

Motion on principles for just trade

We note:

- Modern trade deals are vast instruments that can affect many aspects of our lives – food standards, workers rights, government and corporate powers
- The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a trade deal between the EU and US, was an example of one of these huge deals, and was defeated at the beginning of 2017, due to widespread public and political concern on both sides of the Atlantic
- Trade has become a prominent political issue because the UK government is expecting to sign many new trade deals after Brexit
- Among the most contentious aspects of trade deals are:
 - The investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS or ‘corporate court’) system which allows foreign investors to sue governments in secret arbitration panels for ‘unfair treatment’
 - The liberalisation of services (including public services) in trade deals
 - ‘Regulatory cooperation’ which is used to give business a bigger say over important standards and regulations, including food, environment and finance, and threatens a ‘race to the bottom’.
 - Controls on government procurement, on protection of intellectual property and ‘investor protection’ which limits government’s ability to use taxpayers money to generate local jobs and value, and to regulate big corporations.
- The SNP opposed TTIP and has stated that it will oppose any trade deal that includes ISDS and threatens public services
- The SNP Scottish Government has committed to “always consider the human rights implications of its engagement with countries and business”
- Despite the importance of trade deals, and their vast scope, MPs at Westminster and MSPs at Holyrood have almost no power over trade negotiations, and no ability to stop a trade deal they don’t like.
- The SNP government at Holyrood has produced a paper setting out the role it believes the Scottish government and parliament should have in future trade deals. This includes involving the devolved administrations at an early stage in trade negotiations, requiring consent for new trade deals and sign off from all countries of the UK in addition to sign off from MPs at Westminster, and a new trade committee where the UK and devolved administrations can agree trade priorities.

We believe:

- Trade should serve to make the world fairer, to prioritise well paid jobs and full employment, and not to damage the environment, public services or decent standards
- The position of the SNP in opposing ISDS and TTIP-style deals, and its clear call for a voice for Scotland in trade deals, is to be applauded
- UK trade policy must be based on a fundamentally different set of principles to those used by the current Conservative government, and future trade deals must include:

- A thorough, water-tight opt out for public services – nothing in a trade deal should make it harder for us to maintain or return services to public, democratic ownership and no service should be subject to liberalisation unless explicitly agreed in the deal (so-called ‘positive-listing’ should be used instead of ‘negative listing’)
 - A water-tight guarantee that trade deals can never be used to push down standards, including by allowing products made to lower standards into our markets
 - Clearly defined policy space setting out the right of governments to regulate and to tax investment; to use government procurement to support local value creation; and to break intellectual property protections when they undermine the national interest
 - Future trade deals should never be used to force other countries – especially poorer countries – to liberalise services, to deregulate, or to give up any of the rights we define above.
- It is deplorable that the current government at Westminster has not agreed to give MPs, MSPs and the people more control over trade deals. SNP MPs must fight to for the right to vote at Westminster on a mandate or framework for trade negotiations, a formal role for MSPs, transparency to see all negotiating texts and an affirmative vote on a final deal.

We agree:

- To send this resolution to the shadow SNP spokesperson on trade and encourage the elaboration of these principles in manifesto commitments
- To sign up as a local ally of Global Justice Now, so we can receive campaign updates and invite speakers on this issue and other international issues. [see www.globaljustice.org.uk/internationalist-network]
- To affiliate to Global Justice Now at a rate of £35/year
- To endorse the Trade Justice Scotland Coalition’s Principles for Just Trade: <http://scotlandagainsttip.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Just-Trade-Principles-FINAL.pdf>