

Written evidence submitted by Dr Angela Polkey (TB16)

Personal Introduction

I am a UK citizen who is very concerned about international trade deals. This is the first time that I've followed a government Bill closely and submitted evidence - witness to my strength of feeling about this issue, which I believe many other members of the public share. As a member of a democracy, I expect and want trade deal negotiation to be **transparent, accountable and democratic**.

As a professional ecologist, I want to see **true, long-term sustainability** at the heart of the trade agenda, including actions to reduce carbon emissions resulting both directly and indirectly from international trade. I'm also concerned about social justice, health and food sovereignty and am an advocate for the work of NGO's that campaign on these areas of concern as well as the environment.

I believe that **trade has the potential to do enormous good in creating a fairer and more sustainable world** – as long as the conditions are set to facilitate this. It must **never lower standards** without informed public debate and consultation, and should include the possibility of **raising standards further to progress sustainable development goals** – not be a race to the bottom. This could help, for example, to **fast track carbon emission reductions** across the globe.

The main points I would like to make about the Trade Bill are:

1. As a UK citizen who is concerned about protecting our democracy and sovereignty, I want **Parliament to a) set out a framework (mandate) for trade negotiations and b) be able to scrutinise and amend draft content**, before voting for or against a final text which would be legally binding.¹
 2. As a constituent, I want to be able to make my views heard through my **elected representatives, including in the Welsh Assembly**. There was much talk of Stakeholders in the Trade Bill discussion on 23 January 2018 – **as a UK citizen I am a stakeholder and I want to have representation through the democratic process**.²
 3. International trade **should not override domestic law & policy** nor should it weaken public standards on, for example, food safety, health, the environment. **Parliament should be in control of public policy**.
 4. International trade is now very much focussing on **non-tariff areas** and the associated **regulatory framework** i.e. services such as health, education, e-commerce, public procurement, intellectual property rights. **There should be public consultation about any move to include non-tariff / service areas in UK trade deals and Parliament must be able to scrutinise and debate the content of any text**.
 5. Furthermore, **there should not be a List it or Lose approach** to any exclusions as we cannot predict which new services and goods will be needed in the future.
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6. I am absolutely **against International State Dispute Settlement clauses (Investment Protection Tribunals)** in which corporations can prosecute governments that bring in measures that are in the public interest but affect future profits. This is **completely against the notion of national sovereignty** and more and more examples are reaching the public's attention and concern.^{3, 4} **There is no place for ISDS in a democratic, sovereign state.**
7. I concur with the views of **Nick Ashton-Hart, Geneva Centre for Security Policy**, as voiced in the Trade Bill debate on 23 January 2018, who agreed that it is:
- “essential” and the “right opportunity to make a Bill that is more democratically, socially and economically transparent”, with a “very strong argument for a robust consultation process”.*

I also agree with **Professor Winters, UK Trade Policy Observatory**, who said in the same debate:

“Parliament and the devolved Administrations need to have an important role in setting mandates and...Civil Society...ought to be consulted.”

NOTES (given to the best of my knowledge and subject to confirmation)

1. All of the following have much greater scrutiny and transparency in trade negotiations than here: USA, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, Finland, Belgium; the European Parliament feeds into a mandate for the EU.
 2. The USA has a Citizen Advisory Board of 700 citizens that feeds into Congress; Belgium consults its provincial assemblies.
 3. For example: \$250million paid by Romania to Swedish food processor, Micula, after terminating incentives that were in contravention of EU law; \$90.7million paid by Mexico to Cargill and \$58.4million to Corn Products International, following issues with trade barriers. There are also ISDS cases relating to plain packaging on cigarettes, nuclear power, water etc.
3. *“ISDS has no place while the world is trying to achieve sustainable development goals around food and nutrition security, health and water security, amongst others.”*
Institute for Agriculture & Trade Policy
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