



Contact: Cecelia Heffron, 651-328-4706
cheffron@iatp.org

May 28, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DESPITE GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS, BILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS MOVE FORWARD IN SECRECY

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's Sharon Treat Serves as Expert on U.S.-EU and U.S.-U.K. Trade Negotiations on Upcoming Webinars

MINNEAPOLIS—While most of the world was on lockdown to the COVID-19 pandemic from March through May, top United States trade officials began fast-paced and comprehensive negotiations with the United Kingdom and continued ongoing talks with the European Union. The [Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy](#) (IATP)'s Senior Attorney Sharon Treat is monitoring and analyzing these two potential trade deals, as well as participating in several webinars to address the secretive, non-transparent U.S.-EU and U.S.-U.K negotiations.

The pandemic has exposed significant flaws in the U.S. economic strategy of reliance on commodity exports and offshoring manufacturing, leading to disrupted supplies of everything from food to medicines and protective equipment, as well as increased inequality. Rather than learning from the pandemic, the U.S. is advancing a trade agenda with the U.K. and EU that repeats the mistakes of the past. U.S. trade objectives make clear that a post-Brexit deal with the U.K. would lower food safety and environmental standards, weaken animal welfare protections and increase unfair competition from agribusiness monopolies in that country while locking in unsustainable and environmentally harmful practices in the U.S. A deal with the EU could result in short-term EU relief from some U.S. tariffs in exchange for a weakening of the EU's foundational precautionary principle.

On **Wednesday, May 27 at 11 a.m. EDT**, Treat presented during the second installment of a two-part public webinar series titled "TTIP 2.0 and regulatory cooperation: What lobbyists and regulators have in store for us" hosted by Lobby Control, PowerShift, Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) and IATP. She discussed the longstanding efforts of lobby groups and trade regulators to attack the EU's precautionary principle and regulatory standards, especially in the context of the current EU-U.S. trade negotiations.

On **Wednesday, May 27 at 4:30 p.m. EDT**, Treat presented on preventing a corporate-driven "shock doctrine" moment in upcoming trade deals in a public virtual town hall on COVID-19, trade and resilience, focused on exposing how free trade agreements prioritize private profits over healthy communities. The webinar was cosponsored by Citizens Trade Campaign, New York Trade Justice Coalition, Maine Fair Trade Campaign and the Trade Justice Education Fund.

On **Friday, June 5 at 9 a.m. EDT** on a public webinar sponsored by U.K.-based Global Justice Now titled "How corporate trade deals make the world more vulnerable to Covid-19," Treat will address the U.S.-U.K. trade negotiations and key risks to the U.K. from adopting trade rules based on U.S. regulatory principles and extractive corporate agricultural practices.

On **Wednesday, June 17**, Treat will brief U.K. public health officials on how to navigate trade negotiations post-Brexit to assure positive public health outcomes. The webinar is sponsored by the U.K. Public Health Network, U.K. Prevention Research Partnership, and the PETRA Network, a project focused on prevention of noncommunicable diseases and trade policy. She will provide background on current U.K. trade negotiations with both the EU and U.S. and compare standard-setting based on the EU precautionary principle with U.S. “risk-based” and “science-based” norms, explaining how trade agreements can lock in one approach or the other. Treat will also discuss provisions in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) — the likely template for trade deals currently being pursued by the Trump administration — that could affect public health including restrictions on labeling of food and chemicals.

Trade negotiations that detract from governments’ capacity to focus on responding to the COVID-19 crisis should be paused. Indeed, rather than double down on pushing for free trade deals that favor corporate interests over the public good, IATP is calling for our whole approach to trade policy to be reconsidered in light of the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic and the existential threat of global warming.

###

Based in Minneapolis with offices in Washington, D.C., and Berlin, Germany, the 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.