



## TPP: Obama Gathering Support Ahead of Signing Ceremony

**U.S. President Barack Obama used the platform of his last State of the Union address on January 12<sup>th</sup>, to press American lawmakers and various businesses – from tech groups to farmers – to endorse the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement as quickly as possible. His goal is to build more support and obtain additional endorsements before the TPP is signed on February 4<sup>th</sup> in Auckland, New Zealand.**

Obama argued that the TPP is the best vehicle to open markets, to protect American workers, and to protect the environment while advancing American leadership in Asia.

“It cuts 18,000 taxes on products made in America, which will then support more good jobs here in America.” Obama told lawmakers. “With TPP, China does not set the rules in that region; we do. You want to show our strength in this new century? Approve this agreement. Give us the tools to enforce it. It’s the right thing to do.”

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Trade Representative, Michael Froman, spoke from the same playbook when delivering a keynote speech at the Woodrow Wilson Center event focusing on the TPP. In his speech, Froman outlined the strategic and economic benefits of the agreement and the case for not delaying those benefits at a time when U.S. competitors are negotiating their own agreements that would disadvantage American workers and businesses.

“The full text of the agreement has been out for over two months now, and day after day, as more Americans delve into its details, the momentum is building for its approval,” Froman continued citing endorsements spanning from the U.S. Chamber of

Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Small Business Association, and the American Farm Bureau to the U.S.’s national security and foreign policy experts who described the TPP as “a strategic imperative.”

If the TPP fails, the U.S. will lose vital markets, while embarking in “a race to the bottom without strong labor and environmental protections, without disciplines on state-owned enterprises, without rules to keep the Internet open and free, and without protections for our innovators.”

The 12 TPP countries – Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States, and Vietnam – wrapped up negotiations on the agreement’s 30 chapters on October 5, 2015 in Atlanta. The text was released on November 5, 2015 and included many annexes and bilateral side-letters.

After the February 4<sup>th</sup> signatory ceremony in New Zealand, it would be up to each country’s parliament to ratify the text. “The agreement will come into force within two years if all original signatories notify that they have completed their domestic processes, or after 2 years and 3 months if at least six of them, including the U.S. and Japan and several other large countries, have done so,” said Jane Kelsey, Professor at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

### **TPPA (Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement) Timeline**

- March 2010: First round of negotiations in Melbourne, Australia
- August 2013: Informal inter-sessional and chief negotiators’ meeting
- August 2013: Last formal negotiating round & stakeholder forum, Brunei Darussalam

- November 2013: Ministerial meeting, Singapore
- May 2014: Ministerial meeting, Singapore
- October 2014: Ministerial meeting, Sydney, Australia
- July 2015: Ministerial meeting, Maui, U.S.
- October 2015: Agreement on terms, Atlanta, U.S.
- November 2015: TPPA final text released, subject to legal scrubbing
- April 2016: TPPA can be signed by all parties
- April 2016: TPPA can come into force once all notify their processes are complete
- April 2018: TPPA can come into force by majority, including the major players

(Source: Professor Jane Kelsey, *Expert Paper # 1 The TPPA: Treaty Making, Parliamentary Democracy, Regulatory Sovereignty & the Rule of Law*)

## WTO: What Next After Nairobi?

The debate over what to do with the remainder of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) following the successful deal reached on the Export Competition at the 10<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference (MC10) in Nairobi this past December, is poised to resume this week in Davos, Switzerland when key WTO countries meet on the sidelines of the January 20–23, 2015 World Economic Forum (WEF).

Officials in Geneva, Switzerland do not expect any clear indications to come out of that first brainstorming session, one delegate said, but at least they may sketch out the contours of the debate to have in Geneva following the Davos Mini-Ministerial which is due to take place the last day of the WEF.

USTR Michael Froman, who is expected to attend the meeting alongside his Deputy and U.S. Ambassador to the WTO, Michael Punke, is looking for Members to engage in an honest and focused conversation on the limitations of the DDA framework. He stressed in Kenya that the successful MC10 has started a new phase in the WTO's evolution, one that will give Members the freedom to consider new approaches in tackling unresolved issues and begin evaluating new issues.

A WTO source says WTO Members are unlikely to take on new issues before those currently sitting on the negotiating table are concluded. However, there seems to be an interest to look at alternative approaches, such as plurilateral agreements, even though this also features potential complications. It will all come down to how countries will deal with “difficult countries” (i.e. China and India).

So far, the chair of the agriculture negotiating group, Ambassador Vitalis, has not yet circulated a program concerning the resumption of the talks in his group. But rumours already have it that the U.S. will oppose the continuation of these negotiating sessions, based on its call for the establishment of a new approach.

Geneva Watch is published by Dairy Farmers of Canada, Chicken Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Canada, Turkey Farmers of Canada and Canadian Hatching Egg Producers to report on the various events occurring in Geneva, particularly on the WTO negotiations on agriculture.

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