

PRESS RELEASE

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About IATP

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. IATP is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota with an office in Washington D.C.

TPP would hurt small scale farmers in developing countries, groups say

Faith, development and sustainable agriculture groups call on Congress to reject TPP

MINNEAPOLIS – More than 50 development, religious and sustainable agriculture groups are demanding that Congress reject the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) because of its potential impacts on small scale farmers and food production, especially those in developing countries. The signers include the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Oxfam America, ActionAid USA Presbyterian Church USA, NETWORK National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Food & Water Watch, National Family Farm Coalition and the Rural Coalition.

In a letter sent to Congress today, the groups highlight the negative impacts of previous free trade agreements like NAFTA. Under NAFTA, more than two million Mexican farmers were driven from their lands, and corporate concentration in agriculture increased in Mexico, the United States and Canada. The TPP repeats many of NAFTA's mistakes as well as adding new provisions that would limit farmers' abilities to feed their families and their communities. These include:

- The chapter on Intellectual Property Rights that requires countries to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants 1991 (UPOV-91), which would limit traditional seed saving and sharing by small scale farmers.
- The Annex on Agricultural Biotechnology in TPP's chapter on National Treatment and Market Access that would impose new rules on how countries assess Low Level Presence of GMOs and contaminants in imports—all designed to facilitate trade.
- Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), which allows corporations to sue governments over measures that limit their expected profits. Existing ISDS cases over mining and natural resources have already undermined small-scale farmers' access to healthy soils and water.

The groups conclude, “Given all of these problems, it is alarming that the provisions on Accession to the TPP would direct other countries to sign on to this flawed agreement without changes. Rather than allowing new prospective members to negotiate provisions that respond to their particular situations—much less correcting the various problems in TPP—developing country governments would be expected to simply accede to the existing agreement. Our organizations support fair trade, sustainable development and democratic practice. The TPP fails to support any of those principles. We urge you to reject the TPP.”

You can read the full letter here: <http://www.iatp.org/documents/letter-to-congress-over-concerns-about-tpps-impact>.