



- Women's statement against the rebranded Trans-Pacific Partnership
- Australian Catholic Religious Against Human Trafficking (ACRATH)
- An alternative economic exchange cooperation model:: shared principles and values

WOMEN'S STATEMENT AGAINST THE RE-BRANDED TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

When the USA withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the remaining 11 participating countries decided to continue negotiations and, at a meeting in Chile on 8th March, signed a revised agreement, renamed the Comprehensive Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Some of the worst clauses of the TPP have been temporarily suspended pending the USA re-joining the agreement sometime in the future. But the CPTPP still endorses the right of corporations to bypass national courts and sue governments in international tribunals; and still calls for regulation of essential services to be frozen and reduced over time rather than enabling governments to respond to community needs. *The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development* circulated this Statement on the CPTPP at the end of February and invited organisations and individuals in the participating countries to endorse it. The Grail Global Justice Network (Australia) did so along with other organisations with whom The Grail is connected in the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET).

Every 8th March, women across the world remember and celebrate the struggles of women, past and present, against patriarchy, authoritarian regimes, violence, and neo-liberal market fundamentalism that exploits our labour, silences our voices, privatises our public services and deregulates our market. International Women's Day celebrates the power of women's movements in advancing progressive policy changes and the solidarity actions of women, such as

taking to the streets for the right to vote and hold public office, going on strike to demand equal pay and celebrating other inspirational women in their lives.

Determined to humiliate women's struggles and movements, the governments of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam will gather on 8th March 2018 in Santiago, Chile, to sign the so-called Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) agreement that is neither progressive nor feminist. The CPTPP, just like its predecessor, the TPP, will drive a race to the bottom, with women at the bottom.

It will promote labour competition and low wages for women as a means for corporations to gain competitive advantage.

It will threaten women's access to public services, through

- the reduction of tariffs that deprives governments of important revenue;
- the requirement that foreign corporations be able to compete for public services; and
- the existence of mechanisms that protect investors from decisions of governments, for example, when they want to reverse failed privatisation or introduce new regulations to improve public access to essential, basic public services.

When governments reduce public social services such as healthcare, the health of women is usually deemed expendable

while, at the same time, they are expected to provide the unpaid care needed to make up for the cuts in government expenditure. Based on the principle of 'national treatment', the CPTPP also requires countries to treat foreign companies in the same way they treat local ones. One effect of this is that it will push women, who are the majority of small-scale, subsistence farmers, to compete against huge agribusinesses.

Tightened intellectual property rights will produce big wins only for the large seed companies with legal power to prohibit seed sharing amongst farmers and require farmers to pay royalties for seeds for 20 and more years. Women, the custodians of seed, food and traditional knowledge, who depend on sharing seed and other inputs among one another, will be greatly harmed by the CPTPP, even forced off their farms and out of the local economy.

Even more outrageously, the CPTPP maintains the provision known as Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), a mechanism that allows foreign corporations to reach across borders and sue governments in unaccountable international tribunals if governments pass any laws, policies or practices that infringe on the corporations' rights to profit. Corporations have used ISDS to avoid paying taxes, to undermine policies made in the public interest (e.g., in health, in affirmative action), to avoid obligations to protect the environment, to punish governments that introduce clean energy or, as mentioned above, to reverse failed privatisation.

We, women's rights organisations and their allies, are outraged that governments have decided not only to proceed with the CPTPP despite all criticism of it and of their persistent refusal of public citizen

review, but to sign away women's human rights on the same day that we celebrate it. The very same hard-fought rights that women's organisations and activists have struggled to achieve over centuries are now threatened by their governments as they place powers and privilege in the hands of large multinational corporations and the wealthiest few. It is a breach of the fundamental principle that sovereignty comes from the people.

So many of the governments that are part of the CPTPP have espoused the rhetoric of women's human rights and gender equality, and some of them still do. The affirmation of gender equality in the Preamble of the CPTPP is another such piece of empty rhetoric meant to disguise the glaring absence of even a symbolic chapter on gender and the unabashed entrenchment of corporate power and privilege. If countries in the CPTPP are genuinely committed to women's human rights and gender equality they must not proceed with the CPTPP.

We urge the eleven governments involved in the CPTPP to break with the assumption that opposition to trade agreements equates to nationalism and a rejection of accountable multilateralism. Instead, our time requires the global community urgently to envision and create a different trade model based on 'solidarity economy' and human rights, to redistribute power, resources and wealth among the countries of the world, among men and women, among rich and poor, and so protect the people and the planet.

Source: Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, 26 Feb 2018, Chiang Mai, Thailand, apwld@apwld.org Compiled by Alison Healey.

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMANS

For some years now The Grail has been welcomed in ACRATH meetings and activities as we in The Grail have endeavored to improve our support for this work of upholding the dignity of human persons. In an interview conducted by news.com.au and published on 26th February 2018, Dr Jennifer Burn, Director of Anti-Slavery Australia at the University of Technology, Sydney said: 'Slavery has never been a bigger problem in Australia than it is right now'. So, what are we doing about this? I would like to share with you some of the work that ACRATH has undertaken to address this issue. ACRATH works with other groups in their endeavors to improve the life of those caught up in all forms of modern slavery.

ACRATH members from across Australia, including myself, gathered in February at Baulkham Hills for its annual conference. The 2018 conference focused on work to *Eliminate Human Trafficking, Reclaim the Vision, Plan On-going Action*. Three main issues were addressed: forced marriage, forced labour and slavery in supply chains.

Forced marriage

The Ministry for Home Affairs has announced that for a period of 12 months, victims of forced marriage will be able to access support from the *Support for Trafficked People Pro-gram* for 200 days (formerly only 90 days). ACRATH with other NGOs has been lobbying Government for some years to bring about this change. The trial period is welcome. It will make a huge difference in the lives of those impacted by forced marriage. Red Cross will receive extra resources to implement this trial

There were two conference sessions on this topic: one described an excellent project in two high schools, one Catholic and one State, where students engaged in a creative arts program which raised their awareness and understanding of forced marriage; the other was a discussion in small groups of case studies and issues

that might arise when working in this area. (www.mybluesky.org.au)

Forced labour

The session on this topic explored a wide range of issues concerning overseas workers, their conditions of entry, the areas of work most accessed and the working conditions applying to their entry.

Supply chains and trafficking

Laura McManus, the Ethical Research Manager for Konica Minolta, described her role in leading this company to adopting an ethical business approach, which includes a full exploration of all the supply chains used by the various departments of the company.

Jenny Stanger, National Manager of the Salvation Army project, *Freedom Partnership to End Modern Slavery* spoke of the services they provide: Safe House, Referrals, Survivor Support, Rural Support and Fund of Last Resort for emergency accommodation, financial and legal assistance and re-education (See <http://endslavery.salvos.org.au/>)

Partnership with St Vincent's Health

ACRATH and SVHA have partnered to launch the *Human Trafficking Project*, thought to be a first in Australia's health care sector. The project will look at how trafficked people, who may present at any of SVHA's hospitals at 28 sites Australia-wide, can be identified and receive necessary treatment, support, referrals and access to services. These include women who have been sexually exploited, people who are facing forced marriage or have experienced forced labour. The project also aims to make sure the goods and services procured by St Vincent's are slavery-free. This means investigating supply chains to make sure a diverse range of goods – everything from medical equipment to cotton sheets and gowns and chocolates sold for hospital fund-raising – have been produced without the use of enslaved or forced labour. (See

ACRATH, St Vincent's Health Media Release)

58 meetings in 4 days

An energetic team of 8 ACRATH members recently walked the halls of Parliament. Lobbying Members of Parliament (MPs) in Canberra has been a regular activity over 12 years. The team spoke about forced marriage, the need for a Modern Slavery Act for Australia and for funding for NGOs working against human trafficking. They were heartened by the level of engagement of MPs around these

issues. It is hoped that a Modern Slavery Act will come before Parliament later this year. www.acrath.org.au

Will your Easter eggs be slavery-free?

Did you know that the Easter eggs in your super-markets may be made with cocoa beans picked by children, many of whom are enslaved or forced to work in exploitative conditions with no access to education and other human rights? (<https://acrath.orgt.au>)

Source: Anne Day (Grail Representative ACRATH NSW)

‘Together with the social responsibility of businesses, there is also the social responsibility of consumers ... purchasing is always a moral, and not simply an economic, act.’ *Pope Francis, January 2015.*

AN ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC EXCHANGE COOPERATION MODEL Shared Principle and Values

1. Negotiations must be open, transparent, democratic and inclusive.
2. Any new agreement must require all Parties to adopt, maintain and implement key international commitments, including to protect indigenous rights and sovereignty, as outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Indigenous communities must be key players in any negotiation process.
3. No trade agreement should favour corporate interests over the public interest or hamper Parties' ability to regulate in the public interest. This includes the elimination of the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) in NAFTA Chapter 11, and similar mechanisms (e.g. CETA's Investor Court System)..
4. Any new agreement must include stronger environmental protections requiring all Parties meet the standards of their domestic environmental laws and multilateral environmental agreements, including greenhouse gas reduction commitments under the Paris Agreement.
5. All Parties must eliminate fossil fuel subsidies and present a roadmap of how they will do it.
6. A new NAFTA agreement must eliminate all energy proportionality rules. (see NAFTA proportionality rule, Articles 605, 315) requiring Canada and the USA to maintain the same proportion of total supply they have been exporting to the other, even in the event of regional shortages.. Mexico is exempted from this rule which benefits mostly the USA and blocks Canada's ability to reduce its fossil fuel production to meet its climate commitments.
7. A new agreement must ensure strong labour rights, including for migrant workers, that result in a demonstrated adherence to international labour standards, including the right to free collective bargaining and association.
8. All labour and environmental standards must be enforceable through comprehensive, independent and proactive monitoring mechanisms that allow for trade sanctions to be imposed.

Citizens must be able to enforce all labour and environmental provisions.

9. Public services must be protected by excluding from an agreement public services such as education, health care, culture, telecommunications, energy and water.
10. Trade rules should not restrict government procurement policies, an important resource for local economic and social development
11. An agreement must ensure local/national sovereignty over food and agriculture policy. This includes the protection of

Canada's supply management system.

12. Finally, all trade agreements must involve a gender analysis, i.e., a gender impact assessment.

Source: Alternative model of trade rooted in principles of equity, the primacy of human rights, of Indigenous peoples, women and girls, workers, migrants, farmers, and communities, and social and ecological justice. (Joint letter signed by Canadian Environmental Groups on a just trade policy that respects the environment – Climate Action Network Canada, March 27, 2018, signed by Mary Boyd on behalf of local groups and slightly edited for this Bulletin.)

Contributions to Bulletin and responses to its content are welcomed.

Deadline: 14th of each publication month. Publication bi-monthly from office in Sydney.

The Bulletin is currently produced by two networks: *Justice and Trade Agreements* and *Human Trafficking*.
Coordinators: *JTA* - Mary Boyd (maryboyd@live.ca); Alison Healey (grailsydney@ozemail.com.au);
HT – Patricia Foito e Camisao (pcamisao@gmail.com); Angelina Kyondo (mksgrail@yahoo.com).
Design: Thanks to Marian Kelly for her donation of time and talent.

