

Don't rush into signing TPPA, MMA urges gov't
MalaysiaKini.com
Aug 11, 2015

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has urged the government not to rush into signing the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), which it said may have adverse effect on the nation's healthcare system.

MMA president Dr Ashok Zachariah Philip said the government needed to study thoroughly the TPPA in order to safeguard the healthcare system and the people's welfare.

"We have met with the health minister and the International Trade and Industry Ministry regarding our concerns.

"However, due to the veil of secrecy surrounding the negotiations, we remain uneasy about the potential outcome," he told a news conference at the MMA head office in Kuala Lumpur today.

He added that on Aug 4, the MMA had submitted a memorandum to the government to highlight its concerns.

Dr Ashok said one of the key concerns was the possibility that the TPPA would allow the patent period of a drug to be extended to more than 20 years, thus preventing production and deny many patients the opportunity to obtain generic drugs that cost cheaper.

"We are also very concern about the Investor-State Dispute Settlement Mechanism, as it is to benefit multinational companies more than developing countries," he said.

MMA was also against the extension of data exclusivity period of the drug, which under the TPPA could be extended up to more than seven years.

It is also urging the government to carve out tobacco control measures from the TPPA.

The TPPA negotiation is participated by 12 countries, namely Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States (US) and Vietnam, which in total represent 40 percent of the world's gross domestic product.

However, leaders to the latest TPPA ministerial meeting held in Hawaii, US, on July 28-31 had failed to seek an agreement, after five years of negotiations.

- Bernama