

# **Public Health Objectives for International Trade Negotiations**

## **Submitted to the U.S. Trade Representative and The Ways and Means Committee, U.S. House of Representatives Hearing on the U.S. Trade Agenda**

**Wednesday, February 14, 2007**

### **Public Health and Global Trade: Findings**

Global and bilateral trade negotiations present important opportunities to promote a healthy, safe and just global community. However, current U.S. trade policies have contributed to social and economic inequality, both within the U.S. and among our trading partners, factors strongly associated with poor health outcomes. Trade agreements provide a basis for altering domestic U.S. laws and policies that protect the public's health and access to health care and medicines.

Federal legislation mandates that the United States Trade Representative receive domestic input into trade negotiations from interested parties outside the federal government. There have been limited opportunities for public health advice in reviewing trade policies, and as a result trade negotiations do not reflect a public health perspective.

Federal law also mandates Congressional oversight of U.S. global trade negotiations. Presidential Trade Promotion Authority undermines Congressional oversight and has limited Congress' ability to ensure that trade agreements promote social and economic equity.

We urge Congress and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to adopt the following enforceable Public Health Objectives, as a basis for amending pending trade agreements and to guide any future agreements, and to initiate a review of bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements for their adherence to public health principles.

### **Public Health Objectives for Global Trade**

- 1. To assure democratic participation by public health and transparency in trade policy** by:
  - a. Appointing to all relevant trade advisory committees representatives of organizations that work to assure equitable access to affordable health-related services and products, and promote the health of individuals, communities and populations,
  - b. Opening all proceedings and documents of trade advisory committees to the public, and
  - c. Requiring USTR's consultation with all relevant committees of the House and Senate in the development, implementation, and administration of U.S. trade policy, without renewing presidential trade promotion authority.
- 2. To develop mutually beneficial trade relationships that create sustainable economic development** for the U.S. and our trade partners in an increasingly interdependent world.
- 3. To recognize the legitimate exercise of national, regional and local government sovereignty to protect population health**, and to ensure that countries do not

- weaken or reduce, as an encouragement for trade, sound policies that contribute to health and well being, including laws on public health, the environment and labor.
4. **To exclude tariff and nontariff provisions in trade agreements that address vital human services** such as health care, water supply and sanitation, food safety and supply, and education, including licensing and cross-border movement of personnel in these fields.
  5. **To exclude tobacco and tobacco products**, which are lethal, and for which the public health goal is to reduce consumption, from tariff and nontariff provisions of trade agreements, including advertising, labeling, product regulation and distribution.
  6. **To exclude alcohol products**, which present serious hazards to public health. Policies designed to reduce the harm caused by alcohol products should not be subject to compromise in exchange for other trade benefits.
  7. **To eliminate intellectual property provisions related to pharmaceuticals from bilateral and regional negotiations**, as these are more appropriately addressed in multilateral fora, **and promote trade provisions which enable countries to exercise all flexibilities provided by the Doha Declaration on Public Health**, including issuing compulsory licenses for patented pharmaceuticals, parallel importation, and other measures that address high prices and promote access to affordable medicines.

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American Medical Student Association  
American Public Health Association (APHA)  
APHA Trade and Health Forum  
California Conference of Local Health Officers  
California Public Health Association – North  
Center for Policy Analysis on Trade and Health (CPATH)  
Chinese Progressive Association  
Church World Service  
Doctors for Global Health  
Essential Action  
Health Alliance International  
Health Care Without Harm  
Health GAP (Global Access Project)  
Hesperian Foundation  
Johns Hopkins Health and Human Rights Student Group  
[Maquiladora Health and Safety Support Network](#)  
Missionary Oblates Justice, Peace/Integrity of Creation Office  
National Legislative Association on Prescription Drug Prices  
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala  
Partners in Health  
People's Health Movement USA  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Public Health Association of Australia  
Salud y Farmacos, USA  
San Francisco Tobacco Free Coalition