progressive Democrats of America
78. Public Citizen
79. Quixote Center
80. R2H Action [Right to Health]
81. Rethink Trade
82. Revolving Door Project
83. RootsAction.org
84. Sierra Club
85. Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team
86. Social Security Works
87. Solutionary Rail
88. Texas Fair Trade Coalition
89. The Digital Democracy Project
90. The People's Lobby
91. Trade Justice Education Fund
92. Transport Workers Union of America
93. UE - United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America
94. Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
95. UNITE HERE
96. United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBC)
97. United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries
98. United Steelworkers (USW)
99. Veterans For Peace
100. Washington Fair Trade Coalition
101. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom US