

**Tok Pa defends TPPA negotiators, says following Cabinet mandate**  
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Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed (pic) defended his trade negotiators today from critics of a controversial trade act, saying they took all their orders from him as the International Trade and Industry minister.

Several groups opposed to the controversial Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) have claimed the negotiators were not defending Bumiputra rights in the talks with the other 11 nations.

"They have done their best but whatever it is they have to come to me as the minister (in charge)," Mustapa told reporters after a TPPA Open Day in Kuala Lumpur today.

He rebutted claims by Malay groups that some of the trade negotiators were discriminatory, saying they had to "toe the government line".

"About the position they take, it depends on the Cabinet mandate. Officials, when they go to Brunei, they have to be mindful of the perimeters set by Cabinet," said the minister popularly known as Tok Pa.

"They are negotiators but in the end it's got to come to me and the Cabinet," he said.

Several blogs have openly named Miti officers for failing to fight for the country's interests, lashing out targeted barbs against non-Malay negotiators.

Mustapa also said the negotiators have been made aware of the Cabinet's will and can only work within their job scope.

"They cannot go beyond that. They were at the Cabinet meeting and they know what the sentiment of the Cabinet was," said the minister, who is the Jeli MP.

"Whatever it is, regardless of race, they are bound by government policy," said Mustapa. - September 10, 2013.

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