

Lawmakers in seven countries seek release of TPPA text

MalaysiaKini.com

Feb 12, 2014

While the festering frustration surrounding the secrecy in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) negotiations were prevalent among Malaysian opposition politicians, such frustration seemed to have now expanded globally.

Legislators from seven different countries, including Malaysia, have signed an open letter seeking for the release of the TPPA text in order to enable scrutiny and debate.

The other countries apart from Malaysia who have signed the letter are legislators from Australia, Japan, Canada, Peru, Mexico, and New Zealand, which is the repository of TPPA, making it the secretariat.

According to Klang MP Charles Santiago (left in photo), almost all of the 89 Pakatan Rakyat MPs in the Malaysian parliament have signed the open letter.

"They (TPPA parties) are meeting again next week and nobody knows that the agenda is there," he said.

The next round of TPPA negotiations will be in Singapore on Feb 22 to 25, and there are fresh fears the parties will attempt to conclude negotiations before US President Barack Obama visits South-East Asia later this year.

"They are trying to finish it in time for Obama's arrival," Charles said.

The vice-president of Peru was among the signatories of the open letter, said Prof Jane Kelsey, a law professor from New Zealand who had been monitoring the negotiations.

In a press statement accompanying the open letter, Kelsey said that all trade ministers from countries that are party to the TPPA have "backed themselves into a corner with their extreme secrecy".

"That position is now untenable," she said.

The International Trade and Industry Ministry handles the negotiation for Malaysia, and its minister, Mustapa Mohamed, had insisted that the ministry would ensure

the country's best interests are protected in the negotiations.

A new website called 'TPP legislators for Transparency' has been started to further solidify the call to release TPPA texts.

There are fears in Malaysia, that the price of generic medicine will go up considerably due to clauses in the TPPA, which Malaysian opposition MPs have said were heavily favouring US interests alone.

The TPPA has 12 participating countries, and all parties had agreed in 2009 to only release TPPA texts after an agreement is signed.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/254166>