

Principles for Just Trade deals

Trade Justice Scotland Coalition



The Trade Justice Scotland Coalition firmly believes that trade should benefit all.

Currently, trade deals grant too much power to corporations, weakening democracy and the ability of governments to protect people and the planet. We believe that trade deals should honour obligations to human rights, workers' rights and climate change commitments. Trade deals should be used to help build a fairer society and protect the planet.

Here are our main principles for just trade:

Trade should be democratic

1. Trade policy and trade negotiations should begin with, and continue to create, opportunities for meaningful consultation with the public, with the UK parliament, and with the devolved administrations. The UK parliament should be able to scrutinise, amend or terminate trade negotiations. Negotiations should be fully transparent for parliament and the public. The interim and final texts of trade agreements should be published, with versions also written in plain language so that their implications can be understood by all.

Devolved administrations should be given the opportunity to participate in the formulation of UK trade policy. New trade deals should be debated and voted on at Holyrood, Cardiff and Stormont, with the right of elected members to have a binding vote for or against any aspects of an agreement that fall within their devolved competencies (e.g. health in Scotland.) There should be options for a referendum on particularly controversial deals.

Trade should work in the public interest

2. Trade rules should comply with human rights, labour standards, environmental standards and climate commitments.

3. Trade agreements should focus on trading in goods. Public services, patents, local and national government procurement, domestic regulation, migration, investment and data privacy lie outside the scope of trade agreements. A policy of "positive listing" would reinforce this principle.

4. Domestic courts rather than 'corporate courts', (which give foreign companies special legal rights outside of the national legal system) should deal with trade disputes. The Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanism, the Investor Court System and the proposed Multilateral Investment Court are heavily weighted against governments.

5. Trade agreements should include mechanisms for individuals, groups and communities to bring grievance proceedings for harm caused by the trade agreements. The requirement for a periodic review of the social, environmental and human rights impact of a trade agreement should be written into the text, with a provision for parliament to withdraw from a trade agreement if it is too damaging.
6. A compensation package and alternative decent work for those who lose out as a result of a trade deal should be a pre-requisite of any trade negotiation. When agreements are between developed and developing countries, the developed countries should provide finance for this.

Trade should do good

7. Trade agreements must ensure tariffs and trade preferences take social and environmental considerations into account, so that goods with less environmental impact and higher social welfare receive greater preference.
8. Trade agreements should commit countries to raising standards to the highest, not lowest level, including meeting human rights, labour, environmental and climate obligations.
9. A just trade system should be based on solidarity not competition. Within this system trade deals could facilitate the sharing of knowledge and technology, for example low carbon energy and generic medicines, particularly with countries in the global south.
10. Foreign aid should be kept as a separate issue from trade, so that it cannot be used to persuade a country to open up its domestic markets.



Members of the coalition protest against CETA at the SNP conference in Glasgow

Trade Justice Scotland Coalition brings together trade unions, campaign organisations and local activists, campaigning in Scotland for an alternative to huge trade deals like TTIP and CETA. Find out more from our website:

www.scotlandagainstttip.org.uk