

Malaysia: Anti-TPPA movement to come out with book on the controversial agreement

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Malaysia's anti-Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) movement is putting out a book as part of its protest against the pact despite confirmation from Putrajaya that Malaysia would go ahead with the controversial Pacific Rim trade agreement.

The Malay Economic Action Council (MTEM) said today that the 120-page book, titled "TPPA: Malaysia is not for sale", is to be launched tomorrow by former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also a strong critic of the agreement, which is due to be sealed by the end of the year.

The book is part of MTEM's continuous effort to address the lack of factual engagement from Putrajaya and to inform the public on the impending dangers of the agreement, said its chief executive officer Mohd Nizam Mahshar.

"The government has said again that it is committed to the TPP agreement. According to their latest statement, Malaysia will see the trade deal through in our favour," Nizam said in a statement today.

"However, neither the government nor the Minister for International Trade and Industry (Miti) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed have ever mentioned just what is being negotiated in detail.

"We ask ourselves; just what are the details to ensure that the TPPA is in our favour? What are the details within the agreement that will affect the Malaysian businesses, environment and state-owned enterprises?"

The book, Nizam noted, will list out the arguments of the Bantah TPPA movement based on "deliberation of all issues", including the investor state dispute settlement and the impact on small and medium enterprises.

"This book will serve as proof that our arguments against the TPPA are not purely emotive but factual, and a testament that both the MTEM and Bantah TPPA believe that the whole negotiation and consultation process by Miti is not providing the necessary content to all stakeholders," he added.

He took Putrajaya to task, saying that it was irresponsible of the government to tell Malaysians that the benefits of the agreement would outweigh the costs without releasing the interim cost benefit analysis (CBA) report, which Mustapa had promised since February.

Bantah TPPA urged stakeholders to read the book and then involve themselves in interacting with the relevant authorities, adding that the deal would not only affect Malaysians in the present but also the future generation.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had recently said that the TPPA deal would be completed by year-end on terms acceptable to the country.

Najib, who is also Finance Minister, had said if the year-end date could not be met, Malaysia would continue with the negotiations as the deadline was not important but the contents of the TPP agreement was.

He had said the aim of the TPP agreement was to achieve two main objectives of expanding trade and market access in terms of economic and investment growth and secondly to uphold the country's sovereignty based on current principles.

He had also attributed criticisms against the TPPA to the opposition, saying that the benefits can only be seen in the long-term.

"Of course, that is the work of the opposition, they will oppose everything. What is good for the people they will oppose but there are times when you can only see the benefits in the long-term," Najib had said.

The TPPA is a free trade agreement involving 11 countries namely Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States and Vietnam. – July 10, 2014.

